



BENEFIT OF STRUGGLING

A man found a cocoon of a butterfly. One day a small opening appeared, he sat and watched the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole.

Then it seemed to stop making any progress. It appeared as if it had gotten as far as it could and it could go no farther. Then the man decided to help the butterfly, so he took a pair of scissors and snipped off the remaining bit of the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily.

But it had a swollen body and small, shriveled wings. The man continued to watch the butterfly because he expected that, at any moment, the wings would enlarge and expand to be able to support the body, which would contract in time.

Neither happened!

In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a swollen body and shriveled wings.

It never was able to fly.

What the man in his kindness and haste did not understand was that the restricting cocoon and the struggle required for the butterfly to get through the tiny opening were God's way of forcing fluid from the body of the butterfly into its wings so that it would be ready for flight once it achieved its freedom from the cocoon.

Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in our life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as what we could have been.

And we could never fly.



A POUND OF BUTTER

There was a farmer who sold a pound of butter to a baker. One day the baker decided to weigh the butter to see if he was getting the right amount, which he wasn't. Angry about this,

he took the farmer to court.

The judge asked the farmer if he was using any measure to weight the butter. The farmer replied, "Honor, I am primitive. I don't have a proper measure, but I do have a scale."

The judge asked, "Then how do you weigh the butter?"

The farmer replied;

"Your Honor, long before the baker started buying butter from me, I have been buying a pound loaf of bread from him. Every day when the baker brings the bread, I put it on the scale and give him the same weight in butter. If anyone is to be blamed, it is the baker."

Moral of the story: In life, you get what you give. Don't try and cheat others.



THE GROUP OF FROGS (ENCOURAGEMENT)

As a group of frogs were traveling through the woods, two of them fell into a deep pit. When the other frogs crowded around the pit and saw how deep it was, they told the two frogs that they're was no hope left for them.

However, the two frogs decided to ignore what the others were saying and they proceeded to **try and jump out of the pit**. Despite their efforts, the group of frogs at the top of he pit were still saying that they should just give up. That they would never make it out.

Eventually, one of the frogs took heed to what the others were saying and he gave up, falling down to his death. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Again, the crowd of frogs yelled at him to stop the pain and just die.

He jumped even harder and finally made it out. When he got out, the other frogs said, **"Did you not hear us?"**

The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought **they were encouraging him** the entire time.

Moral of the story: People's words can have a big effect on other's lives. Think about what you say before it comes out of your mouth. It might just be the difference between life and death.



THE ELEPHANT AND SHORT ROPE

A gentleman was walking through an elephant camp, and he spotted that the elephants weren't being kept in cages or held by the use of chains. All that was **holding them back** from escaping the camp, was a small piece of rope tied to one of their legs.

As the man gazed upon the elephants, he was completely confused as to why the elephants didn't just use their strength to break the rope and escape the camp. They could easily have done so, but instead they didn't try to at all.

Curious and wanting to know the answer, he asked a trainer nearby why the elephants were just standing there and never tried to escape.

The trainer replied;

“when they are very young and much smaller we use the same size rope to tie them and, at that age, it's enough to hold them. As they grow up, they are conditioned to

believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free.”

The only reason that the elephants weren't breaking free and escaping from the camp was because over time they adopted the belief that it just wasn't possible.

Moral of the story: No matter how much the world tries to hold you back, always continue with the belief that what you want to achieve is possible. Believing you can become successful is the most important step in actually achieving it.



THE BOX OF KISSES

The story goes that some time ago, a man punished his 3-year-old daughter for wasting a roll of gold wrapping paper. Money was tight and he became infuriated when the child tried to decorate a box to put under the Christmas tree.

Nevertheless, the little girl brought the gift to her father the next morning and said, "This is for you, Daddy." He was embarrassed by his earlier overreaction, but his anger flared again when he found the box was empty.

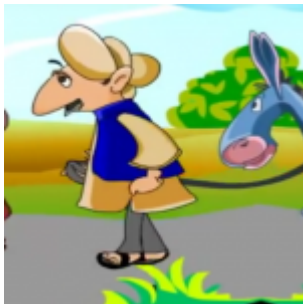
He yelled at her, "Don't you know that when you give someone a present, there's supposed to be something inside it?"

The little girl looked up at him with tears in her eyes and said, "Oh, Daddy, it is not empty. I blew kisses into the box. All for you, Daddy."

The father was crushed. He put his arms around his little girl, and he begged for her forgiveness.

It is told that the man kept that gold box by his bed for years and whenever he was discouraged, he would take out an imaginary kiss and remember the love of the child who had put it there.

In a very real sense, each of us as humans have been given a gold container filled with unconditional love and kisses from our children, friends, family and God. There is no more precious possession anyone could hold.



THE DONKEY STORY

An old man, a boy and a donkey were going to town. The boy rode on the donkey and the old man walked. As they went along, they passed some people who remarked it was a shame the old man was walking and the boy was riding. The man and boy thought maybe the critics were right, so they changed positions.

Then, later, they passed some people who remarked, “What a shame, he makes that little boy walk.” So they then decided they’d both walk! Soon they passed some more people who thought they were stupid to walk when they had a decent donkey to ride. So, they both rode the donkey. Now they passed some people who shamed them by saying how awful to put such a load on a poor donkey.

The boy and man figured they were probably right, so they decided to carry the donkey. As they crossed the bridge, they lost their grip on the animal and he fell into the river and drowned. The moral of the story? If you try to please everyone, you might as well... Kiss your “donkey” goodbye! And even this ending won’t please everyone.



THE TROUBLE TREE

The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit and now his ancient pickup truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving he invited me in to meet his family.

As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. Upon opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation.

His tan face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked me to the car.

We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier. "Oh, that's my trouble tree", he replied. " I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing for sure, troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and children. So I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again." "Funny thing is," he smiled, "when I come out in the morning to pick them up, there aren't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."



THE FOLLY OF CLINGING

The little boy walked slowly into the room where his mother was sitting at her desk writing. She glanced down at him and saw that he was carrying a very precious vase that her grandmother had given her. Almost absentmindedly she said to him, "Robert, go put the vase down before you drop it and break it."

"I can't," he replied, "I can't get my hand out."

"Of course you can," she said, "you got it down there."

He said, "I know, mom, but it won't come out." The neck of the

vase was very narrow and his hand had fit it neatly inside and it was now up to his wrist. He continued to insist that he could not get it out. Growing a little concerned, his mother called out to his dad.

Dad calmly took control and began gently pulling the arm trying to extract the hand from the vase. He tried loosening it up with soapy water. Still nothing. He then got some vegetable oil from the kitchen and poured it around the wrist and let it seep into the vase. He wiggled it some. It still did not budge.

“I give up,” the dad said in desperation. “I’d give a dollar right now to know how to get it out.”

“Really?” little Robert exclaimed. Then they heard a clinking sound and his hand slid right out of the vase. They turned the vase upside down and a penny plopped out. “What’s this?” they said in unison.

“Oh, that’s the penny I put inside. I wanted to get it out so I was clutching it in my hand. But when I heard Dad say he would give a dollar to have the vase free, I let go.”

How often do we cling to things when they are nothing in comparison to what could be ours?



THE CRACKED POT

A water bearer in China had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house."

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."



THE PENCIL TALE

An old pencil maker took his newest pencil aside, just before he was about to pack him into a box. Imagining the little fellow as a person he recalled a few things about the pencil.

“There are five things you need to know,” he said to his pencil, “before I send you out into the world. Always remember these five things – never forget them – and you will become the best pencil you can be!

“The first thing is to remember that you will be able to do many great things, but only if you put yourself in someone else’s hands.

“From time to time you will experience a painful sharpening, but remember that this will make you a better pencil.

“Also, keep in mind that you will be able to correct any mistakes you might make along the way.

“And the most important part of you is what’s on the inside.

“And remember this, as well, upon every surface that you are used, you must leave your mark. No matter what else happens, you must continue to write.”

It seemed the pencil listened to him and promised he would remember these five things so that he could live his life with heart and purpose.