



STORIES

- Stories on Livelihoods



Akshara Livelihoods

First Edition
March 2020

Published
By
Livelihoods Team

Price: Rs. 99
All rights reserved.

alpl.hr07@gmail.com
www.aksharakriti.org
www.livelihoods.net.in
www.7lcx.com

***Dedicated to coexisting
ourselves, all the beings
flowing together***

-Akshara & Team

PREFACE

This Book, “*Stories*”, consists of different livelihood stories which create an interest among people to read.

Story-telling is one of the best ways for facilitating learning. Reading & understanding stories is one of the best methods to improve our analyzing of situations. Stories provide a moral and insights at the end. Each and every story provides us with an essence that makes us feel like that we had/ have been a part of its story; making us relate to certain characters, while despising others.

The “*Stories*” book will help you in analyzing and comprehending situations that are happening in your daily lives. These stories not only give you knowledge but also provide in-depth understanding about life, help you to solve problems and provide you with courage to face the challenges of life.

All age groups may find interesting this book.

The main thought behind this book is to provide entertainment along with wisdom. All the stories in this book have been taken from Livelihoods Monthly Magazines of Akshara Livelihoods Pvt Ltd. These stories have been collected from various sources and published in Livelihoods Monthly Magazines.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratitude to the *AKSHARA* family; those who have walked with us and are walking with us, who saw us through this compendium, and to all those who provided support, talked, read, wrote, offered comments and allowed us to quote their remarks and assisted us in editing, proof-reading and designing. Our special gratitude to K Pravallika and N Vijaya, the students of National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Panchayat Raj for compiling these stories.

G Muralidhar
Chief Mentor
Akshara Livelihoods

Walked / Walking

1. G Muralidhar
2. T. Venkateswarlu
3. V. Aravind Kumar
4. M Bhavya
5. K. Chayadevi
6. S. Laxman
7. S. Mahidhar Reddy
8. K. Ramesh
9. G. Swathi
10. T. Vina
11. V. Ankith
12. T Aparna Gayathri
13. K. Bharathi
14. G. Bhargava
15. Bhima Shankar
16. Chandranshu Gupta
17. Dharmendhar
18. Glen Shewcheck
19. S. Himabindu
20. S. Janaki
21. K. Krishna Chaithanya
22. P. Kishore
23. A. Uma
24. Krishnamurari
25. M. Lavanya
26. B. Madhusudhan
27. P. Madhusudhan
28. G Madhu Vamsi
29. Mansi Koushik
30. P Mahesh
31. D Narasimha Reddy
32. Naval Shaini
33. G. Pulakeshi
34. T Nirmala
35. LB Prakash
36. M. Raja Srinivas
37. S. Rekha
38. B. Ramya
39. B. Sai Srinivas
40. M. Siddhardha
41. K. Sridevi
42. Soumya
43. R. Swati
44. M. Vijaybhaskar
45. K. Visweswara rao
46. Gaargi Pachal
47. Mahesh Patil
48. N. Sruthi
49. R. Anvitha
50. K. Pravallika
51. N. Vijaya

Contents

1. Three Fishes	11
2. The Snake and The Foolish Frogs	12
3. Hare And Tortoise	14
4. Koupeenyam Samrakshanartham Iham Patatopam	16
5. Parable Of The Sheep And Wolves	18
6. Focus-Focus-Focus	20
7. Development Fable	22
8. Decision Making	24
9. A Lesson from Butterfly	25
10. Being Of The Nothing	26
11. From Fish To Ant	28
12. Right Livelihood	30
13. Parroting	31
14. Elephantine Decision Making	33
15. Think Out Of The Box	34
16. Brahma Face To Face With Brahma	35
17. Erudition In Mid-Stream	36
18. A Sparrow And An Elephant	37
19. The Heron, Serpent And The Mongoose	38
20. Story Of Buddha, Elephant And Monkey	39
21. Take A Step Up	41
22. The Frogs In The Pit	42
23. An Archer And His Skills	43
24. Agreement	44
25. Managing Time	45
26. 'Trapped' In Comfort	46
27. The Blind Men And The Elephant	47
28. Sharpen The Axe	48
29. Making A Difference	49
30. Two Choices	50
31. The Echo	52
32. God in The Poor	53
33. No Time For Worry	55

34. Determination And Persistence..... 56

35. The Story Of Two Yogis 58

36. The Emperor’s Seed..... 60

37. Birds of Different Feathers..... 62

38. We Are All at Risk..... 64

39. Only One Move..... 65

40. Put Down Stress 66

41. Excellence in Attitude 67

42. Nail in Fence 68

43. The Moon Lake 69

44. Friendship Forever 71

45. Gopal And His Bat..... 72

46. Strong Desire Makes 73

47. Peace of Mind..... 74

48. The Three Races 75

49. The Secret of Happiness..... 76

50. The First Opportunity 77

51. Self-Confidence Matters 78

52. Learn and Earn..... 79

53. The Window Through Which We Look..... 80

54. Live and Work..... 81

55. The Seed of Honesty..... 83

56. The Ass in The Lion’s Skin 85

57. Selfish Friendship 86

58. Myopic Researchers 87

59. The Wolf, The Kid and The Goat 88

60. Learning to Live 89

61. Lion and Rabbit..... 90

62. Universal Love 91

63. The Tiger’s Whisker 92

64. The Two Patients in Hospital 94

65. Two Frogs in The Milk 95

66. Testing for Gossip..... 96

67. The Obstacle in Our Path 97

68. Donkey in The Well 98

69. Rafting..... 99

70. The American Dream..... 100

71. A Foot Has No Nose..... 101

72. Helping Hands..... 102

73. The Little Wave..... 103

74. Going the Extra Mile..... 104

75. The Day Dreaming Priest..... 105

76. The Slow Cooking Khichri..... 106

77. Tenali Ramalingam And Two Thieves..... 107

78. The Rescue of a Deer..... 109

79. The Royal Cook..... 111

80. The Lazy Person..... 112

81. Live and Work..... 113

82. Struggles of Life..... 114

83. The Giving Tree..... 115

84. Keep Your Dream..... 116

85. The Cracked Pot..... 117

86. Growth and Stability..... 118

87. Appreciation of Hard Work..... 119

88. Looking at Mirror..... 121

89. Helping Others..... 122

90. The Three Types of People..... 123

91. The Lazy Farmer..... 124

92. My Mom Had One Eye..... 125

93. Master and Disciples..... 126

94. A Young Girl and Her Father..... 127

95. The Dream That Came True..... 128

96. A River Cuts the Rock..... 129

97. Learn to Appreciate..... 130

98. Sheela And Python..... 131

99. Big John and The Bus Driver..... 132

100. The Right Person..... 133

101. Friends Forever..... 134

102. Honesty Is the Best Policy..... 135

103. The Story Of The Desert..... 136

104. Burnt Biscuits..... 137

105. The Farmer and The Sparrows 138

106. The Musical Donkey 139

107. The Donkey and The Washer man..... 140

108. This Was Bound to Happen..... 141

109. The Needy King and A Sage..... 142

110. The Reflection of Your Actions 143

111. A Man with A Lamp..... 144

112. Finding Happiness 145

113. One Who Read the Future 146

114. Wealth Without A Value 147

115. Pundit and The Rich Man 148

116. A Blank Question Paper 149

117. Father Son Conversation..... 150

118. An Old Man in The Village..... 151

119. Thinking Out of The Box (Creative Thinking)..... 152

120. I Resign..... 153

121. Control Your Temper (Anger) 154

122. Your Chance of a Greater Good 155

123. Greed 156

124. The Bridge..... 157

125. Bond of Love and The Truth..... 158

126. The Needs and Desires 159

127. What Life Is All About..... 160

128. Responsibility 161

129. The Lion and The Poor Slave 162

130. The Struggles of Our Life 163

131. Three Questions 164

132. The King of Milinda – The Chariot 165

1. Three Fishes

Once there lived three fishes in a pond named – Dheergadharsi (one who can foresee future), Samayaspurthi (one who is street smart) and Mandabuddhi (one who cannot think right). As time went by the water in the pond started declining gradually. Having noticed this change Dheergadharsi was considering shifting to a different location even before the pond goes completely dry. At the same time, one evening, Dheergadharsi overheard some fishermen talking - 'This pond is full of fish. We must come back with our nets and catch these fish!' So, saying, the fishermen left.

Dheergadharsi felt troubled. He called the other fishes and said, 'Did you hear what the fishermen said? We must leave this pond at once and follow the stream that will lead us to a bigger pond!'



Samayaspurthi wanted to wait and see if the fisherman would actually come and then react. So, for now he decided to stay back.



Mandabuddhi gave no ear to these concerns and went on with his business as usual.



Dheergadharsi being the proactive one left the pond that very evening. Soon enough the water in the pond depleted and fishermen arrived. They started catching fish - all the live fish were thrown into a basket and dead fish were laid on a rock. Samayaspurthi reacted to the situation quickly and played dead. As soon as he was caught and laid on the rock he slipped back into the water and saved himself. On the other hand, Mandabuddhi was caught in the net and got killed. This story holds much relevance in the fast-changing context(s) we are in today. Globalization, liberalization, privatization, urbanization, cannot be ignored. Rural and Urban livelihoods are changing. Market dynamics are changing. We need to think and plan keeping these changes in mind. There should be room for re-thinking and re-planning as required. One should be proactive where possible like Dheergadharsi or at least should be able to think quickly and act like Samayaspurthi to have any decent chance of survival. Else one will lose out in this rat race. The poor should be given the right resources to think, act and/or react and win.

Source: <https://www.tell-a-tale.com/panchatantra-three-fish/>

- Livelihoods November 2007

2. The Snake and The Foolish Frogs

Once upon a time, a snake lived in the thick forest near Hastinapur. It had indiscriminately consumed all the frogs and other insects in the forest, and hence unable to get enough food. As a result, it became frailer by the day. One day, while it was moving in search of food, it came across a pond with many frogs in it. Having seen so many frogs in the pond, the snake thought of a trick. It simply lay down as though it was fainting and was ready to die. It lay still despite several frogs moving and jumping in front of it. Having observed this, the king of frogs asked the snake, "Oh Mr. Snake! Why are you fainting now and still? Why are you not eating any of the frogs that came before you?" To this, the snake replied, "Oh the King of Frogs! A few days ago, I was passing before a house of a Brahmin. At that time, the child of the Brahmin trampled on my tail. I got angry and bit him off. As a result, the boy started becoming unconscious and the Brahmin had to send for the King's doctor. The boy was saved, though. "The Brahmin looked around for me and cursed me that the frogs that I like so much would not become my food any longer.

I have to carry them on my back and move about. "I was shocked dead and pleaded him to have mercy on me. He considered and he replied that out of pity, the frogs turn merciful and offer themselves as food to you, you would be able to eat them. If you forcibly eat them, your head would shatter into a thousand pieces and you would die. "From then on, I am living on the mercy and pity of you all. You don't have to fear me anymore. Please climb on my back and enjoy the rides. Please show some pity on me and offer me some food. That way I will be able to live." Having a tender heart, the King of Frogs was full of sympathy for the snake. He asked the snake to carry his people along. The snake carried them, but all the while pretending it was very difficult to carry them with a weakened body. After some time, the king of the frogs offered a frog as food to him. Slowly the frogs began disappearing one after the other. The snake enjoyed his stay near the pond as he could have his food without a lot to bother. At last, the snake ate the king of the frogs, along with his retinue, and moved on in search of another pond.



This story would have brought to your memories several incidents in our present day lives. We consider several such incidents as normal, as they have become a part of our culture – some things which we consider as normal. Several cunning men take advantage of the innocence and helping nature of the (rural) poor and bring the lives of the poor to the brink of death. Several unscrupulous organizations are mushrooming. These organizations impart good training to their staff, who then go into the villages. They use their guile and nice talk to con the villagers into parting their valuables. The poor are kind hearted as the frogs are and believe all the words of the conmen. Many a times, they fall to the prey when the well-trained strangers speak of nice schemes (in which the strangers promise 10 times in return for the savings/ investments made by the people). On several occasions, the poor meet their waterloo in their desire to be out of poverty.

The same is true of the response of the poor towards godmen. They part with the savings of their life time against promises of ending the vagaries of poverty and nature, and having a good life. In the story, the snake eats the frogs, which is a natural way of life. The frogs could be on a look out as they know that the snake is their natural enemy. But alas! What to do when the enemy is the other human

being, who is considered only as a natural ally? On several occasions, the persons trained by the unscrupulous organizations are men and women from among the poor themselves. This is a horrendous situation, as the poor have come to trust their peers (others among them) and are only too willing to help them achieve their targets. Little do they know that their peers work for cunning people. Many a times, even those who work for these people do not realize that they are working for bosses whose designs are questionable and that even those employed would be deceived. Events like these are known, but the urge to help their fellow human beings is strong enough for experiences like these to be remembered for long. Another issue that the story brings out clearly is that we follow the leaders without questioning. The frogs know that the snake is their natural enemy, and could have desisted the entreaties of their king to help the snake. Such devotion to the leaders is quite common among those we work with. This story tells us that we need to inculcate the trait of questioning the leader's decision. This would also result in some dialogue.

This dialogue could have brought into the fore several assumptions that were behind the leader's decision, thus increasing the capacity of the leader. The lessons from the story are more relevant today as several new schemes are being launched by the government, and poor are increasingly taking recourse to the middlemen. Newer intermediaries are coming up even as the government is trying to reduce the dependence on the middlemen. Hence, in the new dispensation, even recognizing middlemen is becoming difficult. Further, as the poor have become restless and are desperate to come out of poverty, they too are venturing outside the areas, whose risks they are familiar with. This too has increased the chances of their being cheated. Hence, we need to try to build the capacity to question among the poor and to recognize the snakes that are waiting to bait them.

Source: <http://www.english-for-students.com/the-snake-and-the-foolish-frogs.html>

- Livelihoods December 2007

3. Hare And Tortoise

Once upon a time, there lived a Hare. He was proud that he could run fast and beat several of the animals in his surroundings. He always used to ridicule the tortoise, a poor fellow who could not carry his bulk with agility and hence could not win others. To make fun of the tortoise, the hare once invited the tortoise for a race. Never to say no, the friendly tortoise agreed. Both of them started the race on the appointed time. The hare shot ahead briskly for some time. After running for a while, the hare saw that the tortoise was far behind. "Poor guy! He will not be able to catch up with me even if I have a nap," thought the hare. He sat under a tree to relax before continuing with the race. Under the tree, he soon fell asleep. The slow tortoise, unmindful of the sleeping hare, continued to walk. By the time, the hare woke up, it was very late. He ran as fast as he could, only to find the smiling and friendly tortoise at the goal post. Alas! The fastest buddy in the surroundings lost! The tortoise emerged as the undisputed champ!! The moral: Slow and steady wins the race. The story till now is familiar to all of us. But the story does not end here. With a crushed ego, the hare wanted to take a revenge. The hare analysed the reasons for his defeat and found that his lackadaisical attitude and resting in between resulted in his defeat. If he had not taken things for granted, there was no way that the tortoise could have beaten him.

Having realized this, the hare once again challenged the tortoise to a race. The tortoise readily agreed again, not knowing the learnings of the hare. They raced again. This time, the hare implemented his learning; shun his attitude of superiority and did not rest till he reached the goal post. A long, long time after wards, the tortoise came lumbering around, only to find the hare already at the goal post. The hare won by several minutes. Moral: Fast and consistent will always beat the slow and steady. If you have two people in your organization, one slow methodical and reliable, and the other fast and still reliable in what he does, the fast and reliable chap will consistently climb the organizational ladder faster than the slow and methodical person. Thus, it is good be slow and steady. But it is better to be fast and reliable. The story does not even end here! The tortoise analysed his failure. He realized that there was no way he could beat the hare in a race in its present format, i.e., on the ground. The structure of the race had to change for him to win - he could win easily if the race was in water. Having realized this, the tortoise challenged the hare for a race once more, but this time, on a slightly different track. The hare agreed.

They started off. In keeping with his self-made commitment, the hare took off and ran at top speed until he came to a broad river. The finishing line was a couple of kilometres on the other side of the river. The hare sat there wondering what to do. In the meantime, the tortoise trundled along, got into the river, swam to the opposite side, continued walking and finished the race. The moral: First recognize your core competence, then change the playing field and rules of the game to suit your core competence. In an organization, if you are a good speaker, make sure you create opportunities to give presentations to enable the senior management to notice you. If your strength is analysis, make sure you do some sort of research and send the report to the top. Working to your strengths will not only get you noticed, but will also create opportunities for growth and advancement. The story has still not ended. The hare and the tortoise, by this time, had become pretty good friends. They did some thinking together. Both realized that the last race could have been run much better. So, they decided to do the last race again, but to run as a team this time. They started off, and this time, the hare carried the tortoise on its back till the river bank. There, the tortoise took over and swam across with the hare on his back. On the opposite bank, the hare again carried the tortoise and they reached the finishing line together. They both felt a greater sense of satisfaction than they had felt earlier. The moral: It is good to be individually brilliant and to have strong core competencies; but unless you are able to work

in a team and harness each other's core competencies, you will always perform below par because there will be situations at which you will do poorly and someone else does well. Team work is mainly



about situational leadership, letting the person with the relevant core competency for a situation take leadership. Pooling resources and working as a team will always beat individual performers. There are more lessons to learn from this story. Note that neither the hare nor the tortoise have given up after failures. The hare decided to work harder and put in more effort after each failure. The tortoise changed his strategy because

he was already working as hard as he could. In life, when faced with failure, sometimes it is appropriate to work harder and put in more effort. Sometimes it is appropriate to change strategy and try something different. And sometimes, it is appropriate to do both. The hare and tortoise story also offer another important lesson. When we stop competing against a rival but compete against the situation, we perform far better. Thus, the race for the hare was not against tortoise. Rather, it was against the time clocked earlier.

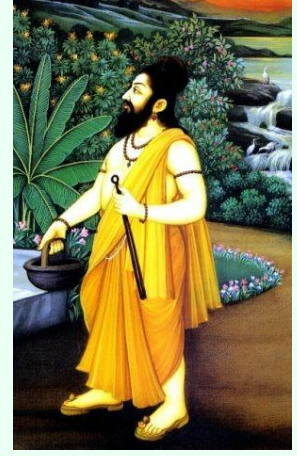
Moral: Slow and steady wins the race; but fast and consistent is much better. Individual strengths pave way for opportunities; teamwork rules.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tortoise_and_the_Hare

- Livelihoods January 2008

4. Koupeenyam Samrakshanartham Iham Patatopam

Once there lived a hermit in a dense forest. As advised by his guru, he lived an extremely austere life, with the only mission of attaining nirvana. His only possession in the hermitage was a pair of loin cloths. Nothing distracted him from his yogic pursuits and he continued with his meditation. One day, a rat made a small hole in his loin cloth. Initially, the problem appeared minor. But the hole got bigger as the tear increased with the use of the loin-cloth. The hermit started feeling uncomfortable in his clothing, which started disturbing his meditation and other rituals. He was unable to get rid of the rats, and this inability made him lose his calm. Fearing that the loss of mental calm would wreck his mission, he visited the nearby grama (village) to find a solution. Having heard that a jnani (wise man, present day consultant) was in the grama on the invitation of a group of artisans to solve their problem, the hermit also approached the jnani with his problem. The jnani heard the hermit with patience. After some deep thought, the jnani remembered the adage 'for every creature in the universe, there is a natural enemy'. And, he suggested the hermit to take a cat to the hermitage, which the hermit did without any loss of time.



The hermit was happy as he could continue meditating after the cat hunted several of the mice around. But as the rats became scarcer, the cat became hungrier. And the cat began to wail out of hunger. The wailing was a bigger problem for the hermit. As he could no longer concentrate on his rituals, he went in search of the jnani again. This time the jnani was quick to announce the solution: "The cat is hungry and needs some milk. Take a cow that gives milk along with you to the hermitage. Even you can drink some milk and continue with your rituals with more vigour." So did the hermit. Happy with the milk and decline in hunger, the cat stopped wailing.

But the cow, being a holy animal, won't graze and live on any and sundry leaves/vegetation available in the forest. Being hungry, it bellowed continuously. The hermit was afraid that he would be committing the larger sin of causing the death of the holy cow. He started taking the cow for browsing to the nearby fields every day. As the days passed, the hermit realized that he was spending less and less time on meditation and rituals. This disturbed him very much and he decided to seek the advice of the jnani once more. Before proceeding to the jnani, the hermit thought, "The jnani is the reason for all my troubles. I will not let him away with some silly advice this time." The jnani was concerned on hearing that the hermit was spending lesser time on the rituals – all his advices were to make him do more meditation and not less! The jnani thought for a while and asked the hermit to take a herdsman along with him to the hermitage. Having been wise over the days, the hermit immediately quipped, "Oh, the learned one! Who will feed the herdsman?" The jnani thought: "At last, the hermit is also thinking. This paves way for his capacity building." Having thought for some time, the jnani asked the hermit to take a married herdsman, along with his wife, to the hermitage. "By that, the woman would be able to feed the herdsman while the herdsman feeds the cow, which in turn feeds both the hermit and cat. The herdsman and his wife would also engage in simple cultivation, that would produce enough to feed the couple and leave some vegetables for the hermit too. As the cat is happy and keeps the rats away, the hermit can concentrate on his rituals," reasoned the jnani. The hermit was happy with the reasoning. Having accepted the advice, the hermit started a search for a married herdsman who could come along with him and stay in the forest. After visiting several gramas and foregoing several days of meditation, the hermit could finally recruit and select a suitable herdsman. He was happy with his success, introduced the herdsman to the forest and his domestic

..

animals – the cow and the cat – and started to concentrate on his meditation and rituals. But, alas! The wife of the herdsman felt alone when the herdsman went out into the forest for grazing the cow and she started chatting with the hermit. If the hermit won't talk, she would begin crying. This turned totally unbearable, and the hermit had to marry and bring another woman to keep company to the wife of the herdsman.

Then the hermit had several sons and tending to the household duties took all the time available with the hermit. One day, the hermit's guru visited the hermit to enquire about the progress made by his disciple towards achieving nirvana. But he was amazed to find a new grama in place of the hermitage in the midst of the forest. The guru had difficulty in even recognizing his student, who had now totally given up on the austere life and the quest for nirvana. Totally shaken, the guru asked the disciple to explain what led to the transformation. After hearing all the story, the guru said, "Simply mending your loin-cloth with a needle and thread could have solved your problem at the beginning. You could have even given the cat to someone in the grama after the rats stopped troubling you. All the way, you had been spending more and more time out of meditation without realizing it. While you needed to relinquish, the jnani came from the background which discouraged relinquishing and encouraged acquisition. Without realizing this important difference, you continued to rely on the advice of the jnani. You should either rely on your common sense or on the advice tendered to by those who share/ understand your life/ philosophical position.

Koupeenyam = loin cloth;

Samrakshanartham = to save;

Iham = one's world;

Patatopam = went helter-skelter

Source: <http://www.bhagavatam-katha.com/krishna-story-sannyasi-who-got-cat-cow-and-wife/>

- Livelihoods February 2008

5. Parable Of The Sheep And Wolves

Not so long ago and in a pasture too uncomfortably close to here, a flock of sheep lived and grazed. They were protected by a dog, who answered to the master, but despite his best efforts from time to time a nearby pack of wolves would prey upon the flock. One day a group of sheep, bolder than the rest, met to discuss their dilemma. "Our dog is good, and vigilant, but he is one dog and the wolves are many. What can we do? We are sheep, but we do not wish to be food, too!" One sheep spoke up, saying "It is his teeth and claws that make the wolf so terrible to us. It is his nature to prey, but it is the tools he wields that make it possible. If we had such teeth, we could fight back, and stop this savagery." The other sheep agreed, and they went together to the old bones of the dead wolves and gathered fang and claw and made them into weapons. That night, when the wolves came, the newly armed sheep sprang up with their weapons and struck at them and drove off the wolves, who were astonished. When did the sheep become so bold and so dangerous to the wolves?

The next day, flush with victory and waving their weapons, they approached the flock to pronounce their discovery. But as they drew nigh, the flock huddled together and cried out "Baaaaaaadddd! Baaaaaddd things! You have bad things! We are afraid! You are not sheep!" The brave sheep stopped, amazed. "We are still sheep, but we do not wish to be food. Our new teeth and claws protect us but do not make us into wolves, they make us equal to the wolves, and safe from their viciousness!" "Baaaaaaadddd!", cried the flock, "the things are bad and will pervert you, and we fear them. You cannot bring them into the flock. They scare us!". So, the armed sheep resolved to conceal their weapons, for although they had no desire to panic the flock, they wished to remain in the fold. But they would not return to those nights of terror, waiting for the wolves to come. In time, the wolves attacked less often for they had no stomach for fighting sheep with tooth and claw even as they did. Then came the day when, as the flock grazed beside the stream, one sheep's weapon slipped from the folds of her fleece, and the flock cried out in terror again, "Baaaaaaadddd! You still possess these evil things! We must ban you from our presence!". The chief sheep and his court and council, encouraged by the words of their moneylenders and advisors, placed signs and totems at the edges of the pasture forbidding the presence of hidden weapons there. The armed sheep protested before the council, saying "It is our pasture, too, and we have never harmed you! When can you say we have caused you hurt? It is the wolves, not we, who prey upon you.

We are still sheep, but we are not food!". But the flock would not hear, and drowned them out with cries of "Baaaaadddd! We will not hear your clever words! You and your things are evil and will harm us!". Saddened by this rejection, the armed sheep moved off and spent their days on the edges of the flock, trying from time to time to speak with their brethren to convince them of the wisdom of having such teeth, but meeting with little success. They found it hard to talk to those who, upon hearing their words, would roll back their eyes and flee, crying "Baaaadddd! Bad things!".

That night, the wolves happened upon the sheep's totems and signs, and said, "Truly, these sheep are fools! They have told us they have no teeth! Brothers, let us feed!". And they set upon the flock, and horrible was the carnage in the midst of the fold. The dog fought like a demon, and often seemed to be in two places at once, but even he could not halt the slaughter. It was only when the other sheep arrived with their weapons that the wolves fled, vowing to each other to remain on the edge of the pasture and wait for the next time they could prey, for if the sheep were so foolish once, they would be so again. This they did, and do still. In the morning, the armed sheep spoke to the flock, and said, "See? If the wolves know you have no teeth, they will fall upon you. Why be prey? To be a sheep does not mean to be food for wolves!". But the flock cried out, more feebly for their voices were fewer,

though with no less terror, "Baaaaaaadddd! These things are bad! If they were banished, the wolves would not harm us! Baaaaaaadddd!". The other sheep could only hang their heads and sigh. The flock had forgotten that even they possessed teeth; how else could they graze the grasses of the pasture? It was only those who preyed, like the wolves and jackals, who turned their teeth to evil ends. If you pulled their own fangs those beasts would take another's teeth and claws, perhaps even the broad flat teeth of sheep, and turn them to evil purposes. The bold sheep knew that the fangs and claws they possessed had not changed them.



They still grazed like other sheep, and raised their lambs in the spring, and greeted their friend the dog as he walked among them. But they could not quell the terror of the flock, which rose in them like some ancient dark smoky spirit and could not be damped by reason, nor dispelled by the light of day. So they resolved to retain their weapons, but to conceal them from the flock; to endure their fear and loathing, and even to protect their brethren if the need arose, until the day the flock learned to understand that as long as there were wolves in the night, sheep would need teeth to repel them. They would still be sheep, but they would not be food! Change faces resistance and comfort is sought in protecting the status quo. However, change is not always bad. One can adapt to good and needed changes!

Source: https://www.kidsgen.com/stories/bedtime_stories/a_wolf_and_seven_lambs.htm

- Livelihoods March 2008

6. Focus-Focus-Focus

Out of all Pandavas and Kauravas, Arjuna had immense liking for the sport of bow and arrow. He practiced this art with great concentration and perseverance. Soon he became numerous uno in this art. Acharya Drona, the Guru was very much pleased with his Sishya, Arjuna and showed preferential love and favour towards him. This caused a natural adolescence jealousy in the heart of Duryodhana and his brother Dushasana. Duryodhana, in particular, did not like Arjuna and other Pandavas and silently ill feelings like hatred towards Pandavas took birth in his heart. One day they openly criticized their Guru for a favour shown towards Arjuna, telling him they also were not less skillful in archery. As a reply to their criticism, Acharya Drona arranged a test to decide the best archer amongst all. So, the stage was set for the test. A wooden bird was put on a branch of a distant tree. It was partly hidden by the foliage. A prominent artificial eye was painted on the wooden bird. The teacher called all his disciples and said, "Look my children, a bird is sitting on that far off tree. You have to hit the arrow exactly in its eye. Are you ready?" Everyone nodded enthusiastically.

First the eldest of all disciples Yudhisthira was invited to try his skill. He stretched his bow-string and was about to release the arrow when Dronacharya asked him a question, "O eldest son of Kunti, may I know what is visible to you at this point of time?" Yudhisthira replied innocently, "Why, O Gurudev, I am seeing you, the tree, people around me, and the bird!" Similar questions

were put to Duryodhana, Bhima, Nakul, Sahadeva and others, and Acharya Drona got more or less similar answers as those given by Yudhisthira. Acharya told them to step aside. He realized that with such poor concentration his disciples would obviously miss the target! Lastly, it was the turn of Arjuna. He readied himself, with his bow and arrow in perfect graceful harmony! The Guru asked him, "O Arjuna, now that it's your turn, will you tell me what is being observed by you at this time?" Arjuna replied, "Sir, at this point of time only



the eye of the bird is visible to me." Then the teacher asked Arjuna if he is able to what others saw - the bird, the tree and the people around. Arjuna replied in negative maintaining that he saw only the eye of the bird and nothing else.

The Guru, Dronacharya was pleased with Arjuna's response. Arjuna's answer reflects his immense concentration and focus. He explained to his students that the correct approach towards the art of archery is to focus and concentrate.

Now the Sishyas, realized the point including Duryodhana; but the seed of jealousy was sown in his heart. In his attempt to equal Arjuna and other Pandavas, Duryodhana fell victim to anger and similar base emotions later in life. Focus and concentration are fundamental to accomplish any given task efficiently and effectively. Without focus energies are spread thin among various things / events. With some introspection one can realize that half of these 'things / events' are irrelevant to achieving one's goal / purpose. Focus and concentration hold greater relevance and significance in development

sector. The primary stakeholders here are the poor and the vulnerable and any attempts made without constant and consistent focus on the purpose would either boomerang and/ or leave the poor confused.

Poverty and issues surrounding poverty are a complex maze. Poverty is also dynamic. It is easy for development workers to get overwhelmed with myriad issues concerning the poor. It gives sample opportunity to lose focus and have divided attention to a variety of problems. One can start responding to everything without a sense of direction. But it is proved that this approach will not lead to results of significance. When dimensions are varied, issues are many and players/ stakeholders are multiple one need to devise focused approach to understand and analyse issues, devise plans and deliver. When only the present matters focusing and concentrating on every action that's being done is achievable. The present of course will be guided by the broader purpose. In the story only the present - hitting the eye of the bird - was relevant to Arjuna. He could not see anything else. The broader purpose is to become the most skilful archer. With broader purpose as the guiding force, focusing and concentrating on the present karma/action will yield results. This age-old story very beautifully narrates this simple yet significant message.

Source: <https://www.scoopwhoop.com/inothernews/arjunas-bird-eye-test-teachings/>

- Livelihoods April 2008

7. Development Fable

The experts arrived at the fishing village. For years, the natives had used primitive techniques in their work. True, they caught fish, but they had to paddle out to sea every day, may be even on feast days. It was a hard life, though well tried over the years. The experts gave the fisher-folk improvised nets. The new nets were rather dearer than the old, and the method of fishing was different too. But in a single net they caught a whole week's supply.

Fantastic! You could work one day and be free for the rest of the week! The village folk had a great feast, several feasts... in fact so many that they had to fish two days each week to pay for the celebrations. "This is no good," thought the experts, "they should be fishing six days a week and making money out of it.

We haven't come here to witness endless parties. Surely, it's enough with one feast a month. This is an underdeveloped country; they must produce more proteins – fish!" But the village favoured fiesta. Fishing two-days, and free the rest of the week. The experts grew annoyed. They hadn't travelled from the distant North to watch natives drum, dance and dream. They had come to fill hungry stomachs,



to lessen the threat of the undernourished against the overfed. Yet the villagers danced late into the night. Why shouldn't they? They were rich now, almost as rich as the Maharaja, though he had never done a day's work in his life... And then the Project Director had a brilliant idea. (Not for nothing had he taken an evening course back home in economics.) These lazy fisher-folk were not actually lazy: they were simply weak on motivation, motivation to work harder. They had not discovered their needs.

He bribed a villager to buy a motorbike. Bribery was distasteful, but sometimes necessary. True, there were no roads as such, but the wet sand along the water edge was hard and smooth... The motorcycle roared back and forth. What a toy! And soon every young man wanted one of his own. The village elders warned them: "What use is there in riding far off and back again on the sand?" But the young man replied: "We can race. We shall see who is the fastest. And you grey-beards, you can place bets on us!" The Project Director's idea proved a brilliant success. At last the men fished almost every day.



The capital city got the fresh fish it needed. Indeed, a large part is now converted into fish-meal and exported to Europe where it makes excellent pig food and helps keep down the price of bacon. But



probably most pleased of all was the Maharaja, for it so happens that he was sole agent for the motorcycle firm in that country. He also owned the main fish market in the city. While his uncle's family built and ran the fish-meal factory. When the experts flew home, he raised the price of motorcycles, so that to buy one, a man must work three years, instead of a single season. And the fishermen fished on. They had discovered a need. So, what is development? Is everything new development?

◆ Is modernization development? Modernization will usually mean such changes as seem more efficient and more productive.

◆ Is Economic growth development? More fish; motorcycles... increased purchasing power...

◆ Is social change development? (The younger men become more dominant).

Source: By Olavi Gunus, quoted by: Glyn Roberts in 'Questioning Development' – 1976.

- Livelihoods May 2008

8. Decision Making

The dilemmas of decision making are always there both within and without. Hasty decisions can be costly, can be unethical, can be unreasonable, can be biased. This interesting story is shared by our colleague and fellow development worker L.B. Prakash,

A group of children were playing near two railway tracks, one still in use while the other disused. Only one child played on the disused track, the rest on the operational track.

The train is coming, and you are just beside the track interchange. You can make the train change its course to the disused track and save most of the kids. However, that would also mean the lone child playing by the disused track would be sacrificed. Or would you rather let the train go its way?

Let's take a pause to think what kind of decision we could make.....

Most people might choose to divert the course of the train, and sacrifice only one child. You might think the same way, I guess. Exactly, I thought the same way initially because to save most of the children at the expense of only one child was rational decision most people would make, morally and emotionally. But, have you ever thought that the child choosing to play on the disused track had in fact made the right decision to play at a safe place?

Nevertheless, he had to be sacrificed because of his ignorant friends who chose to play where the danger was. This kind of dilemma happens around us every day. In the office, community, in politics and especially in a democratic society, the minority is often sacrificed for the interest of the majority, no matter how foolish or ignorant the majority are,



and how farsighted and knowledgeable the minority are. The child who chose not to play with the rest on the operational track was side lined. And in the case, he was sacrificed, no one would shed a tear for him.

The great critic Leo Velski Julian who told the story said he would not try to change the course of the train because he believed that the kids playing on the operational track should have known very well that track was still in use, and that they should have run away if they heard the train's sirens. If the train was diverted, that lone child would definitely die because he never thought the train could come over to that track! Moreover, that track was not in use probably because it was not safe. If the train was diverted to the track, we could put the lives of all passengers on board at stake!

And in your attempt to save a few kids by sacrificing one child, you might end up sacrificing hundreds of people to save these few kids.

While we are all aware that life is full of tough decisions that need to be made, we may not realize that hasty decisions may not always be the right one.

Remember that, "what's right isn't always popular... and what's popular isn't always right"

Source: [Written by Development worker L.B. Prakash](#)

- Livelihoods June 2008

9. A Lesson from Butterfly

In helping the poor, many a time we respond to our sensitiveness, we work to assuage our own internal pain/guilt. In this process instead of understanding and delivering what the poor actually need we instead give what we think/believe are their needs. This can hinder the process of empowerment of the poor. It can cripple the thinking and decision-making abilities of the poor. The story of the butterfly draws a nice parallel.



One day a small opening appeared on a cocoon. A man sat and watched for the butterfly for several hours as it struggled to force its body through that little hole. Then it seems like it stopped making further progress. It appeared as it had gotten as far as it could and it could not go any further. So, the man decided to help the butterfly. He took a pair of scissors and opened the cocoon. The butterfly then emerged easily. But it had a withered body. It was tiny. Its wings were shrivelled. The man continued to watch because he expected that at any moment the wings would open, enlarge and expand to be able to support the



butterfly's body and become firm. Neither happened! In fact, the butterfly spent the rest of its life crawling around with a withered body and shrivelled wings. It never was able to fly. What the man in his kindness and in his goodwill 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 its achieved its freedom from the cocoon. Sometimes struggles are exactly what we need in life. If God allowed us to go through our life without any obstacles, it would cripple us. We would not be as strong as we could have been. Never been able to fly.

Source: <https://www.kidsworldfun.com/blog/lessons-we-can-learn-from-a-butterfly/>

- Livelihoods July 2008

10. Being Of The Nothing

For many the unknown does not exist. But this is a fallacy. No one person can have all the knowledge and capacities to know the 'whole'. We learn as we go along through direct or indirect experiences, through interactions and many more ways. Learning at times also come the hard way. What is important is to have an open mind to learn and unlearn. Learning is a lifelong phenomenon.

Once upon a time there was a fish. And just because it was a fish, it had lived all its life in the water and knew nothing whatever about anything else but water. And one day as it swam about in the lake where all its days had been spent, it happened to meet a turtle of its acquaintance who had just come back from a little excursion on the land.

"Good day, Mr. Turtle!" said the fish. "I have not seen you for a long time. Where have you been?"

"Oh", said the turtle, "I have just been for a trip on dry land."

"On dry land!" exclaimed the fish.

"What do you mean by on dry land? There is no dry land. I had never seen such a thing. Dry land is nothing."

"Well," said the turtle good-naturedly. "If you want to think so, of course you may; there is no one who can hinder you. But that's where I've been, all the same. "Oh, come," said the fish. "Try to talk sense. Just tell me now what is this land of yours like? Is it all wet?"

"No, it is not wet," said the turtle. "Is it nice and fresh and cool?" asked the fish.

"No, it is not nice and fresh and cool," the turtle replied.

"Is it clear so that light can come through it "No, it is not clear. Light cannot come through it."

"Is it soft and yielding, so that I can move my fins about in it and push my nose through it?"

"No, it is not soft and yielding. You could not swim in it."

"Does it move or flow in streams?"

"No, it neither moves nor flows in streams."

"Does it ever rise up into waves then, with white foams in them?" asked the fish, impatient at this string of Noes.

"No!" replied the turtle, truthfully. "It never rises up into waves that I have seen."

"There now," exclaimed the fish triumphantly. "Didn't I tell you that this land of yours was just nothing? I have just asked, and you have answered me that it is neither dry nor cool, not clear nor soft and that it does not flow in streams nor rise up into waves. And if it isn't a single one of these things what else is it but nothing? Don't tell me."



"Well, well", said the turtle, "If you are determined to think that dry land is nothing, I suppose you must just go on thinking so. But anyone who knows what is water and what is land would say you were just a silly fish, for you think that anything you have never known is nothing just because you have never known it." And with that the turtle turned away and, leaving the fish behind in its little pond of water, set out on another excursion over the dry land that was nothing.

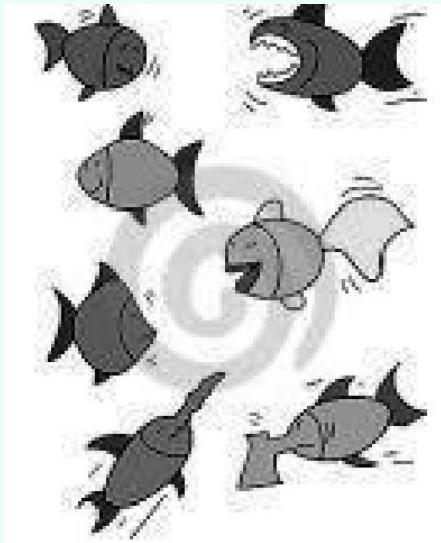
Source: [http://www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php/Buddhist Story: The Fish and the Turtle %28Is Nibbana Nothingness%3F%29](http://www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php/Buddhist_Story:_The_Fish_and_the_Turtle_%28Is_Nibbana_Nothingness%3F%29)

- Livelihoods August 2008

11. From Fish To Ant

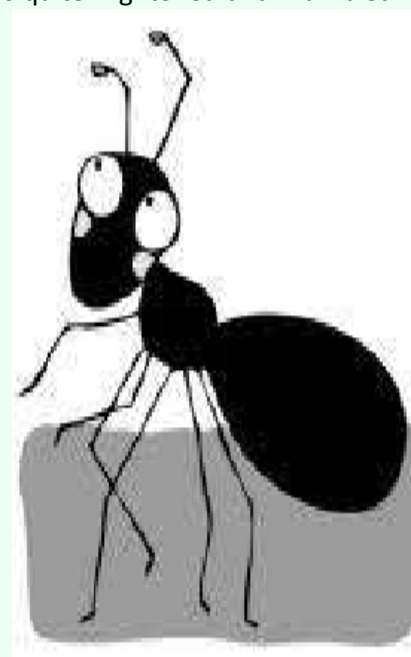
It is natural human tendency to search for reasons and this nature become more obvious when searching for reasons behind problems. How far we go in search of the real reason is significant. Many a time the reasons that appear on the surface may not be the actual reasons. The reason might be deeper or elsewhere. It is important for a development worker to sieve the problem till he/she arrives at the root cause.

Once upon a time there was a king who had seven sons. Upon growing they were introduced to hunting along with other skills. One fine morning the seven sons went to the forest for hunt on their horses. For long time they did not find any game to hunt. Finally, the sons gave up and rested under a tree near the pond. Looking at the pond they considered fishing. Each of them caught one fish and travelled back home with their catch.



The sons dried all the fish in the sun in their backyard. All the fish duly dried except one. When the prince asked the fish as to why it did not dry like the other ones', the fish responded that it was placed under the shadow of grass and therefore did not receive enough sunlight to dry. The prince did not stop at that. He went to the grass and asked why it is still there and would obstruct the fish from drying. The grass said that it was supposed to be feed for the cow but the cow did not feed. So now, the prince asked the cow as to why it skipped the grass meal. The cow responded that the person who usually takes her for grazing did not show up. Therefore, the cow remained

tied and could not feed on the grass. Now the prince approached the cattle herder and asked him why he did not do his job of grazing the cow? The cattle herder was quite frightened and mumbled that his mother did not give him food this morning and therefore he did not have enough energy to take the cow for grazing. The prince went to the herder's mother and asked her why she did not give food for her son. The mother responded that she had a small baby at home that was crying loud at that time and therefore she had to give her attention to the small child and could not attend to the needs of her elder child. She could not take time to give food for the elder one. Then the prince asked the baby 'Why were you crying loud?'. Then the baby answers, 'Ant has bitten me, so I cried'. Then the prince asks the ant as to why it had to bite the baby. Then the ant questions back, "If anybody disturbs me what will do, do I not bite them?". Now the prince is convinced with that he found the root cause of why his fish did not dry. He went home happily having found the reason.



Many times, we look at the surface of the problem and try to figure out reasons and solutions. However, we forget the fact that it is important to go deeper into an issue and work towards finding right reasons. Unless right reasons are figured out. we cannot find right solutions to the problem. So, it is important to go till the ant and this aspect assumes great significance in development work. In

development work, many times reasons are disguised and one should make serious and sincere efforts to dig deep into the problem and excavate the reasons. But one should also be careful not to fall into the trap of paralysis of analysis. This balancing approach comes with experience. Also, some situations like emergencies require immediate response. But even in these cases after attending to the immediate needs, it will be important to understand the root cause of the emergency situation. Once the cause is identified, efforts can be made to avoid its recurrence.

Source: <https://telugustories.in/stories/famous-stories/seven-fishes-story/>

- Livelihoods September 2008

12. Right Livelihood

Your work is to discover your world and then with all your heart give yourself to it – Buddha

In a small Himalayan village hundreds of miles from his native Tibet, an artist is thoughtfully carving a wood block which will be used for making beautiful ink block prints. There is a peaceful smile on his face as he stops to show me his progress. Nearby, a group of women are weaving rugs that will be sold to an American trading company to provide income for their families.

The women are talking softly and laughing at the antics of the children playing in the courtyard outside. They are sharing this space with several other workers who are producing the staples needed for everyday life. They have suffered a great deal, yet they are happy and their business is thriving. When I talk to them about their situation, there is no



trace of bitterness or resentment, only compassion. They are smiling, and their gentle manner and contentment are so genuine they leave me with an uncanny sense of inner peace. I've never been around people who enjoyed their work so much. You've got to love your job. Imagine waking up every morning thinking: "WOW! I get to go to work today! Am I lucky! What I do makes a difference! And to think, I get paid for this!" That's the way it's supposed to be, and that's the way it can be. As a wise sage once said, choose a job you love and you'll never have to work a day in your life. What we do for a living and how we treat each other as we make our living are as important to our success, happiness, and spiritual development as are prayer and meditation. Viewed from this perspective, work is a spiritual practice. Right Livelihood involves finding a way to make a living that benefits both ourselves and others. It is a commitment to working with integrity and awareness. Above all, it is avoiding causing harm to others or the environment. To paraphrase the Bible: What is the point of gaining the world if you lose your soul? Are you searching for the right job which will make you happy? If you look within, you'll realize that finding the perfect career is an "inside job." Make a list of the things that are important to you, your values, dreams, aspirations. Is what you're doing making a difference? Are you making sure that you're doing no harm? **Extra Credit: When you're 80 years old, sitting in your rocking chair on the porch, will you feel good about what you did with your life?**

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods October 2008

13. Parroting

We see things happening, we hear people, we read books and we get influenced by all kinds of media. But if we do not progress beyond seeing, hearing, reading and the like we will only end up parroting words. The data/information we receive need to undergo a fair rational synthesis. A blend of our learnings, knowledge, wisdom and intuition with the essence of the information obtained externally will produce at least close to workable results. If only the parrots have thought beyond parroting!

One day Narada, the divine sage, was on his way to Satyaloka (Brahma's abode). He was crossing Dandakaranya (a huge forest in central India) and stopped a while to watch the beauty of the forests lashed by golden rays of rising sun. The forest was so beautiful with sky touching green trees and wandering deers. Running rabbits made a feast to his eyes. Wondered by the beauty of the nature, Narada spent quite a long time in the forest. While moving around the forest, at one place, he saw thousands and thousands of parrots singing and dancing. They were flying from one tree to another and looked very happily. Narada went to them and asked the reason for their happiness. One elder parrot came forward and replied "Mr. Narada, we are not happy. Actually, we are afraid. We are enjoying like this to forget our fear". Surprised by this answer Narada asked why they were so afraid. The elder parrot replied "Very frequently one hunter is coming to this forest. He throws some grains on the ground. Our parrots very foolishly go there to eat the grains. The hunter throws his net and catches the parrots. He caught some hundreds of parrots so far. We are unable to protect our flock. We are afraid if this continues our flock may disappear in no time".

Narada felt very sad at the plight of the poor parrots. He firmly decided to do something to protect the parrots from the hunter. He thought intensely for a while to decide on what to do for these parrots. He thought of conducting a training program to all the parrots on how they can protect themselves from the hunter. But it seemed an impossible task for him to conduct training to all these hundreds and thousands of parrots. So, with the help of the elder parrot among the flock, he selected some bright and wise parrots who appeared to articulate issues well. Narada sat comfortably under a shady tree and started a "Training of Trainers" (TOT) program to the selected parrots. He taught them how they should train the other parrots. He taught them a mantra which can help them in



protecting themselves. His Mantra read "The hunter will come. First, he will sprinkle grains on the ground. Then he will throw his net and catch us. So, don't go for the grains and fall in the net". He made the parrots memorize this mantra. After each and every parrot in the group learnt this mantra and memorized it, Narada also made them prepare a plan to give training and transfer this knowledge to other parrots. All the details as to where the training would be conducted and for how many days and in how many batches and the number of parrots per batch etc were worked out. Thus, the trainer parrots finalized the plans. Satisfied with this effort, Narada went back to Satyaloka. Few months later, Narada was journeying through Dandakaranya. He suddenly remembered the parrots and got curious about their plight. He desired to have a look at the parrots. So, he started descending down to earth. When he was half way through, to earth he heard lot of noise. As he moved closer to the noise Narada

heard parrots enchanting the mantra rhythmically. Narada could hear them repeating “The hunter will come. First, he will sprinkle grains on the ground. Then he will throw his net and catch us. So, don’t go for the grains and fall in the net. Narada felt very excited by listening to this. He became very eager to see the parrots and walked swiftly towards them. After reaching the place and seeing the parrots Narada was shocked! All the parrots there were caught in the net. But they were still enchanting the mantra with a loud voice!

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods November 2008

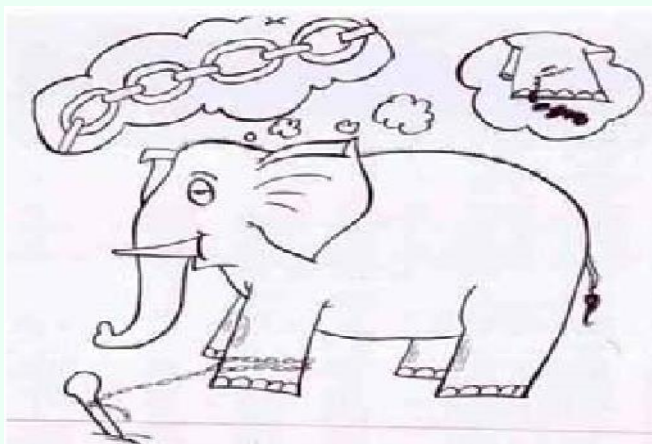
14. Elephantine Decision Making

Quite a few executives are overly dependent on old facts, on outmoded conventions, or are still basing decisions on what worked twenty years ago. This amounts to elephantine decision making. This story of a baby elephant precisely says the point....

A circus keeps a baby elephant from running away by chaining it to a stake. When the animal pulls at the chain the cuff chafes its leg, and the baby elephant concludes that to avoid pain it best stay put. But when the elephant grows up, the circus still chains it to the same small stake. The mature elephant could now pull the stake out of the ground like a toothpick, but the elephant remembers the pain and is too dumb to use the new set of facts. It did not perceive the new and changed circumstances. The tiny stake continues to keep a two-ton elephant at bay just as effectively as it did the baby elephant!

Most development workers continue to do what they had done at the start of their career. In order that one should not suffer from the traits of 'elephantine decision making', one should keep on learning. Some cross learning needs to happen among those working at the grassroots and among those working in different organizations and circumstances. But unfortunately, while some core few get the chance of exposure, many remain deprived of such exposure. Another important lesson is regarding the behavior of the community and community leaders.

In the initial stages, they depend on the staff of the NGO to guide them. If right from that time, the staff of the NGO do not encourage the community to be on its own, the community is likely to develop the trait of 'elephantine decision making' – and be ever dependent on the development worker. Though one could argue that the community do not have enough knowledge and capacity to be on its own, the development worker has to be aware that the alternative to pushing the community be on its own (and providing support without the community recognizing it) is the community developing the trait of 'elephantine decision making'. A development actor needs to be always kept this in mind and balance his priorities. Hence, the importance of initiating appropriate processes right from the beginning in any community development project. One can also see why a belief in the capacities of the community (and the poor) is important!



Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods December 2009

15. Think Out Of The Box

Old is gold does not seem to work all the time. Thinking out of the box, outside the traditional thought processes will help. Decisions overshadowed with emotions will many a time be devoid of logic. The story seems to say that a balance between the right and the left brain helps.

You are driving along in your car on a wild, stormy night, it's raining heavily, when suddenly you pass by a bus stop, and you see three people waiting for a bus:

- ◆ An old lady who looks as if she is about to die.
- ◆ An old friend who once saved your life.
- ◆ The perfect partner you have been dreaming about. Which one would you choose to offer a ride to, knowing very well that there could only be one passenger in your car?

_This is a dilemma that was once used as part of a job application.

- ◆ You could pick up the old lady, because she is going to die, and thus you should save her first;
- ◆ Or you could take the old friend because he once saved your life, and this would be the perfect chance to pay him back.



- ◆ However, you may never be able to find your perfect mate again. The candidate who was hired had no trouble coming up with his answer. Guess what was his answer? He simply answered: "I would give the car keys to my Old friend and let him take the lady to the hospital. I would stay behind and wait for the bus with the partner of my dreams." Sometimes, we gain more if we are able to give up our calcified thought limitations. Never forget to "Think Out of the Box."

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods January 2009

16. Brahma Face To Face With Brahma

Laloo was a good-natured boy but was often told by the sage in whose Ashram he lived, “My boy, it pays to be prudent. Do not over-do things.” It is difficult to say how seriously Laloo took his mentor’s advice - rather how much he understood it, though he never confessed to having failed to understand anything at all of the guru’s teachings-from Vedanta to Samkhya. When the guru explained a text, he was the first man in the audience to repeatedly not indicating how much he appreciated or rather approved of the explanation! It was a bright morning and Laloo was on his way to his home after almost a year. None of his childhood friends had the privilege to live in an Ashram. Every time he went home, they gathered around him in order to benefit by his wisdom.

This time Laloo was prepared to tell them something that was sure to startle them. Lately the sage explained to his students the mystery of Brahma - the Supreme Reality that pervaded the universe. All was Brahma-said the sage-all the human beings, all the animals, all the birds, the trees, the hills-all, all was Brahma! This was a knowledge quite exciting to him. He saw everything around him in a new light. He hills, the trees, the river, the grazing cattle in the fields to his left, the boys playing hide and seek amidst the bushes to his right, appeared quite interesting to him because they were all essentially one-the Brahma. The road before him was long, tall trees on both its sides providing it with ample shade and keeping it cool. An elephant was coming from the opposite direction, its mahout seated on it and humming a tune. A bullock-cart passing by Laloo moved to a side at the sight of the elephant. So did three or four pedestrians. But Laloo, walking right along the middle of the road, did not care.

Just as he was himself the Brahma, so was the elephant. Why should Laloo-Brahma be scared of the elephant-Brahma? The carter and the pedestrians do not have the knowledge which he had. That explains their conduct. A wise man’s conduct needs not be similar to that of the ordinary ones! “You boy, move to a side; don’t you see what you are going to face?” one of the passers-by shouted at Laloo. Laloo looked at him displaying a smile of superiority, but showed no sign of being affected by the warning. The elephant had come quite close to him. “Get off its way, boy, get off its way!” the mahout himself shouted. Laloo only threw a look of contempt at the rider. What does the fellow know of the mystery of the Brahma? “Be careful boy, give way to the elephant!” shouted the mahout again, quite desperately. And the elephant took hold of Laloo by its trunk, lifted him high and threw him on the roadside bush and marched on as if nothing had happened. Nothing much, luckily, had happened to Laloo physically except that he had been bruised at several places all over his body. But much had happened to him mentally. He was in a state of daze. The passers-by helped him to stand up and upon learning that he was an inmate of the nearby Ashram, put him in the bullock-cart and the carter was kind enough to carry him to the Ashram. The surprised sage heard all that led him to his present condition. To the sage’s question why he did not move away from the elephant’s path, Laloo’s was a simple answer; “Why should Laloo-Brahma be scared of the elephant-Brahma?” “But why did Laloo-Brahma refuse to listen to the mahout Brahma?” asked the sage. Laloo, needless to say, had no answer to the sage’s last question.

Source:<https://ocoy.org/dharma-for-christians/bhagavad-gita-for-awakening/the-brahman-knower/>

- Livelihoods February 2009

17. Erudition In Mid-Stream

Knowledge is good, but that cannot carry one across the river of life-to safety. The practical knowledge is no less important than theoretical knowledge. This little story of a scholar and boatman explains this truth in a simple way.

“How long will it take to reach the other bank?” the solitary passenger asked the lone boatman as they started crossing the river. “It takes half an hour or a little more or a little less depending on the course of wind and the current. I’ll do my best to ply it as fast as I can in view of the gathering storm”, said the boatman who at first had been reluctant to set out. “Be quick!” commanded the passenger, a great pundit, who has insisted on being taken to the other side as he had been invited by the zamindar. But the pundit was not in the habit of traveling in silence. He loved to talk. He was always accompanied by a few disciples or admirers to whom he lectured on great issues of philosophy. “Have you studied the Upanishads, boatman?” the pundit, bored of silence, asked. “Studied, sir? I’m as illiterate as my boat!” “I see! What is your notion of mayavada?”

“No notion, Sir, I’d never heard that word!” “I thought as much!” sighed the pundit.

“I pity people like you. At least one-fourth of your life is a waste without this much basic knowledge of philosophy.” “I agree with you, sir, we uneducated folks are unfortunate,” said the boatman.



They were in the middle of the river. “Do you have some idea about Advaita, Dvaita and Visistadvaita?” “Oh, no,” said the boatman.

“Such words are a riddle to me,” “I see. That means, another one-fourth of your life is a waste,” “Quite so, sir,”

“Do you have any idea of cosmology?”

“No, sir.” “I see. Do you know of astrology?”

“No, sir”. “That means three-fourth of your life is a waste. Suddenly a whirlwind broke out and rains came down in torrents. Despite all efforts of the boatman to keep his boat steady, strong winds shook it violently. “Sir, do you know swimology?” asked the boatman. “Oh no!” “In that case, Sir, your whole life is a waste” said the boatman. There was not the slightest irony in his voice, but great anxiety. Next moment the boat overturned. The boatman beat his strong arms and reached the shore while the pundit, with all his knowledge of philosophy, went down into the terrible waters.

Source: <https://electronicmediatoday.blogspot.com/2018/06/the-pandit-and-boatman-theory-and.html>

- Livelihoods March 2009

18. A Sparrow And An Elephant

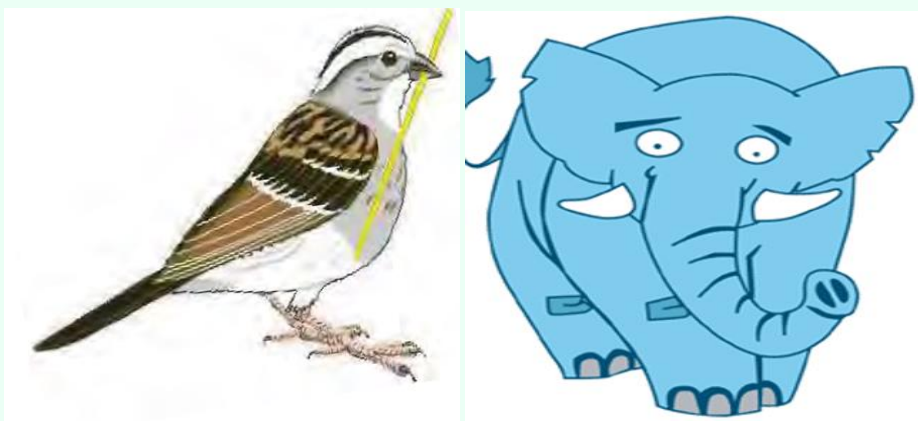
A good collective plan of action and sticking to the plan could help even the small and weak people to fight against a big and strong enemy. This small story of a sparrow and elephant rightly points out that, when a person is in distress, the actions of persons around them matter and not those of the person in distress.

Once upon a time there lived a sparrow with her husband on a tree. She had built a nice nest and laid her eggs in the nest. One morning, a wild elephant with spring fever, feeling restive, came to the tree in search of shade and in a rage broke the branch of the tree on which the nest was residing. Unluckily all the sparrow eggs were lost though both parents were saved. The she-sparrow was deep in lament. Seeing her lament, the woodpecker bird, a friend of hers offered her consolation that she would think of a way of killing the elephant. Then she went to her friend the gnat, who in turn went to the counsellor frog for advice. The frog then devised a scheme for killing the elephant. He asked the gnat to buzz in the ears of the elephant, so that the elephant would be thrilled to listen to the music of the gnat and close its eyes. Then she asked the woodpecker to pluck his eyes. She herself would be on the edge of a pit and would croak misleading the elephant to think that it is a pond.

The next day at noon the three carried out the plan and the elephant was killed when he fell flat into a pit after being blinded by the woodpecker when he closed his eyes in response to the gnat.

So, the revenge was taken with collective wit of all three animals.

Despite the suffers being very small, a good collective plan of action and sticking to the plan could help them



fight a big and powerful opponent. The injustice done to the sparrow could not be avenged but for a series of consultation by the smaller beings. When a person is in trouble, it is another person (like the woodpecker in the story) who needs to take lead, organize consultations and facilitate the emergence and execution of a plan. When a person is in distress, the actions of persons around them matter and not those of the person in distress. We routinely see that some other persons take up the cause of the persons in distress and not those in distress themselves. Probably, there are limits to asking the person suffering injustice to lead the fight

Source: <https://www.nriol.com/indianparents/indian-tales/sparrow-elephant-short-story.asp>

- Livelihoods April 2009

19. The Heron, Serpent And The Mongoose

The solution to a problem could be a bigger problem. Many at a time, the solutions suggested by livelihoods workers to the people increase their risk. The livelihoods workers themselves may not suggest with bad intentions and the suggestions may have been made in good faith. But an improper assessment of the situation and the stakeholders may lead to a state where the community finds itself in much worse situation before the intervention. This short story of The Heron, Serpent and the Mongoose illustrates the point.

Near the mountains in the north, on a fig tree on the banks of the river Amravati, lived a pair of Herons who were husband and wife. In a hole, at the foot of this tree, lived a serpent. He used to slither up the tree and eat the Herons' young ones. Once, when the female Heron was lamenting over the loss of her babies, another Heron living in a tree hereby, advised, "Do as I tell you". "You must bring some bits of fishes from the river and lay them, one by one, in a line from the whole over yonder where the mongoose lives, down to the serpent's hole. The mongoose is greedy for fish. When the Mongoose comes to get the fishes, he will find the Serpent and when he finds the Serpent, he will kill him. "

The advice seemed good, so the Herons flew down to the river and quickly brought many fishes which they laid in a long line all the way from the hole of the Mongoose down to the Serpent's hole. Pretty soon, the Mongoose came to get the fishes and at last he found the Serpent. But while he was killing it, the Mongoose heard the cries of the young's Heron. So, after that he climbed up the tree and eaten up all of them. The neighboring Heron felt miserable and guilty for giving advice unthinkingly. He did not think that the Mongoose will climb the tree and eat the Heron's. He was with good intentions to help the Heron's family and do not want to see them lose their babies anymore. He said to himself, "When one thinks of a plan, one should also think of its consequences." The solution to a problem could be a bigger problem. Be aware! It's happened not only on solving the personal problem but also on solving the community problem. Therefore, the learning of the neighboring Heron is true - When one thinks of a plan, he/she should also think of its consequences.



Moral: Don't listen to the advice of your natural enemy

Source: <http://nriol.com/indianparents/indian-tales/heron-serpent-mongoose-story.asp>

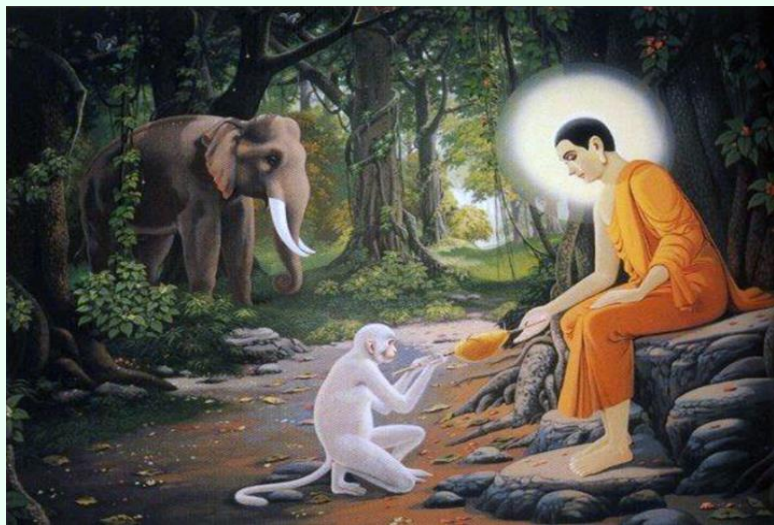
- Livelihoods May 2009

20. Story Of Buddha, Elephant And Monkey

We can reflect on where we can "make things better" by less action -- even temporary withdrawal. We can look also at where in our lives we are currently making well-meaning but inappropriate interventions, like the monkey; or where we are being of significant service, like the elephant. The story of Buddha, Elephant and Monkey beautifully narrates the appropriateness of interventions.

Once the Buddha felt really sad at the bickering going on between the monks at his monastery. In spite of all his teachings, in spite of the fact that his followers were basically good people who wanted sincerely to be on the Path, if there was one lot that wanted this -- the others wanted that. If there was one group that believed strongly in something, there would be others who believed something quite different. If one lot perceived things one way -- why, then, of course others perceived it in quite the opposite way. If some people were satisfied with something -- you can be sure there was an equal number who were not! The people were human. The Buddha was human (something we tend to forget). Growing quite sad with all of this discord, he told them he was leaving the place for a while to allow them to find their own way to sort out their issues, and smiled gently as Ananda, his close disciple, wailed, "But, how?" He left to live in solitude in the forest. The forest was silent, the forest was peaceful; the forest was also cold. The Buddha climbed halfway up a small hill and found a sheltered cave near a small pool that provided a source of water for drinking and bathing, even though the water was icy cold.

As news of the Buddha's presence spread among the forest creatures, the birds and animals began to come by to breathe in his holy presence -- and yes, to worship the Holy One, as only they really knew how. Among the creatures of the forest, a wise old elephant noticed how cold the water in the pool was, and made it his task every evening to roll down a huge rock from the very top of the hill, after it had been heated by the rays of the sun. Pushing and shoving mightily, he got it to finally end up -- SPLASH -- in the little pool near the Buddha's cave, where it warmed the water for the Lord Buddha's bath. Then, each morning, with great effort he pushed and pushed, his mighty forehead against the huge rock, to get it back up to the top of the hill, so it would get heated by the sun again. Day after day, he rolled the huge hot rock downhill into the pool, bowing to announce to the Buddha that the task was done.



Monkey noticed all of this as he jumped around all over the place. Monkey too loved Lord Buddha. He too wanted to show his love and make an offering. So, he went off swinging and leaping, climbed up a tree, snatched a good bit of a large honeycomb, fleeing the angry buzzing bees, and almost fell over Lord Buddha as he made a bumbling-tumbling bow before him, waving the dripping honeycomb in an awkward but joyous offering. Lord Buddha smiled. Then Lord Buddha gently shook his head. "No," he said to Monkey, "I know you mean well, but to squeeze honey from that will kill the bees still inside. We cannot harm them." And he instructed Monkey to leave the comb next to the tree from which he

..

had broken it off, so that those bees could rejoin their hive. We can happily assume that Lord Buddha returned, when Ananda came to tell him that there was more peace and understanding now at the monastery. But we don't know if he returned after many days or many weeks or many months or many years. ... The devoted elephant and monkey and their gifts find a place in the enduring story and icon of the Wednesday Night Buddha ... and all of this finds a place in our own hearts and lives too. We can reflect on where we can "make things better" by less action -- even temporary withdrawal. We can look also at where in our lives we are currently making well-meaning but inappropriate interventions, like the monkey; or where we are being of significant service, like the elephant. And we can joyfully own our Buddha-nature, our higher, nobler selves, every one of us. As the Buddhists teach -- we are all Buddhas; only perhaps densely clouded. May Story color and bless your lives.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Madhu_Purnima

- Livelihoods June 2009

21. Take A Step Up

Each of our troubles is an invitation for us to steps to grow up. We can get out of the deepest wells just by not stopping, never giving up! Shake it off and take a step up.

One day a farmer's donkey fell into a well. The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally, he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up any way; It just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey.

He invited all his neighbors to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well. At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement he quieted down.



Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods July 2009

22. The Frogs In The Pit

Positive outlook and optimism make a positive difference. This holds good much more for those working with the community. In difficult times the community seeks positive spirit from the development worker and the later cannot afford to let them down. Constant motivation through appropriate communication by using encouraging words will really help the community to motivate themselves in all times. The story of the frogs tells about how the communication and the choice of words can impact the thinking and confidence in others.

A group of frogs were traveling through the woods, and two of them fell into a deep pit. When the other frogs saw how deep the pit was, they told the two frogs that they were as good as dead. The two frogs ignored the comments and tried to jump up out of the pit with all their might. The other



frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as dead. Finally, one of the frogs took heed to what the other frogs were saying and gave up. He fell down and died. The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. Once 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.

This story teaches two lessons: There is power of life and death in the tongue. An encouraging word to someone who is down can lift them up and help them make it through the day. A destructive word to someone who is down can be what it takes to kill them. Be careful of what you say. Speak life to those who cross your path. The power of words... it is sometimes hard to understand that an encouraging word can go such a long way. Anyone can speak words that tend to rob another of the spirit to continue in difficult times. Special is the individual who will take the time to encourage another.

Source: <https://www.nlplifetraining.com/metaphors/story-two-frogs.html>

- Livelihoods August 2009

23. An Archer And His Skills

Everyone is better when on solid ground. We are more assertive, surer of ourselves, etc. But when our stability is taken away, we are simply a child learning everything anew. This story of an archer and a Zen master reveals this truth in a beautiful manner.

After winning several archery contests, the young and rather boastful champion challenged a Zen master who was renowned for his skill as an archer. The young man demonstrated remarkable technical proficiency when he hit a distant bull's eye on his first try, and then split that arrow with his second shot. "There," he said to the old man, "see if you can match that!" Undisturbed, the master did not draw his bow, but rather motioned for the young archer to follow him up the mountain. Curious about the old fellow's intentions, the champion followed him high into the mountain until they reached a deep chasm spanned by a rather flimsy and shaky log.



Calmly stepping out onto the middle of the unsteady and certainly perilous bridge, the old master picked a faraway tree as a target, drew his bow, and fired a clean, direct hit. "Now it is your turn," he said as he gracefully stepped back onto the safe ground. Staring with terror into the seemingly bottomless and beckoning abyss, the young man could not force himself to step out onto the log, no less shoot at a target. "You have much skill with your bow," the master said, sensing his challenger's predicament, "but you have little skill with the mind that lets loose the shot."

Source: <https://www.bedtimeshortstories.com/the-brave-little-archer>

- Livelihoods September 2009

24. Agreement

Collective action is an important element of all development activities. However collective action depends upon the agreements between the people who are working together. Many times, there are chances of breaking the agreements by any of the members which can affect the collective action. Hence it is important for all the members of a collective to keep up the agreements to achieve the desired objectives

The four pupils of a meditation school promised one another to observe seven days of silence. On the first day all were silent. Their meditation had begun auspiciously, but when night came and the oil lamps were growing dim one of the pupils could not help exclaiming to a servant: "Fix those lamps." The second pupils were surprised to hear the first one talk. "We are not supposed to say a word," he remarked. "You two are stupid. Why did you talk?" asked the third. "I am the only one who has not talked," concluded the fourth pupil. This is how agreements between members of a cooperative are broken. None of the students had any intention to speak and thus break his agreement with others. It must be remembered that these pupils were still practicing meditation and hence remaining silent is not natural to them. Since it is not natural for them, they break silence without even realizing it at the very first major challenge.

This has a very important lesson for the development actor promoting collective action. Where the collective action is in a domain that is not a part of their tradition, the person promoting cooperation must ensure that even those events that have the slightest tendency to break the mutual promise



must be avoided. This is where the lessons from the collective actions that have failed become important. And the cases documenting successful collective actions need to bring out the efforts made to manage those factors that led to the failure of the collective actions elsewhere. Since reasons for failure of collective action are diverse, exposure to diverse collective action assumes importance in training development actors promoting

collective action. As collective action is in one way or the other an important element of all development action, a larger emphasis needs to be placed on field exposure to the functioning of people's institution. The field placements should also aim at providing practical experience of promoting/ managing a people's institution, of course under an experienced guide. This might require the institutions providing programs related to rural development/social work to offer field work experience much more than can be offered during a summer project. And at least, the summer project must be re-engineered to provide the deep insights into promoting/ managing people's institution.

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods October 2009

25. Managing Time

Many of us complain that we don't have time to do certain things that are necessary for our life. In fact, what happens is most of us spend our time and energy on small and unimportant things first and then complain that we don't have time to do important things. To be successful in life, we need to appreciate this reality and prioritize our works so that we have time for the things that are truly most important.

A professor stood before his class and had some items in front of him. When class began, wordlessly he picked up a large empty jar and proceeded to fill it with rocks right to the top, rocks about 2" diameter. He then asked the students if the jar was full. They agreed that it was. So, the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them in to the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the rocks. The students laughed.

He asked his students again if the jar was full. They agreed that yes, it was. The professor then picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. "Now," said the professor, "I want you to recognize that this is your life. The rocks are the important things - your family, your partner, your health, and your children - anything that is so important to you that if it were lost, you would be nearly destroyed. The pebbles are the other things in life that matter, but on a smaller scale. The pebbles represent things like your job, house, or car. The sand is everything else, the "small stuff." "If you put the sand or the pebbles into the jar first, there is no room for the rocks. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your energy and time on the small stuff, material things, you will never have room for the things that are truly most important.



Source: <https://www.odessa.edu/current-students/documents/pdfs/a-story-of-priorities-and-a-jar.pdf>

- Livelihoods November 2009

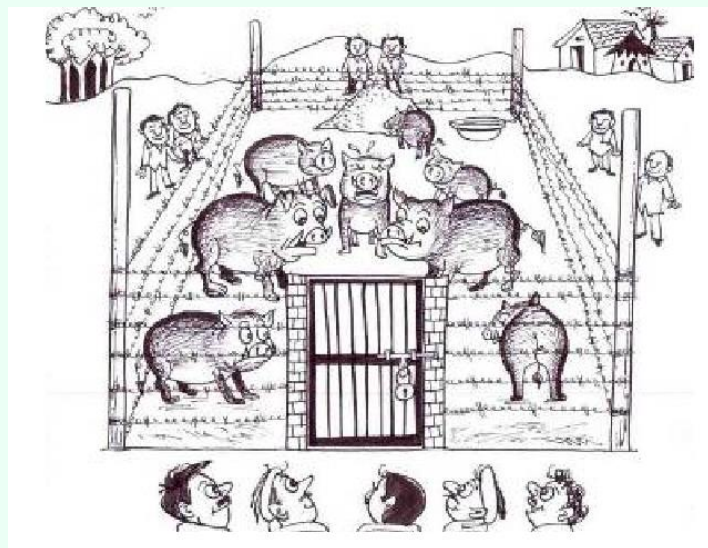
26. 'Trapped' In Comfort

Many of us become too comfortable with our life styles and many times don't realize that we are being trapped in one way or the other. If we don't realize this trap of comfort, we will not try to grow in life. This small story of wild boars is an excellent example of this truth.

There was a village that was attacked by wild boars. Every day, the wild boars would enter the village to rampage the whole village of their food. The villagers tried various means to fight and chase away the wild boars, but without much success. One day the village headman approached a wise man to offer his advice. He told the villagers that they will have to follow all his advice and directions. Out of desperation, the villagers agreed. The wise man told the villagers to gather food from every household and put it in the middle of a big empty field. They followed his advice, and immediately they saw hundreds of wild boars approaching the vicinity where the food was placed. The wild boars were apprehensive initially, but after a while they went for the food. Once the wild boars had a taste of the food, they came back for the free food every day. And every day the villagers would put more food in the field and the wild boars would come to have their free meals. After a while, the wise man asked the villagers to erect four poles at the four corners of the field.

The wild boars were too busy having their food that they did not took notice of what was happening.

After a few weeks, the wild boars developed the habit of having free food. The wise man then asked the villagers to put fencing around the field, with a large gate through which the wild boars can enter to have their food. Finally, once the fencing and the gate were completed the villagers closed the gate and all the wild boars were trapped inside the field. The wild boars were finally caught! Habits are easily developed but are difficult to get rid of. The wild boars were trapped because out of their greed, they developed the habit of having free food, and without



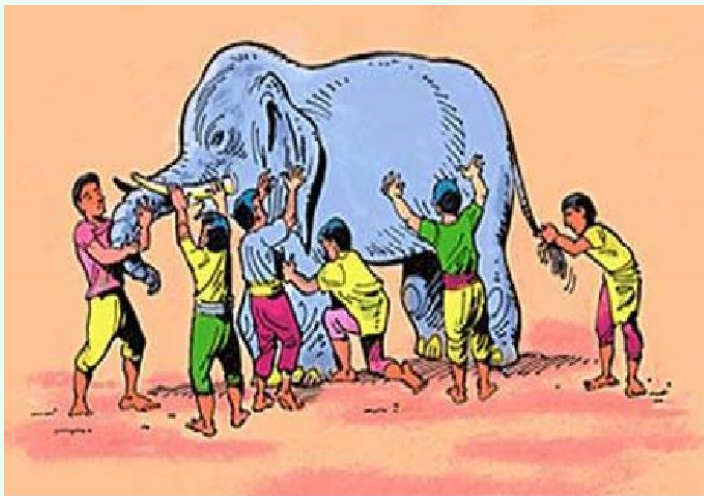
having to work for their food. They became so comfortable, that they did not realize they were being trapped. Many of us are like the wild boars. We become too comfortable with our life style and do not realize we are in one way or another being “trapped”

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods December 2009

27. The Blind Men And The Elephant

There are various versions of the story of the blind men and the elephant. The blind men and the elephant are a legend that appears in different cultures - notably China, Africa and India - and the tale dates back thousands of years. Some versions of the story feature three blind men, others five or six, but the message is always the same. Here's a story of the six blind men and the elephant: Six blind men were discussing exactly what they believed an elephant to be, since each had heard how strange the creature was, yet none had ever seen one before. So, the blind men agreed to find an elephant and discover what the animal was really like. It didn't take the blind men long to find an elephant at a nearby market. The first blind man approached the beast and felt the animal's firm flat side. "It seems to me that the elephant is just like a wall," he said to his friends. The second blind man reached out and touched one of the elephant's tusks. "No, this is round and smooth and sharp - the elephant is like a spear."



Intrigued, the third blind man stepped up to the elephant and touched its trunk. "Well, I can't agree with either of you; I feel a squirming writhing thing - surely the elephant is just like a snake." The fourth blind man was of course by now quite puzzled. So, he reached out, and felt the elephant's leg. "You are all talking complete nonsense," he said, "because clearly the elephant is just like

a tree." Utterly confused, the fifth blind man stepped forward and grabbed one of the elephant's ears. "You must all be mad - an elephant is exactly like a fan." Duly, the sixth man approached, and, holding the beast's tail, disagreed again. "It's nothing like any of your descriptions - the elephant is just like a rope." And all six blind men continued to argue, based on their own particular experiences, as to what they thought an elephant was like. It was an argument that they were never able to resolve. Each of them was concerned only with their own idea. None of them had the full picture, and none could see any of the other's point of view. Each man saw the elephant as something quite different, and while in part each blind man was right, none was wholly correct. There is never just one way to look at something - there are always different perspectives, meanings, and perceptions, depending on who is looking.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blind_men_and_an_elephant

- Livelihoods January 2010

28. Sharpen The Axe

Most of us never update our skills. We think whatever we learnt is enough to lead the life forever. However, this is not true. If we do not update our skills our efficiency will reduce, forbidding our growth. This short story of the woodcutter tells us this fact.

Once upon a time a very strong woodcutter asked for a job with a timber merchant, and he got it. His salary was really good and so were the working conditions. For that reason, the woodcutter was determined to do his best. His boss gave him an axe and showed him the area where he was supposed to fell the trees. The first day, the woodcutter brought fifteen (15) trees.

"Congratulations," the boss said, "Carry on with your work!" Highly motivated by the words of his boss, the woodcutter tried harder the next day, but he only could bring ten (10) trees. The third day he tried even harder, but he was only able to bring seven (7) trees. Day after day he was bringing less and less trees. "I must be losing my strength." The woodcutter thought. He went to the boss and apologized, saying that he could not understand what was going on. "When was the last time you sharpened your axe?" the boss asked. "Sharpen? I had no time to sharpen my axe. I have been very busy trying to cut trees..."



Most of us never update our skills. We think that whatever we have learned is very much enough. But good is not good when better is expected. Updating our skills from time to time is the key to success. So 'keep sharpening the axe'.

Source: <https://screbble.com/blog/2017/03/07/story-of-two-woodcutters/>

- Livelihoods February 2010

29. Making A Difference

Many people want to help others. But there is always a doubt that the number of people that require help are so much and our efforts are not enough to help them all. Its really true. But one should not forget Hellen Keller's words - 'I am only one but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something, I will not refuse to do something I can do. So let each one of us keep making a difference.

Once upon a time there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his journal writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work. One day he was walking along the shore. As he looked down the beach, he saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day. So, he began to walk faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man and the young man wasn't dancing, but instead he was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean. As



he got closer, he called out, "Good morning! What are you doing?" The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish in the ocean." "I guess I should have asked, why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?" "The sun is up, and the tide is going out. And if I don't throw them in they'll die." "But, young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach, and starfish

all along it. You can't possibly make a difference!" The young man listened politely. Then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves and said, "It made a difference for that one." There is something very special in each and every one of us. We have all been gifted with the ability to make a difference. And if we can become aware of that gift, we gain through the strength of our visions the power to shape the future. We must each find our starfish. And if we throw our stars wisely and well, the world will be blessed.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-aVMdJ3Aok>

- Livelihoods March 2010

30. Two Choices

At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves children with learning disabilities, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question: 'When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does is done with perfection. Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do. Where is the natural order of things in my son?' The audience was stilled by the query.

The father continued. 'I believe that when a child like Shay, who was mentally and physically disabled comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes in the way other people treat that child.' Then he told the following story: Shay and I had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, 'Do you think they'll let me play?' I knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but as a father I also understood that if my son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps. I approached one of the boys on the field and asked (not expecting much) if Shay could play. The boy looked around for guidance and said, 'We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning.' Shay struggled over to the team's bench and, with a broad smile, put on a team shirt. I watched with a small tear in my eye and warmth in my heart.

The boys saw my joy at my son being accepted. In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as I waved to him from the stands. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again. Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat. At this juncture, do they let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game? Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible because Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect with the ball. However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher, recognizing that the other team was putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least make contact! The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay.

As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher. The game would now be over. The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game. Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the first baseman's head, out of reach of all team mates. Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, 'Shay, run to first! Run to first!' Never in his life had Shay ever run that far, but he made it to first base. He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled. Everyone yelled, 'Run to second, run to second!' Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to the base. By the time Shay rounded towards second base, the right fielder had the ball. The smallest guy on their team who now had his first chance to be the hero for his team. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions so he, too, intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head. Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home.

..

All were screaming, 'Shay, Shay, Shay, all the Way Shay' Shay reached third base because the opposing shortstop ran to help him by turning him in the direction of third base, and shouted, 'Run to third! Shay, run to third!' As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams, and the spectators, were on their feet screaming, 'Shay, run home! Run home!' Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the grand slam and won the game for his team! 'That day', said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, 'the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world'. Shay didn't make it to another summer. He died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making me so happy and coming home and seeing his Mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day! For the most part, today's Development World is suffering with unhealthy competition, soaring egos and other ills. If only, we can all come together and replace these with 'Love and Humanity'!



Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods April 2010

31. The Echo

"A son and his father were walking on the mountains. Suddenly, his son falls, hurts himself and screams: "AAAhhhhhhhhhh! !!" To his surprise, he hears the voice repeating, somewhere in the mountain: "AAAhhhhhhhhhh! !!" Curious, he yells: "Who are you?" He receives the answer: "Who are you?" And then he screams to the mountain: "I admire you!" The voice answers: "I admire you!"



Angered at the response, he screams: "Coward!" He receives the answer: "Coward!" He looks to his father and asks: "What's going on?" The father smiles and says: "My son, pay attention." Again, the man screams: "You are a champion!" The voice answers: "You are a champion!" The boy is surprised, but does not understand. Then the father explains: "People call this ECHO, but really this is LIFE. It gives you back everything you say or do. Our life is simply a reflection of our actions. If you want more love in the world, create more love in your heart. If you want more competence in your team, improve your competence. This relationship applies to everything, in all aspects of life; Life will give you back everything you have given to it.

" YOUR LIFE IS NOT A COINCIDENCE. IT'S A REFLECTION OF YOU!"

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwjxymC-PEM>

-Livelihoods May 2010

32. God in The Poor

The needs of the poor are basic and fundamental in nature like food to eat; a shelter to live etc. The poor strive hard to earn their living and satisfy their needs. The poor can appreciate and can relate to others needs which are basic and fundamental because the poor themselves, are deprived of their basic needs many a time. Here is a true event which occurred when Swami Vivekananda was touring Khetri town in Rajasthan to give sermons about the importance of Vedas and Hindu religion. The people of khetri (Rajasthan) came streaming to see the young Sanyasi. They came in the morning and noon. They flocked in the evening and stayed till dawn. They listened to what the young Sanyasi, Swami Vivekananda, had to say. This went on for three days and three nights. None thought of the needs of Swamiji. He did not have any food or drink for three days. Yet the Swamiji did not show the slightest irritation.

At last, when the Swamiji was alone, a cobbler came and fell prostrate before him. Swamiji lifted him. The cobbler said, "Swami, you have had no food for three days you have not even taken a glass of water during this period. Strange that none of your devotees thought of your needs". Then Swamiji smiled and asked the cobbler "can you give me something to eat?" The cobbler was taken aback. He was a cobbler, he was an 'untouchable'. How could he feed the Swamiji? Swami Vivekananda realized what was troubling the poor man. He said again, "can't you give me something to eat?" The cobbler replied, "I will get you flour. I will get you lentil. Please cook them yourself. I can't provide you cooked food. I am a cobbler. "But, my friend, I can't cook food. I am bound by a vow. I am observing a monastic vow. I shall not touch fire so long as I am observing the vow," Swami Vivekananda told the cobbler. The cobbler did not know what to do. He was at his wit's end. He knew that everyone in Khetri would be angry with him if he fed the Swamiji. The maharaja of khetri might put him in jail if he learnt of his act. The cobbler pleaded with Swamiji. He explained the danger he faced. "I know my friend. But you need not be afraid. I shall tell no one. And even if the maharaja comes to know of this, I will tell him that I asked you for food. Right?" swamiji said in a soft tone. Then he added, get me chapattis.

I am very hungry. Hurry my friend. I am just waiting for homemade chapattis," Swamiji said in all earnestness. The cobbler hurried to his hut. Swami Vivekananda was deeply touched by the devotion of the poor cobbler. None in the town had thought of his needs. And he had told none of his needs. For he had abiding faith that god would bring him someone to feed him. He saw god in the cobbler. He saw god in the Daridranaraya that the cobbler was. He wanted to share the food prepared by the cobbler. Thus, he assured himself that he had no prejudices of caste or creed. He loved all humans. Swami Vivekananda was thinking along these lines when the cobbler appeared. He came forward, rather hesitantly. He still seemed to have reservations.

He was still wondering whether he was doing the right thing by bringing the chapattis to the sanyasi. "Ah, you have come. I hope you have brought the chapattis," swami Vivekananda seemed eager to get hold of the chapattis. "Here they are Swamiji, a poor man's offerings. A cobbler's offering. But...but..." the man could not speak any more, as emotions gripped him. "Ah...these chapattis...they are delicious..." Swami Vivekananda took a few morsels and told the cobbler, thank you friend. Thank you." Tears coated his eyes.

The cobbler stood and watched while Swami Vivekananda ate the chapattis. Then Swami Vivekananda held out his hand, touched the cobbler's head, and said in a voice, filled with emotions. "Thousands

of such large-hearted men like you live in lowly huts. And we despise them as low castes, as untouchables.”



The cobbler felt prostrate before the Swamiji. The cobbler went back, happy. He had played host to such a great man. Swami Vivekananda watched him till he was out of sight. Then he felt an inner peace descending on him. He had gained a glimpse of the hospitality of the poor. They were humane. There was nothing lowly about them. Swamiji saw God in the poor and the lowly. And he sought redemption by serving the poor and the lowly. The poor may not be ‘intellectuals’ in philosophy, religion, so called purity-impurity etc.,

but they are sensitive to the most fundamental and non-negotiable needs of their fellow beings. They have lessons to teach and others have lessons to learn.

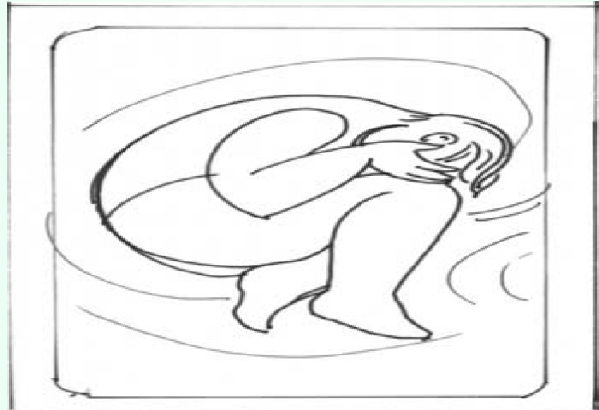
Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daridra_Narayana

-Livelihoods June 2010

33. No Time For Worry

A day of worry is more exhausting than a day of work is an adage which is even relevant today as most of us worry about one thing or the other and try not come out of it. Keeping oneself busy is always the best way to keep out of a worry. A busy mind does not have time to think of any other things including our worries. This story of a father reminds us this simple yet important fact that can bring a lot of difference to our life.

When people are not busy, their minds tend to become a near-vacuum. Every student of physics knows that ‘nature abhors a vacuum’. The nearest thing to a vacuum that one will probably see is the inside of an incandescent electric light bulb. Break the bulb-and nature forces air in to fill the theoretically empty space. Nature also rushes in to fill the vacant mind with emotions of worry, fear, hate, jealousy, and envy as they are driven by the primeval vigor and the dynamic energy of nature. Such emotions are so violent that they tend to drive out of people’s minds all peaceful, happy thoughts and emotions. Here is a story of a tragedy driven father (who was also a teacher) who told his class how he conquered worry by keeping himself busy. The first time he had lost his five-year-old daughter he abhorred. He and his wife thought they couldn’t endure that first loss; but as he said, ‘ten months later God gave us another little girl-and she died in five days’. This double tragedy was almost too much to bear.



‘I couldn’t take it,’ this father told the class. ‘I couldn’t sleep, I couldn’t eat. I couldn’t rest or relax. My nerves were utterly shaken and my confidence gone.’ At last he went to doctors; one recommended sleeping pills and another recommended a trip. He tried both, but neither remedy helped. He said, ‘My body felt as if it was encased in a vice, and the jaws of the vice were being drawn tighter and tighter.’ ‘But thank God. I had one child left-a four-year-old son. He gave me the solution to my problem. One afternoon as I sat around feeling sorry for myself, he asked: “Daddy can you build a boat, a boat for me?” I was in no mood to build a boat; in fact, I was in no mood to do anything. But my son is a persistent little fellow! I had to give in. Building that toy boat took about three hours. By the time it was finished, I realized that those three hours spent building that boat were the first hours of mental relaxation and peace in months!

That discovery jarred me out of my lethargy and caused me to do a bit of thinking- the first real thinking I had done in months. I realized that it is difficult to worry while you are busy doing something that requires planning and thinking. In my case, building the boat had knocked worry out of ring. So, I resolved to keep busy. Today, one can hardly see a person without a worry. People worry about one thing or the other and waste their valuable time in despair. Further, worry breeds misery. The secret of being miserable is to have the leisure to bother about whether one is happy or not. So, don’t bother to think about it! Resolve to keep busy and very soon this whole positive upsurge of life in one’s body will drive worry from the mind. Get busy. Keep busy. It is the cheapest kind of medicine there is on this Earth-and one of the best.

Source: <https://store.joycemeyer.org/p-1522-no-time-for-worry-download.aspx>

-Livelihoods July 2010

34. Determination And Persistence

Often when we face obstacles in our day-to-day life, our hurdles seem very small in comparison to what many others have to face. The Brooklyn Bridge shows us that dreams that seem impossible can be realized with determination and persistence, no matter what the odds are.

This is a real-life story of engineer John Roebling building the Brooklyn Bridge in New York, USA back in 1870. The bridge was completed in 1883, after 13 years. In 1883, a creative engineer named John Roebling was inspired by an idea to build a spectacular bridge connecting New York with the Long Island. However, bridge building experts throughout the world thought that this was an impossible feat and told Roebling to forget the idea. It just could not be done. It was not practical. It had never been done before. Roebling could not ignore the vision he had in his mind of this bridge. He thought about it all the time and he knew deep in his heart that it could be done. He just had to share the dream with someone else.

After much discussion and persuasion, he managed to convince his son Washington, an up and coming engineer, that the bridge in fact could be built. Working together for the first time, the father and son developed concepts of how it could be accomplished and how the obstacles could be overcome. With great excitement and inspiration, and the headiness of a wild challenge before them, they hired their crew and began to build their dream bridge. The project started well, but when it was only a few months underway a tragic accident on the site took the life of John Roebling. Washington was also injured and left with a certain amount of brain damage, which resulted in him not being able to talk or walk. "We told them so." "Crazy men and their crazy dreams." "It's foolish to chase wild visions." Everyone had a negative comment to make and felt that the project should be scrapped since the Roeblings were the only ones who knew how the bridge could be built. In spite of his handicap Washington was never discouraged and still had a burning desire to complete the bridge and his mind was still as sharp as ever.



He tried to inspire and pass on his enthusiasm to some of his friends, but they were too daunted by the task. As he lay on his bed in his hospital room, with the sunlight streaming through the windows, a gentle breeze blew the flimsy white curtains apart and he was able to see the sky and the tops of the trees outside for just a moment. It seemed that there was a

message for him not to give up. Suddenly an idea hit him. All he could do was move one finger and he decided to make the best use of it. By moving this, he slowly developed a code of communication with his wife. He touched his wife's arm with that finger, indicating to her that he wanted her to call the engineers again. Then he used the same method of tapping her arm to tell the engineers what to do.

It seemed foolish but the project was under way again. For 13 years Washington tapped out his instructions with his finger on his wife's arm, until the bridge was finally completed. Today the spectacular Brooklyn Bridge stands in all its glory as a tribute to the triumph of one man's indomitable spirit and his determination not to be defeated by circumstances. It is also a tribute to the engineers and their team work, and to their faith in a man who was considered mad by half the world. It stands too as a tangible monument to the love and devotion of his wife who for 13 long years patiently decoded the messages of her husband and told the engineers what to do. Perhaps this is one of the best examples of a never-say-die attitude that helped overcome a terrible physical handicap and helped achieve an impossible goal.

Source: <https://academictips.org/blogs/determination-and-persistence/>

-Livelihoods August 2010

35. The Story Of Two Yogis

A person who does anything that he does to utmost perfection, without being involved in its materialistic aspects and benefits is called a Yogi. However, since it is very difficult for a person to attain such a state, principled ways like vaanaprastham, sanyaasam have been suggested, to train a person to be detached from the materialistic world. The following story shows the importance in maintaining the central idea of vairaagyam.

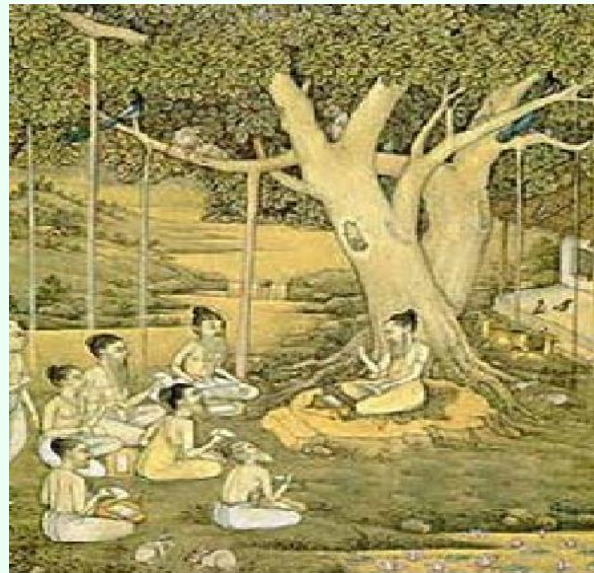
Once upon a time, there was a sanyaasi. He used to visit all the kingdoms and used to preach the people "for attaining moksham one needs to give away everything he owns. He should not have any vyamoham or desire on anything. He should not think of the next minute. He should not store anything for future. He should not tell who he is to anyone and should do dhyaanam with peace and no desire. Then he can achieve moksham".

The sermons of the sanyaasi were all very good, however, were very difficult for people to understand. One day Magadha raaja was inspired by the teachings of the sanyaasi. He gave away his kingdom and went to the forest for daiva -dhyaanam. In the same manner, Kaambhoja raaja was also inspired and went to the forest for daivadhyaanam. He also had given away everything he had.

Both the kings met each other in the forests, but they did not tell to each other that they were kings. They both used to go for bhiksha for their food. According to the rules, they used to eat the food that day itself without storing it for future. One day, they got only ganji (rice starch or rice soup). Kambhoja raaja commented to Magadha raaja that it would be better if there was some salt for the taste. Then the Magadha raaja told that he had some. The Kambhoja raaja questioned him "where did u get the salt from?".

The Magadha raaja replied that he had picked small amount of it from the vindu bhojanam to which he was called. He had taken some with him in case he needed in the journey. Then the Kaambhoja raaja told Magadha raaja that he has given his whole empire but was unable to keep up the rule that they should not store anything for future. The Magadha raaja replied that Kambhoja raaja who also left his kingdom with ease was not able to control his taste. Both were shocked realizing that they broke the rules.

They then realized the true meaning in the teachings of the sanyaasi and returned to their duties as kings and ruled with love, peace and harmony. But because of the learning from the forest, they were never involved in the bhogas of a king and were totally detached. They got the unattainable moksham in the end.



Morals in the story:

➤ **There is no need to go to the forest and to do the daiva-dhyaanam for moksham. One can achieve it while doing all his duties, but being a viraagi. Even Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavadgita:**

..

- **"He who does his duty without expecting the fruit of action is sanyasi and yogi both, and not the one who has simply renounced the fire or given up all activity."**
- **The easiest way is to do nishkaama karma and surrender everything to God. Then one will not be attracted to the benefits of karma, whether good or bad.**

Source: <https://www.speakingtree.in/blog/the-story-of-two-yogis-neeti-katha>

- Livelihoods September 2010

36. The Emperor's Seed

If you plant honesty, you will reap trust.

If you plant humility, you will reap greatness.

If you plant perseverance, you will reap victory.

If you plant consideration, you will reap harmony.

If you plant hard work, you will reap success.

If you plant forgiveness, you will reap reconciliation.

If you plant openness, you will reap intimacy.

If you plant patience, you will reap improvements.

If you plant faith, you will reap miracles.

This short story of Ling and an Emperor gives this simple yet profound message.

An emperor in the Far East was growing old and knew it was time to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or his children, he decided something different. He called young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, "It is time for me to step down and choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you."

The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued. "I am going to give each one of you a seed today, one very special seed. I want you to plant the seed, water it and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring, and the one I choose will be the next emperor!"

One boy named Ling was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the story. She helped him get a pot and planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully.



Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about 3 weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. 3 weeks, 4 weeks, 5 weeks went by. Still nothing. By now, others were talking about their plants but Ling didn't have a plant, and he felt like a failure. 6 months went by; still nothing in Ling's

pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing.

Ling didn't say anything to his friends. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow. A year finally went by and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot but his Mother said he must be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his Mother was right.

He took his empty pot to the palace. When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other youths. They were beautiful, in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the other kinds laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, "Hey nice try."

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. "My, what great plants, trees and flowers you have grown," said the emperor. "Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor!" All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. "The emperor knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!"

When Ling got to the front, the Emperor asked his name. "My name is Ling," he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down.

He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, "Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!" Ling couldn't believe it. Ling couldn't even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor?

Then the emperor said, "One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds, which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you.

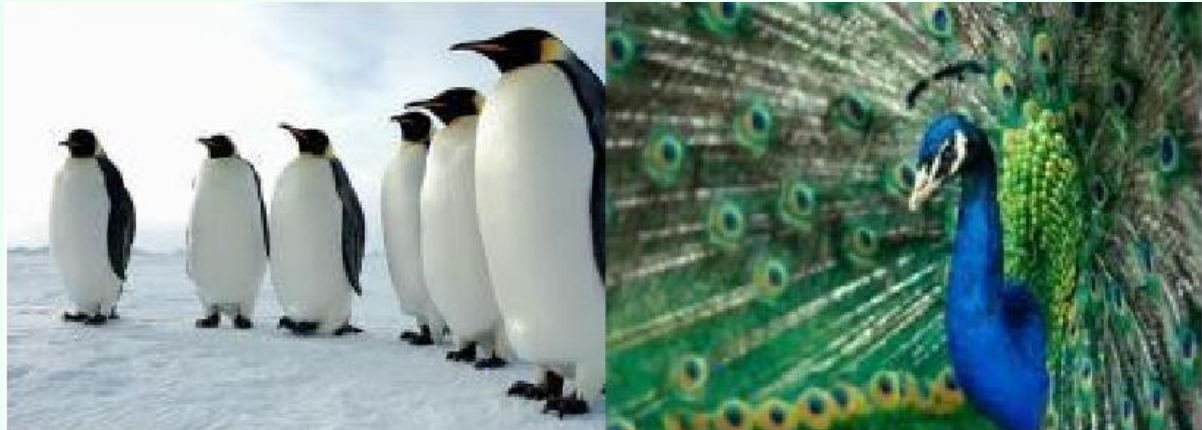
Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!"

Source: <https://betterlifecoachingblog.com/2010/05/04/the-emperors-seed-a-story-about-integrity/>

- Livelihoods October 2010

37. Birds of Different Feathers

There once was a time, in the not so distant past, when penguins ruled many lands in the sea of organizations. These penguins were not always wise, they were not always popular, but they were always in charge. The top management wore the same outlook in their distinctive black and white suits. They believed that uniformity is the way to do things; uniformity is unity. On the other hand, worker birds wore colors and outfits that reflected their work and lifestyles. Birds who aspired to move up the corporate ladder were encouraged to adopt the penguins' code of conduct and wear the penguin's suits.



They learn the penguin stride and follow the example of their leaders. One day, Perry the peacock joined the land of penguins. He was loud, colorful and full of new ideas. Although he was different, the penguins were impressed by his new ideas. They felt that he has real penguin potential. Initially,



everyone was happy. The penguins were pleased with their new recruit, Perry was creative and he brought in good results. However, as time went by, the penguins began to murmur against Perry. He was too loud, too colorful and had too many new ideas that intruded the penguins comfort zone. Perry was also unhappy. The penguins tried to turn him into a penguin. He was told to “try to be like the rest of us, wear a penguin suit”. Both parties were unhappy.

We see this story unfolds in many organizations today. Creativity and innovation are seemed to be “a breath of fresh air” in many organizations. Many “Perrys” are recruited for their creativity. Yet, along the way their creativity is stifled by the need to confirm to the norm. There will always be penguins and peacocks in any organizations. Other than penguins and peacocks, there are also pigeons who are peacemakers in the office, sparrows who try to be neutral so as to keep a low profile or ostriches who choose to bury their heads in the sand.

Peacocks bring in varieties and new ideas, but the stability provided by the penguins must not be ignored. Penguins, being the back bone of the organization, need to recognize that diversity can exist in an organization if there is acceptance and trust. When we learn to appreciate one another's differences, we become more willing to listen, more open to new ideas and more eager to grow.

Source: <http://k16space.blogspot.com/2018/01/birds-of-different-feathers-by-trithi.html>

- Livelihoods November 2010

38. We Are All at Risk

One day, a little mouse living on a farm, spied the farmer and his wife opening a package. He was aghast to discover that the package contained, not food, but a mouse trap.

The mouse ran to the farmyard warning everyone.

“There is a mouse trap in the house; there is a mouse trap in the house!”

The chicken raised his head and exclaimed, “Mr. Mouse, I can tell you this trap is a grave concern to you, but it has no consequence to me and I cannot be bothered with it.”

The mouse turned to the pig. “I am sorry Mr. Mouse, but the trap is no concern of mine either.”



The mouse then turned to the bull...“Sounds like you have a problem Mr. Mouse, but not one that concerns me.”

The mouse returned to the house, dejected that no one would help him or was concerned about his dilemma. He knew he had to face the trap on his own.

That night the sound of a trap catching its prey was heard throughout the house. The farmer’s wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness she could not see that it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit the farmer’s wife.

The wife caught a bad fever and the farmer knew the best way to treat a fever was with chicken soup. He took his hatchet to the farmyard to get the soup’s main ingredient.

The wife got sicker, and friends visited her round the clock. The farmer had to feed them, so he butchered the pig. The farmer’s wife got worse and died. So many friends and family came to her funeral that the farmer had to slaughter the bull to feed them all.

So, the next time we hear that one of our team-mates is facing a problem and think it does not concern or affect us, let us remember this:

When anyone of our team members is in trouble, **“WE ARE ALL AT RISK!”**

Source:<https://marktranski.wordpress.com/2015/12/17/the-story-of-a-mouse-who-live-with-a-cow-pig-and-chicken-in-a-farm/>

- Livelihoods December 2010

39. Only One Move

We sometimes allow our weaknesses to be our downfall rather than using them to our advantage. We tell ourselves we cannot do something because we do not feel it is our strength. But, if we didn't dwell on our weaknesses, we may find that we could succeed. We tend to give up rather than persevere. We all need to be reminded that sometimes what we perceive as our weakness could actually turn out to be our strength. This inspirational short story offers words of wisdom about our strengths and weaknesses.

This is a story of one 10-year-old boy who decided to study judo despite the fact that he had lost his left arm in a devastating car accident. The boy began lessons with an old Japanese judo master. The boy was doing well, so he couldn't understand why, after three months of training, the master had taught him only one move. "Sensei," the boy finally said, "Shouldn't I be learning more moves?"

"This is the only move you know, but this is the only move you'll ever need to know," the Sensei replied. Not quite understanding, but believing in his teacher, the boy kept training.

Several months later, the Sensei took the boy to his first tournament. Surprising himself, the boy easily won his first two matches. The third match proved to be more difficult, but after some time, his opponent became impatient and charged; the boy deftly used his one move to win the match. Still amazed by his success, the boy was now in the finals.



This time, his opponent was bigger, stronger, and more experienced. For a while, the boy appeared to be overmatched. Concerned that the boy might get hurt, the referee called a time-out. He was about to stop the match when the Sensei intervened. "No," the Sensei insisted, "Let him continue."

Soon after the match resumed, his opponent made a critical mistake: he dropped his guard.

Instantly, the boy used his move to pin him. The boy had won the match and the tournament. He was the champion.

On the way home, the boy and Sensei reviewed every move in each and every match. Then the boy summoned the courage to ask what was really on his mind. "Sensei, how did I win the tournament with only one move?" "You won for two reasons," the Sensei answered. "First, you've almost mastered one of the most difficult throws in all of judo. And second, the only known defense for that move is for your opponent to grab your left arm." The boy's greatest weakness had become his greatest strength.

All of us do have weaknesses... some physical and many psychological and emotional weaknesses...It is entirely in our hands to turn them into strengths.

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/boys-weakness/>

- Livelihoods January 2011

40. Put Down Stress

A professor began his class by holding up a glass with some water in it. He held it up for all to see & asked the students.

“How much do you think this glass weighs?”

‘50gms!’ ‘100gms!’ ‘125gms’ ...the students answered.

“I really don’t know unless I weigh it,” said the professor, “but, my question is: What would happen if I held it up like this for a few minutes?” ‘Nothing’... the students said.

‘Ok what would happen if I held it up like this for an hour?’ the professor asked. ‘Your arm would begin to ache’ said one of the students.

“You’re right, now what would happen if I held it for a day?” “Your arm could go numb; you might have severe muscle stress & paralysis & have to go to hospital for sure!” ventured another student & all the students laughed.

“Very good. But during all this, did the weight of the glass change?” asked the professor.

‘No’ ... was the answer.



“Then what caused the arm ache & the muscle stress?” The students were puzzled.

“What should I do now to come out of pain?” asked professor again. “Put the glass down!” said one of the students... “Exactly!” said the professor.

Life’s problems are something like this. Hold it for a few minutes in your head & they seem OK. Think of them for a long time & they begin to ache. Hold it even longer & they begin to paralyze you. You will not be able to do

anything.

It’s important to think of the challenges or problems in your life or work, But **EVEN MORE IMPORTANT** is to ‘**PUT THEM DOWN**’ at the end of every day before You go to sleep. That way, you are not stressed, you wake up every day fresh & strong & can handle any issue, any challenge that comes your way!

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idV2vTytp9k>

- Livelihoods February 2011

41. Excellence in Attitude

A gentleman once visited a temple under construction where he saw a sculptor making an idol of God. Suddenly he noticed a similar idol lying nearby. Surprised, he asked the sculptor, "Do you need two statues of the same idol?"

"No," said the sculptor without looking up, "We need only one, but the first one got damaged at the last stage."

The gentleman examined the idol and found no apparent damage... "Where is the damage?" he asked. "There is a scratch on the nose of the idol." said the sculptor, still busy with his work. "Where are you going to install the idol?"

The sculptor replied that it would be installed on a pillar twenty feet high.



"If the idol is that far, who is going to know that there is a scratch on the nose?" the gentleman asked. The sculptor stopped his work, looked up at the gentleman, smiled and said, "I know it and God knows it!"

Moral - The desire to excel should be exclusive of the fact whether someone appreciates it or not. Excellence is a drive from inside, not outside. Excel at a task today - not necessarily for someone else to notice but for your own satisfaction.

Source: <https://academictips.org/blogs/the-perfectionist-sculptor/>

- Livelihoods March 2011

42. Nail in Fence

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily Gradually dwindled down.

He discovered that it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence. Finally, the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail each day that he was able to hold his temper.

The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The



father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence & said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will ever be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one."

It won't matter how many times you say, "I'm sorry", the wound is still there.

"A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one." Friends are very rare jewels, indeed. They make you smile and

encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear; they share words of praise and they always want to open their hearts to us."

Source: <https://teachnet.com/communicate/inspiration/story-the-fence/>

- Livelihoods April 2011

43. The Moon Lake

Once A large herd of elephants lived in a jungle. Their king was a huge, majestic tusker. He looked after them with love and care. A severe drought hit the area. As there was no rain for a few years, all the rivers and tanks had dried up. Birds and animals died of thirst. The wild elephants suffered for want of water. Their king knew that if they did not get water soon, many of them would die of thirst. He had to find water as quickly as possible.

He asked the elephants to go in different directions to look for water. One of them found a large lake full of water in another jungle far away. The king was happy. He ordered all the elephants to make their way to the lake. It was a beautiful lake. Close to it was a colony of rabbits. The elephants had to pass through this colony. Thousands of rabbits were trampled to death and thousands more were injured. The rabbits were in a panic. Their king called a meeting.

"A herd of wild elephants is passing through our colony," he said. "They have already killed or injured thousands of us. We have to take urgent steps to prevent more deaths. I want all of you to think of a way to save our race." The rabbits thought and thought. How could they stop the elephants? One little rabbit stood up. "Your Majesty," he said, "if you will send me as your messenger to the king of the elephants, I may be able to find a solution." "By all means, go as my messenger and see what you can do." The little rabbit hurried out.

He saw a group of elephants returning from the lake. Right in the middle was the king. To get near him was impossible. "I will be crushed to death," thought the rabbit. So he climbed up a huge rock. "O, king of the elephants," he shouted, "hear me, please." The king heard his voice and turned towards him. "Well, who are you?" he asked. "I am a messenger," replied the rabbit. "A messenger? From whom?" "I am a messenger from the mighty Moon." "What is your business? Is there a message for me from the Moon?" "Yes, yes, your Majesty. But you must not be angry with me. Please remember that a messenger is never punished for what he has to say. He is only doing his duty." "Very well. Say what you have been sent to say. I shall not harm you." "Sir," said the little rabbit, "the Moon has this to say" " You, the king of the elephants, have brought your herd to my holy lake and soiled its waters.



You have killed thousands of rabbits on your way to the lake. You know that rabbits are under my special protection. Everyone knows that the king of the rabbits lives with me. I ask you not to kill any more rabbits. Otherwise something terrible will happen to you and your herd." The king of the elephants was shocked. He looked at the little rabbit. "You are right," he said. "We may have killed many rabbits on our way to the lake. I shall see that you do not suffer anymore. I shall request the Moon to forgive me for my sins. Please tell me what I should do." "Come with me alone," replied the rabbit. "Come, I shall take you to the Moon." The little rabbit took the huge elephant to the lake. There they saw the Moon

reflected in the still waters. "There, your Majesty, meet the Moon," said the little rabbit. "Let me worship the divine Moon," said the elephant, and dipped his trunk into the water.

At once the water was disturbed. The Moon seemed to move to and fro. The rabbit said, "Now the Moon is angrier than ever." "Why?" asked the king. "What have I done?" "You have touched the holy waters of the lake," replied the rabbit. The elephant bowed his head. "Please ask the Moon to forgive me. Never again will we touch the holy waters of this lake. Never again will we harm the rabbits whom the Moon loves so much." And the king and his herd went away. Soon there was rain and the elephants lived happily. It did not occur to them ever that a little rabbit had fooled them.

Moral: Wit can win over might.

Source: <https://www.nriol.com/indianparents/indian-tales/moon-lake-story.asp>

- Livelihoods May 2011

44. Friendship Forever

Once upon a time there lived two great friends in a hamlet near Jaipur. Jay and Vijay had been friends since their childhood. Now they were studying in a college, which was at far distance from their place. In the way they had to cross a river, pass hills and sandy area too. They used to go to college together. Their friendship was famous in college.

One rainy day the two friends set out for college as usual. They were chatting while walking. Perhaps



they were discussing some point of atomic theory which was taught on previous day. The two had different opinions. There began heated arguments. This was followed by abusive language by both sides. Things got so bad that in a fit of anger Jay slapped Vijay. Shell shocked Vijay stared at his friend and wrote on sand that “today my best friend slapped me.” Both resumed their walk but now they were silent. Meanwhile they reached

the river which was overflowing today. Vijay was not a good swimmer. He stepped into the river but began to drown and flow with force of water in the direction of the flood. Jay saw this and without thinking for a second jumped into the river. With difficulty he could drag Vijay out of the river. He helped Vijay restore his normal breath. When Vijay became normal, he wrote on a hill that “today my best friend saved my life.”

Jay who was observing all this could not help asking “why did you write it on sand when I slapped you and why are you writing on the hill when I’ve saved your life?” Vijay replied that “we should soon forget wrong done by our friends and dear ones as writing on sand gets erased in no time, but if they do something good for us, we should always remember their kindness just as writing on stones is forever.” Saying this Vijay hugged his friends and two went to college as if nothing had happened.

Source: https://www.kidsgen.com/events/friendshipday/stories/friendship_forever.html

- Livelihoods June 2011

45. Gopal And His Bat

There was a boy named Gopal who was extremely lazy. Once, he badly wanted a cricket bat but had no money to buy one. So, like every kid, he went to his father and asked for the money but was refused saying that he will have to earn the money and that nothing comes for free in the world.

Lazy as he was, Gopal did not like the idea of putting in effort to earn the money. Therefore, he went to the sports shop with whose owner he was acquainted with. Gopal then said he wanted a cricket bat but he could only pay at a later date. The shopkeeper who was short on staff offered his customer two options: that Gopal could take the bat and repay later with interest or pay by lending a hand to running the shop. Again, Gopal's laziness got the better of him and he opted for the first option.

Gopal reveled in his new possession and forgot all about his deal with shopkeeper for a few days. He



even bragged to his few friends how he could get a new bat without paying even a single penny. However, his short stint of fame came to an end one day when walking down the street, he met the angry shopkeeper who threatened him that the interest rate will be increased. Now, Gopal is faced with the pain of paying almost double of what the bat really cost.

This shook Gopal and he went to his father again. His father agreed to give money with the same condition that that he will have to earn the money. As desperate as he was, Gopal was equally arrogant and turned down the offer and instead approached his friend Krishna to borrow a part of the money. His friend said he could borrow the money but should repay the money with interest on time.

Gopal went to the shop the next day and paid the shopkeeper the first instalment and this unexpected payment raised the shopkeeper's hope that he will get the money. However, sensing the satisfaction of the shopkeeper, Gopal again relaxed for a few days oblivious of the fact that his debt was rising by the day. Few days later on a warm evening, the angry shopkeeper and Krishna came to Gopal's house and demanded that they be paid back immediately. Gopal's father who was present there gave a puzzled look to Gopal who had to finally recite the series of the events and debts that led to this embarrassing day.

Gopal's father was highly disappointed but apologetically told the unexpected visitors he would ensure that they would get their money back soon. Once the visitors left, Gopal was made to sit and listen to his father and how he let him down and that still he would still have to earn the money. Left with no choice, finally it was decided that Gopal will work at the sports shop and the owner too waived off the interest amount as a gesture of goodwill. Back home, he would also walk the family dog and earn money so he could repay his friends.

Moral: Easy routes will not lead to easy solution. One should be ready to pay the price of one's own bargain

Source: <https://www.worldclasslearning.com/stories-for-kids/inspiring-story-peace-of-mind.html>

- Livelihoods July 2011

46. Strong Desire Makes

I have a friend named Monty Roberts who owns a horse ranch in San Isidro. He has let me use his house to put on fundraising events to raise money for youth at risk programs. The last time I was there he introduced me by saying, "I want to tell you why I let Jack use my horse. It all goes back to a story about a young man who was the son of an itinerant horse trainer who would go from stable to stable, race track to race track, farm to farm and ranch to ranch, training horses. As a result, the boy's high school career was continually interrupted. When he was a senior, he was asked to write a paper about what he wanted to be and do when he grew up.

"That night he wrote a seven-page paper describing his goal of someday owning a horse ranch. He wrote about his dream in great detail and he even drew a diagram of a 200-acre ranch, showing the



location of all the buildings, the stables and the track. Then he drew a detailed floor plan for a 4,000-square-foot house that would sit on a 200-acre dream ranch. "He put a great deal of his heart into the project and the next day he handed it in to his teacher. Two days later he received his paper back. On the front page was

a large red F with a note that read, 'see me after class.' "The boy with the dream went to see the teacher after class and asked, 'why did I receive an F?'

"The teacher said, 'This is an unrealistic dream for a young boy like you. You have no money. You come from an itinerant family. You have no resources. Owning a horse ranch requires a lot of money. You have to buy the land. You have to pay for the original breeding stock and later you'll have to pay large stud fees. There's no way you could ever do it.' Then the teacher added, 'If you will rewrite this paper with a more realistic goal, I will reconsider your grade.' "The boy went home and thought about it long and hard. He asked his father what he should do. His father said, 'Look, son, you have to make up your own mind on this. However, I think it is a very important decision for you.' "Finally, after sitting with it for a week, the boy turned in the same paper, making no changes at all.

He stated, "You can keep the F and I'll keep my dream." Monty then turned to the assembled group and said, "I tell you this story because you are sitting in my 4,000-square-foot house in the middle of my 200-acre horse ranch. I still have that school paper framed over the fireplace." He added, "The best part of the story is that two summers ago that same schoolteacher brought 30 kids to camp out on my ranch for a week." When the teacher was leaving, he said, "Look, Monty, I can tell you this now. When I was your teacher, I was something of a dream stealer. During those years I stole a lot of kids' dreams. Fortunately, you had enough gumption not to give up on yours."

Moral: Don't let anyone steal your dreams. Follow your heart, no matter what. No Dream is too big or too small when one works hard to live it. One should always try making dreams come true no matter what.

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods August 2011

47. Peace of Mind

Once Buddha was walking from one town to another town with a few of his followers. While they were travelling, they happened to pass a lake. They stopped there and Buddha told one of his disciples, “I am thirsty. Do get me some water from that lake there.”

The disciple walked up to the lake. When he reached it, he noticed that some people were washing clothes in the water and, right at that moment, a bullock cart started crossing through the lake. As a result, the water became very muddy, very turbid. The disciple thought, “How can I give this muddy water to Buddha to drink!” So, he came back and told

Buddha, “The water in there is very muddy. I don’t think it is fit to drink.”



After about half an hour, again Buddha asked the same disciple to go back to the lake and get him some water to drink. The disciple obediently went back to the lake. This time he found that the lake had absolutely clear water in it. The mud had settled down and the water above it looked fit to be had. So, he collected some water in a pot and brought it to Buddha.

Buddha looked at the water, and then he looked up at the disciple and said, “See what you did to make the water clean. You let it be ... and the mud settled down on its own – and you got clear water... Your mind is also like that. When it is disturbed, just let it be. Give it a little time. It will settle down on its own. You don’t have to put in any effort to calm it down. It will happen. It is effortless.”

What did Buddha emphasize here? He said, “It is effortless.” Having 'peace of mind' is not a strenuous job; it is an effortless process. When there is peace inside you, that peace permeates to the outside. It spreads around you and in the environment, such that people around start feeling that peace and grace.

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods September 2011

48. The Three Races

One day, a remarkable athlete was preparing himself for a running competition in his village, he and two other young boys were to compete. A large crowd had congregated to witness the sporting spectacle and a wise old man, upon hearing of the little boy, had travelled far to bear witness also.

The race commenced, looking like a level heat at the finishing line, but sure enough the boy dug deep and called on his determination, strength and power. He took the winning line and was first. The crowd was ecstatic and cheered and waved at the boy. The wise man remained still and calm, expressing no sentiment. The little boy, however felt proud and important.

A second race was called, and two new young, fit, challengers came forward, to run with the little boy. The race started and sure enough the little boy came through and finished first once again. The crowd was ecstatic again and cheered and waved at the boy. The wise man remained still and calm, again expressing no sentiment. The little boy, however, felt proud and important.



"Another race, another race!" pleaded the little boy. The wise old man stepped forward and presented the little boy with two new challengers, an elderly frail lady and a blind man. "What is this?", quizzed the little boy. "This is no race" he exclaimed. "Race!", said the wise man. The race was started and the boy was the only finisher, the other two challengers left standing at the starting line. The little boy was ecstatic; he raised his arms in delight. The crowd, however, was silent showing no sentiment toward the little boy.

"What has happened? Why don't people join in my success?" he asked the wise old man. "Race again", replied the wise man, "...this time, finish together, all three of you, finish together" continued the wise man. The little boy thought a little, stood in the middle of the blind man and the frail old lady, and then took the two challengers by the hand. The race began and the little boy walked slowly, ever so slowly, to the finishing line and crossed it. The crowd were ecstatic and cheered and waved at the boy. The wise man smiled, gently nodding his head. The little boy felt proud and important.

"Old man, I understand not! Who are the crowd cheering for? Which one of us three?", asked the little boy. The wise old man looked into the little boy's eyes, placing his hands on the boy's shoulders, and replied softly. "Little boy, for this race you have won much more than in any race you have ever ran before, and for this race the crowd cheer not for any winner!"

Source: <http://www.inspire21.com/stories/sportsstories/TheThreeRaces>

- Livelihoods October 2011

49. The Secret of Happiness

A shopkeeper sent his son to learn about the secret of happiness from the wisest man in the world. The lad wandered through the desert for 40 days, and finally came upon a beautiful castle, high atop a mountain. It was there that the wise man lived.

Rather than finding a saintly man, the boy, upon entering the main room of the castle, saw a hive of activity: traders came and went, people were conversing in the corners, a small orchestra was playing soft music, and there was a table covered with platters of the most delicious food in that part of the



world. The wise man conversed with everyone, and the boy had to wait for two hours before it was his turn to be given the man's attention. The wise man listened attentively to the boy's explanation of why he had come, but told him that he didn't have time just then to explain the secret of happiness. He suggested that the boy look around the palace and return in two hours.

"Meanwhile, I want to ask you to do something", said the wise man, handing the

boy a teaspoon that held two drops of oil. "As you wander around, carry this spoon with you without allowing the oil to spill".

The boy began climbing and descending the many stairways of the palace, keeping his eyes fixed on the spoon. After two hours, he returned to the room where the wise man was.

"Well", asked the wise man, "Did you see the Persian tapestries that are hanging in my dining hall? Did you see the garden that it took the master gardener ten years to create? Did you notice the beautiful parchments in my library?"

The boy was embarrassed, and confessed that he had observed nothing. His only concern had been not to spill the oil that the wise man had entrusted to him. "Then go back and observe the marvels of my world", said the wise man. "You cannot trust a man if you don't know his house".

Relieved, the boy picked up the spoon and returned to his exploration of the palace, this time observing all of the works of art on the ceilings and the walls. He saw the gardens, the mountains all around him, the beauty of the flowers, and the taste with which everything had been selected. Upon returning to the wise man, he related in detail everything he had seen.

"But where are the drops of oil, I entrusted to you?" asked the wise man. Looking down at the spoon he held, the boy saw that the oil was gone.

"Well, there is only one piece of advice I can give you", said the wisest of wise men. "The secret of happiness is to see all the marvels of the world and never to forget the drops of oil on the spoon".

(Author: Paul Coelho in "The Alchemist")

Source: <https://www.sloww.co/alchemy-secret-happiness-story/>

- Livelihoods November 2011

50. The First Opportunity

A young man wished to marry the farmer's beautiful daughter. He went to the farmer to ask for her. The farmer looked at him and said, "Son, go stand out in that field. I'm going to release three bulls, one at a time. If you can catch the tail of any one of the three bulls, you can marry my daughter."



The young man stood in the pasture awaiting the first bull. The barn door opened and out ran the biggest, meanest looking bull he had ever seen. He decided that one of the next bulls had to be a better choice than this one, so he ran over to the side and let the bull pass through the pasture out of the back gate.

The barn door opened a second time and out came charging another menacing bull that breathed fury. The young fellow took cover behind the gate once more.

The door opened a third time. A smile came across his face. This was the weakest, scrawniest little bull that he had ever seen. This one was his bull. As the bull came running by, he positioned himself just right and jumped at just the exact moment. He grabbed, but the bull had no tail!

Life is full of opportunities. Some will be easy to take advantage of; some will be difficult. But once we let them pass

(Often in hopes of something better), those opportunities may never again be available. So always grab the first opportunity!

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods December 2011

51. Self-Confidence Matters

A business executive was deep in debt and could see no way out. Creditors were closing in on him. Suppliers were demanding payment. He sat on the park bench, head in hands, wondering if anything could save his company from bankruptcy. Suddenly an old man appeared before him. "I can see that something is troubling you," he said. After listening to the executive's woes, the old man said, "I believe I can help you."

He asked the man his name, wrote out a check, and pushed it into his hand saying, "Take this money. Meet me here exactly one year from today, and you can pay me back at that time." Then he turned and disappeared as quickly as he had come. The business executive saw in his hand a check for \$500,000, signed by John D. Rockefeller, then one of the richest men in the world! "I can erase my money worries in an instant!" he realized. But instead, the executive decided to put the un-cashed check in his safe. Just knowing it was there might give him the strength to work out a way to save his business, he thought.

With renewed optimism, he negotiated better deals and extended terms of payment. He closed several big sales. Within a few months, he was out of debt and making money once again. Exactly one



year later, he returned to the park with the un-cashed check. At the agreed-upon time, the old man appeared. But just as the executive was about to hand back the check and share his success story, a nurse came running up and grabbed the old man. "I'm so glad I caught him!" she cried. "I hope he hasn't been bothering you. He's always escaping from the rest home and telling people he's John D. Rockefeller."

And she led the old man away by the arm. The astonished executive just stood there, stunned. All year long he'd been wheeling and dealing, buying and selling, convinced he had half

a million dollars behind him. Suddenly, he realized that it wasn't the money, real or imaginary, that had turned his life around. It was his newfound self-confidence that gave him the power to achieve anything he ever imagined.

Self-confidence Matters!

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods January 2012

52. Learn and Earn

Chuan and Jing joined a wholesale company together just after graduation. Both worked very hard. After several years, the boss promoted Jing to sales executive but Chuan remained a sales rep. One day Chuan could not take it anymore, tender resignation to the boss and complained the boss did not value hard working staff, but only promoted those who flattered him.



The boss knew that Chuan worked very hard for the years, but in order to help Chuan realize the difference between him and Jing, the boss asked Chuan to do the following.

Go and find out anyone selling water melon in the market? Chuan returned and said yes. The boss asked how much per kg? Chuan went back to the market to ask and returned to inform boss the \$12 per kg.

Boss told Chuan, I will ask Jing the same question? Jing went, returned and said, boss, only one person selling water melon. \$12 per kg, \$100 for 10 kg, he has inventory of 340 melons. On the table 58 melons, every melon weigh about 15 kg, bought from the South two days ago, they are fresh and red, good quality.

Chuan was very impressed and realized the difference between himself and Jing. He decided not to resign but to learn from Jing.

My dear friends, a more successful person is more observant, think more and understand in depth. For the same matter, a more successful person sees several years ahead, while you see only tomorrow. The difference between a year and a day is 365 times, how could you win?

Think! How far have you seen ahead in your life? How thoughtful in depth are you?

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods February 2012

53. The Window Through Which We Look

A young couple moved into a new neighborhood. The next morning while they were eating breakfast, the young woman saw her neighbor hanging the wash outside. 'That laundry is not very clean,' she said. 'She doesn't know how to wash correctly. Perhaps she needs better laundry soap.' Her husband looked on, but remained silent. Every time her neighbor would hang her wash to dry, the young woman would make the same comments. About one month later, the woman was surprised to see a



nice clean wash on the line and said to her husband: 'Look, she has learned how to wash correctly. I wonder who taught her this.' The husband said, 'I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows.' And so, it is with life. What we see when watching others depends on the window through which we look!

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods March 2012

54. Live and Work

Father was a hardworking man who delivered bread as a living to support his wife and three children. He spent all his evenings after work attending classes, hoping to improve himself so that he could one day find a better paying job. Except for Sundays, Father hardly ate a meal together with his family. He worked and studied very hard because he wanted to provide his family with the best money could buy.

Whenever the family complained that he was not spending enough time with them, he reasoned that he was doing all this for them. But he often yearned to spend more time with his family.

The day came when the examination results were announced. To his joy, Father passed, and with distinctions too! Soon after, he was offered a good job as a senior supervisor which paid handsomely.

Like a dream come true, Father could now afford to provide his family with life 's little luxuries like nice clothing, fine food and vacation abroad.

However, the family still did not get to see father for most of the week. He continued to work very hard, hoping to be promoted to the position of manager. In fact, to make himself a worthy candidate for the promotion, he enrolled for another course in the Open University.

Again, whenever the family complained that he was not spending enough time with them, he reasoned that he was doing all this for them. But he often yearned to spend more time with his family.



Father 's hard work paid off and he was promoted. Jubilantly, he decided to hire a maid to relieve his wife from her domestic tasks. He also felt that their three-room flat was no longer big enough, it would be nice for his family to be able to enjoy the facilities and comfort of a condominium. Having experienced the rewards of his hard work many times before, Father resolved to further his studies

and work at being promoted again. The family still did not get to see much of him. In fact, sometimes Father had to work on Sundays entertaining clients. Again, whenever the family complained that he was not spending enough time with them, he reasoned that he was doing all this for them. But he often yearned to spend more time with his family.

As expected, Father 's hard work paid off again and he bought a beautiful condominium overlooking the coast of Singapore. On the first Sunday evening at their new home, Father declared to his family that he decided not to take anymore courses or pursue any more promotions. From then on he was going to devote more time to his family.

Father did not wake up the next day.

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods April 2012

55. The Seed of Honesty

A successful business man was growing old and knew it was time to choose a successor to take over the business. Instead of choosing one of his Directors or his children, he decided to do something different. He called all the young executives in his company together. He said, “It is time for me to step down and choose the next CEO. I have decided to choose one of you.” The young executives were shocked, but the boss continued. “I am going to give each one of you a SEED today – one very special SEED. I want you to plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from the seed I have given you. I will then judge the plants that you bring, and the one I choose will be the next CEO.” One man, named Jim, was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly, told his wife the story. She helped him get a pot, soil and compost and he planted the seed. Every day, he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks, some of the other executives began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Jim kept checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by, still nothing. By now, others were talking about their plants, but Jim didn’t have a plant and he felt like a failure. Six months went by — still nothing in Jim’s pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Jim didn’t say anything to his colleagues, however He just kept watering and fertilizing the soil – He so wanted the seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the young executives of the company brought their plants to the CEO for inspection. Jim told his wife that he wasn’t going to take an empty pot. But she asked him to be honest about what happened. Jim felt sick to his stomach, it was going to be the most embarrassing moment of his life, but he knew his wife was right. He took his empty pot to the board room. When Jim arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other executives. They were beautiful — in all shapes and sizes. Jim put his empty pot on the floor and many of his colleagues laughed, a few felt sorry for him! When the CEO arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted his young executives. Jim just tried to hide in the back.



“My, what great plants, trees, and flowers you have grown,” said the CEO. “Today one of you will be appointed the next CEO!” All of a sudden, the CEO spotted Jim at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered the Financial Director to bring him to the front. Jim was terrified. He thought, “The CEO knows I’m a failure! Maybe he will have me fired!” When Jim got to the front, the CEO asked him what had happened to his seed – Jim told him the story. The CEO asked everyone to sit down except Jim. He looked at Jim, and then announced to the young executives, “Behold your next Chief Executive Officer! His name is Jim!” Jim couldn’t believe it. Jim couldn’t even grow his seed. “How could he be the new CEO?” the others said. Then the CEO said, “One year ago today, I gave everyone in this room a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all

boiled seeds; they were dead – it was not possible for them to grow. All of you, except Jim, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Jim was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new Chief Executive Officer!” If you plant honesty, you will reap trust. So, be careful what you plant now; it will determine what you will reap later.

“Whatever You Give to Life, Life Gives You Back”.

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods November 2012

56. The Ass in The Lion's Skin

An Ass found a Lion's skin left in the forest by a hunter. He dressed himself in it and amused himself by hiding in a thicket and rushing out suddenly at the animals that passed that way. All took to their heels the moment they saw him.



The Ass was so pleased to see the animals running away from him. Just as if he were King Lion himself, that he could not keep from expressing his delight by a loud, harsh bray. A Fox, who ran with the rest, stopped short as soon as he heard the voice.

Approaching the Ass, he said with a laugh:

“If you had kept your mouth shut you might have frightened me too. But you gave yourself away with that silly bray.”

A fool may deceive by his dress and appearance, but his words will soon show what he really is.

Source: <https://fablesfaesop.com/the-ass-in-the-lions-skin.html>

- Livelihoods December 2012

57. Selfish Friendship

Once, a cat was caught in a hunter's net. A mouse used to live in a nearby hole. The mouse seeing the cat in the net started playing around the cat. Soon a mongoose came there. He wanted to kill the



mouse. As he lifted his head, he saw an owl sitting on a tree trying to catch him. The mongoose went very near the cat's net to save himself. The mouse thought "When the hunter takes away the cat, the mongoose will not spare me and the owl is there to enjoy both of us."

The Mouse went to the cat and said, "I can cut the net if you promise to save my life from the mongoose and the owl." The cat agreed. The mouse started cutting the net slowly and freed the cat only when the hunter was just near the cat. The cat took to heels and so ran the mongoose too. The owl was very much disappointed to

see even the mouse running away to safety.

A few days later, the cat being hungry, went to the hole of the mouse and requested him to come out for a game. The mouse replied, "I sought friendship and saved you to save my life." Now you can go home.

Don't nurture friendship with selfish people.

Source: <http://www.english-for-students.com/Selfish-Friendship.html>

- Livelihoods January 2013

58. Myopic Researchers

Two young students were sent on an educational tour to study the agriculture scenario across the country. The students, who lived in a city all their life, had little exposure to farming, except for three years in their university. They set out on the tour armed with all the research instruments necessary for the study.

In every village that they visited, the students would ask in Hindi – “kiski fasal hai yeh” (lit. whose crop is this?), the farmers would promptly reply – “Rabi ki sab.” They learnt more about the crop and diligently noted down all their findings. By the end of the year, the duo had visited 4-5 states. Satisfied with their effort, they documented their learning and submitted their report to their guide.

The guide, an agriculture scientist was shocked at the findings made by the pair. The report read:

“India is a vast country with an agriculture-based economy. This study explores the patterns in agriculture in the 5 states across the country.

It is a well-known fact that more and more farmers are moving out of agriculture and land is getting concentrated in a few hands. It appears that this pattern has taken deep roots in the 5 states studied. The research revealed that all the land in the area is in the hands of two landlords— Ravi and Kharif. The two, who rarely meet the public have devised an interesting system of sharing the land. Mr. Ravi (whom locals call Rabi saab) holds the ownership from November to April and Mr. Kharif holds the land from May to November.



The landlords provide no security against the vagaries of weather or market” The report went on and on about the monopoly the two have established over the agriculture in the country.

Often development researchers visit villages with prejudiced notions and miss out on the realities. It is important to know local knowledge.

Source: [Nilendu Mukherjee](#)

- Livelihoods February 2013

59. The Wolf, The Kid and The Goat

Mother Goat was going to the market one morning to get provisions for her household, which consisted of but one little Kid and herself.

“Take good care of the house, my son,” she said to the Kid, as she carefully latched the door. “Do not let anyone in, unless he gives you this password: ‘Down with the Wolf and his entire race!’”



Strangely enough, a Wolf was lurking near and heard what the Mother Goat had said. So, as soon as she was out of sight, up he trotted to the door and knocked.

“Down with the Wolf and his entire race,” said the Wolf softly.

It was the right password, but when the Kid peeped through a crack in the door and saw the shadowy figure outside, he did not feel at all easy. “Show me a white paw,” he said, “or I won’t let you in.”

A white paw, of course, is a feature few Wolves can show and so Master Wolf had to go away as hungry as he had come.

“You can never be too sure,” said the Kid, when he saw the Wolf making off to the woods.

Two sureties are better than one.

Source: <https://fablesfaesop.com/a-wolf-kid-and-goat.html>

- Livelihoods March 2013

60. Learning to Live

There was a farmer who had a horse and a goat. One day, the horse became ill. So, he called the veterinarian, who said:

"Well, your horse has a virus. He must take this medicine for three days. I'll come back on the 3rd day and if he's not better, we're going to have to put him down.

Nearby, the goat listened closely to their conversation.

The next day, they gave the horse the medicine and left.

The goat approached the horse and said: "Be strong, my friend. Get up or else they're going to put you to sleep!"



On the second day, they again gave the horse the medicine and left. The goat came back and said: "Come on buddy, get up or else you're going to die! Come on, I'll help you get up. Let's go! One, two, three..."

On the third day, they came to give the horse the medicine and the vet said: "Unfortunately, we're going to have to put him down tomorrow. Otherwise, the virus might spread and infect

the other horses". After they left, the goat approached the horse and said: "Listen pal, it's now or never! Get up, come on! Have courage! Come on! Get up! Get up! That's it, slowly! Great! Come on, one, two, three... Good, good. Now faster, come on..... Fantastic! Run, run more! Yes! Yay! Yes! You did it, you're a champion...!!!" All of a sudden, the owner came back, saw the horse running in the field and began shouting: It's a miracle! My horse is cured. We must have a grand party. Let's kill the goat!!!!

Moral: Nobody truly knows which employee actually deserves the merit of success, or who's actually contributing the necessary support to make things happen.

Source: https://www.kidsgen.com/moral_stories/the-goat-and-the-horse.html

- Livelihoods April 2013

61. Lion and Rabbit

In a forest named Kadal, lived a rabbit that became quite famous as a saint. He lived near the outskirts of the forest, in an isolated place on an island. There were very few animals who did not know about the wisdom of Rabbit who was also known for his fortune telling prowess.



Mrigaraj, the king of the forest came to know about the feats of Rabbit, to pay respect to this great saint, he invited the Rabbit to his den. When the Rabbit arrived,

Mrigaraj welcomed him and offered him a seat, the king then asked the saint Rabbit to tell something about his horoscope. After a keen examination into the king's horoscope, Rabbit started telling the King about the boons that were to be bestowed upon him in future. The king was so happy. He kept on rewarding the saint Rabbit with carrots and roots for every boon told by Rabbit. Now, came the time to forecast the future misfortunes. The whole outlook of Mrigaraj underwent a change. At one point he shouted, "Stop! You filthy soul! How dare you utter such nonsense! I order you to predict the time of your death".

Saint Rabbit replied in a small voice, "My lord! According to my calculations, my death will take place just an hour before thy death".

The king was stunned. He felt his error. He begged pardon from Rabbit and sent him off with more gifts.

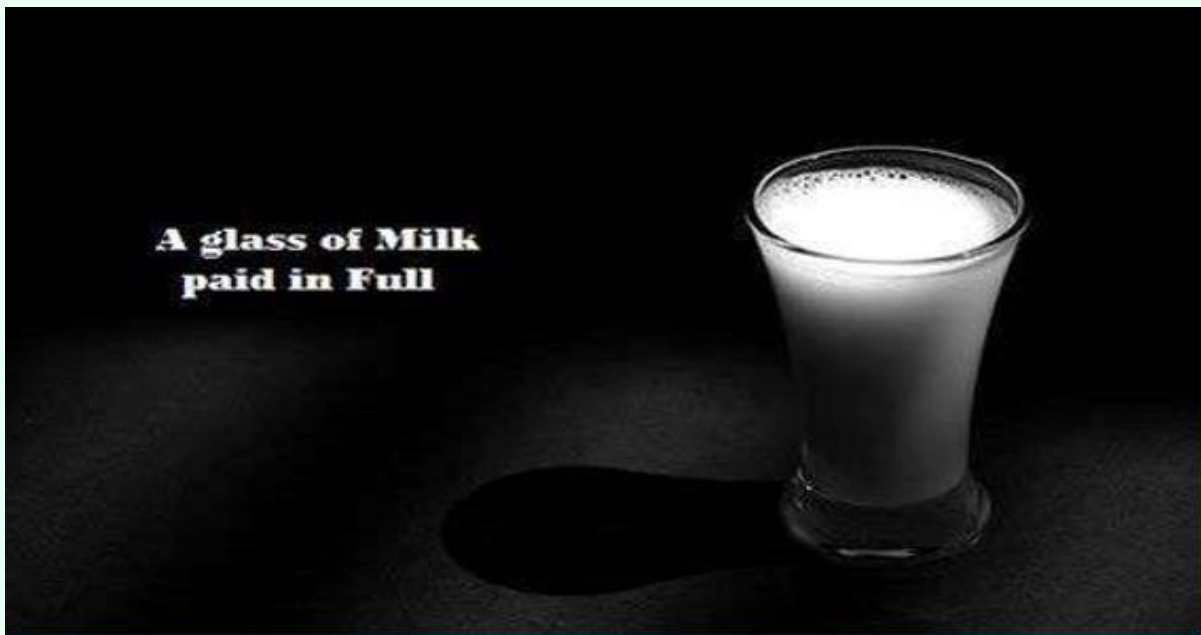
Moral: Wisdom is more able than power.

Source: <https://www.nriol.com/indianparents/indian-tales/foolish-lion-clever-rabbit.asp>

- Livelihoods May 2013

62. Universal Love

One day, a poor boy who was selling goods from door to door to pay his way through school, found he had only one thin dime left, and he was hungry. He decided he would ask for a meal at the next house. However, he lost his nerve when a lovely young woman opened the door. Instead of a meal he asked for a drink of water. Sensing his hunger, she brought him a large glass of milk. He drank it slowly, and then asked, "How much do I owe you?" "You don't owe me anything," she replied. "Mother has taught us never to accept pay for a kindness." He said, "Then I thank you from my heart." and left that house. He not only felt stronger physically, but his faith in God and man was strong also.



Years later that woman became critically ill. The local doctors were baffled. They finally sent her to the big city, where they called in a specialist to study her rare disease. After a long struggle, the battle was won and the doctors were able to save her. The final bill was sent to the specialist for approval. He looked at it and wrote something on the edge and the bill was sent to her room. She feared to open it, for she was sure it would take the rest of her life to pay for it all. Finally, she looked, and something caught her attention on the side of the bill. She began to read the following words:

"Paid in full with one glass of milk"

Moral: Give love without expecting any return. It will come back to you any day and in any form.

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods June 2013

63. The Tiger's Whisker

Once upon a time, a young wife named Yun Ok was at her wit's end. Her husband had always been a tender and loving soulmate before he had left for the wars but, ever since he returned home, he was cross, angry, and unpredictable. She was almost afraid to live with her own husband. Only in glancing moments did she catch a shadow of the husband she used to know and love. When one ailment or another bothered people in her village, they would often rush for a cure to a hermit who lived deep in the mountains. Not Yun Ok. She always prided herself that she could heal her own troubles. But this time was different. She was desperate. As Yun Ok approached the hermit's hut, she saw the door was open.

The old man said without turning around: "I hear you. What's your problem?" She explained the situation. His back still to her, he said, "Ah yes, it's often that way when soldiers return from the war. What do you expect me to do about it?" "Make me a potion!" cried the young wife. "Or an amulet, a drink, whatever it takes to get my husband back the way he used to be." The old man turned around. "Young woman, your request doesn't exactly fall into the same category as a broken bone or ear infection." "I know", said she. "It will take three days before I can even look into it. Come back then." Three days later, Yun Ok returned to the hermit's hut. "Yun Ok", he greeted her with a smile, "I have good news. There is a potion that will restore your husband to the way he used to be, but you should know that it requires an unusual ingredient.

You must bring me a whisker from a live tiger." "What?" she gasped. "Such a thing is impossible!" "I cannot make the potion without it!" he shouted, startling her. He turned his back. "There is nothing more to say. As you can see, I'm very busy."



That night Yun Ok tossed and turned. How could she get a whisker from a live tiger? The next day before dawn, she crept out of the house with a bowl of rice covered with meat sauce. She went to a cave on the mountainside where a tiger was known to live. She clicked her tongue very softly as she crept up, her heart pounding, and carefully set the bowl on the grass. Then, trying to make as little noise as she could, she backed away. The next day before dawn, she took another bowl of rice covered with meat sauce to the cave. She

approached the same spot, clicking softly with her tongue. She saw that the bowl was empty, replaced the empty one with a fresh one, and again left, clicking softly and trying not to break twigs or rustle leaves, or do anything else to startle and unsettle the wild beast.

So, it went, day after day, for several months. She never saw the tiger (thank goodness for that! she thought) though she knew from footprints on the ground that the tiger - and not a smaller mountain creature - had been eating her food. Then one day as she approached, she noticed the tiger's head poking out of its cave. Glancing downward, she stepped very carefully to the same spot and with as little noise as she could, set down the fresh bowl and, her heart pounding, picked up the one that was empty.

After a few weeks, she noticed the tiger would come out of its cave as it heard her footsteps, though it stayed a distance away (again, thank goodness! she thought, though she knew that someday, in order to get the whisker, she'd have to come closer to it). Another month went by. Then the tiger would wait by the empty food bowl as it heard her approaching. As she picked up the old bowl and replaced it with a fresh one, she could smell its scent, as it could surely smell hers. "Actually", she thought, remembering its almost kittenish look as she set down a fresh bowl, "it is a rather friendly creature, when you get to know it." The next time she visited, she glanced up at the tiger briefly and noticed what a lovely downturn of reddish fur it had from over one of its eyebrows to the next. Not a week later, the tiger allowed her to gently rub its head, and it purred and stretched like a house cat. Then she knew the time had come. The next morning, very early, she brought with her a small knife.

After she set down the fresh bowl and the tiger allowed her to pet its head, she said in a low voice: "Oh, my tiger, may I please have just one of your whiskers?" While petting the tiger with one hand, she held one whisker at its base and, with the other hand, in one quick stroke, she carved the whisker off. She stood up, speaking softly her thanks, and left, for the last time. The next morning seemed endless. At last her husband left for the rice fields. She ran to the hermit's hut, clutching the precious whisker in her fist. Bursting in, she cried to the hermit: "I have it! I have the tiger's whisker!" "You don't say?" he said, turning around. "From a live tiger?" "Yes!" she said. Tell me", said the hermit, interested. "How did you do it?" Yun Ok told the hermit how, for the last six months, she had earned the trust of the creature and it had finally permitted her to cut off one of its whiskers. With pride she handed him the whisker.

The hermit examined it, satisfied himself that it was indeed a whisker from a live tiger, then flicked it into the fire where it sizzled and burned in an instant. "Yun Ok", the hermit said softly, "you no longer need the whisker. Tell me, is a man more vicious than a tiger? If a dangerous wild beast will respond to your gradual and patient care, do you think a man will respond any less willingly?" Yun Ok stood speechless. Then she turned and stepped down the trail, turning over in her mind images of the tiger and of her husband, back and forth. She knew what she could do.

Source: <https://www.storiestogrowby.org/story/the-tigers-whisker-korean-folktales/>

- Livelihoods August 2013

64. The Two Patients in Hospital

Two men, both seriously ill, occupied the same hospital room. One man was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour each afternoon to help drain the fluid from his lungs. His bed was next to the room's only window. The other man had to spend all his time flat on his back. The men talked for hours on end. They spoke of their wives and families, their homes, their jobs, their involvement in the military service, where they had been on holiday.

And every afternoon when the man in the bed by the window could sit up, he would pass the time by describing to his roommate all the things he could see outside the window. The man in the other bed began to live for those one-hour periods where his world would be broadened and enlivened by all the activity and colour of the world outside.

The window overlooked a park with a lovely lake.



Ducks and swans played on the water while children sailed their model boats. Young lovers walked arm in arm amidst flowers of every colour of the rainbow. Grand old trees graced the landscape and a fine view of the city skyline could be seen in the distance. As the man by the window described all this in exquisite detail, the man on the other side of the room would close his eyes and imagine the picturesque

scene. One warm afternoon the man by the window described a parade passing by. Although the other man couldn't hear the band - he could see it in his mind's eye as the gentleman by the window portrayed it with descriptive words. Days and weeks passed.

One morning, the day nurse arrived to bring water for their baths only to find the lifeless body of the man by the window, who had died peacefully in his sleep. She was saddened and called the hospital attendants to take the body away. As soon as it seemed appropriate, the other man asked if he could be moved next to the window. The nurse was happy to make the switch and, after making sure he was comfortable, she left him alone. Slowly, painfully, he propped himself up on one elbow to take his first look at the world outside. Finally, he would have the joy of seeing it for himself. He strained to slowly turn to look out the window beside the bed. It faced a blank wall. The man asked the nurse what could have compelled his deceased roommate who had described such wonderful things outside this window. The nurse responded that the man was blind and could not even see the wall. She said, "Perhaps he just wanted to encourage you."

Source: <https://alltimeshortstories.com/life-the-hospital-window/>

- Livelihoods September 2013

65. Two Frogs in The Milk

This is the story of two frogs. One frog was fat and the other skinny. One day, while searching for food, they inadvertently jumped into a vat of milk. They couldn't get out, as the sides were too slippery, so they were just swimming around.

The fat frog said to the skinny frog, "Brother frog, there's no use paddling any longer. We're just going to drown, so we might as well give up." The skinny frog replied, "Hold on brother, keep paddling. Somebody will get us out." And they continued paddling for hours.

After a while, the fat frog said, "Brother frog, there's no use. I'm becoming very tired now. I'm just going to stop paddling and drown. It's Sunday and nobody's working. We're doomed. There's no possible way out of here." But the skinny frog said, "Keep trying. Keep paddling. Something will happen, keep paddling." Another couple of hours passed. The fat frog said, "I can't go on any longer. There's no sense in doing it because we're going to drown anyway. What's the use?" And the fat frog stopped. He gave up. And he drowned in the milk. But the skinny frog kept on paddling.



Ten minutes later, the skinny frog felt something solid beneath his feet. He had churned the milk into butter and he hopped out of the vat.

Source: <https://ycamp.org/2011/03/02/do-you-know-the-story-of-the-two-frogs-in-a-bowl-of-milk/>

- Livelihoods December 2013

66. Testing for Gossip

In ancient Greece, Socrates was reputed to hold knowledge in high esteem. One day an acquaintance met the great philosopher and said, "Do you know what I just heard about your friend?"

"Hold on a minute", Socrates replied. "Before telling me anything I'd like you to pass a little test. It's called the Triple Filter Test."

"Triple filter?"

"That's right", Socrates continued. "Before you talk to me about my friend, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you're going to say. That's why I call it the triple filter test. The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?"

"No," the man said, "Actually I just heard about it and ..."

"All right", said Socrates. "So, you don't really know if it's true or not. Now let's try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my friend something good?"



"No, on the contrary."

"So", Socrates continued, "you want to tell me something bad about him, but you're not certain it's true. You may still pass the test though, because there's one filter left: the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend going to be useful to me?"

"No, not really." "Well", concluded Socrates, "if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?"

Source: <https://academictips.org/blogs/testing-for-gossip/>

- Livelihoods January 2014

67. The Obstacle in Our Path

In ancient times, a King had a boulder placed on a roadway. Then he hid himself and watched to see if anyone would remove the huge rock. Some of the king's wealthiest merchants and courtiers came by and simply walked around it. Many loudly blamed the King for not keeping the roads clear, but none did anything about getting the stone out of the way.

Then a peasant came along carrying a load of vegetables. Upon approaching the boulder, the peasant laid down his burden and tried to move the stone to the side of the road. After much pushing and straining, he finally succeeded. After the peasant picked up his load of vegetables, he noticed a purse lying in the road where the boulder had been. The purse contained many gold coins and a note from the King indicating that the gold was for the person who removed the boulder from the roadway.



The peasant learnt what many of us never understand! Every obstacle presents an opportunity to improve our condition.

Source: <https://medium.com/motivationapp/the-obstacle-in-our-path-6060a4361e4e>

- Livelihoods February 2014

68. Donkey in The Well

One day a farmer's donkey fell down into a well. The animal cried piteously for hours as the farmer tried to figure out what to do. Finally, he decided the animal was old, and the well needed to be covered up anyway; it just wasn't worth it to retrieve the donkey. He invited all his neighbors to come over and help him. They all grabbed a shovel and began to shovel dirt into the well. At first, the donkey realized what was happening and cried horribly. Then, to everyone's amazement he quieted down. A few shovels load later, the farmer finally looked down the well. He was astonished at what he saw.

With each shovel of dirt that hit his back, the donkey was doing something amazing. He would shake it off and take a step up. As the farmer's neighbors continued to shovel dirt on top of the animal, he would shake it off and take a step up. Pretty soon, everyone was amazed as the donkey stepped up over the edge of the well and happily trotted off! Moral: Life is going to shovel dirt on you, all kinds of dirt. The trick to getting out of the well is to shake it off and take a step up. Each of our troubles is a steppingstone. We can get out of the deepest wells just by not stopping, never giving up! Shake it off and take a step up. Remember the five simple rules to be happy:



Free your heart from hatred – Forgive
Free your mind from worries - Most never happens
Live simply and appreciate what you have
Give more
Expect less from people but more from yourself.

Source: http://syque.com/stories/discovered/donkey_well.html

- Livelihoods March 2014

69. Rafting

By good fortune, I was able to raft down the Motu River in New Zealand twice during the last year. The magnificent four-day journey traverses one of the last wilderness areas in the North Island. The first expedition was led by "Buzz", an American guide with a great deal of rafting experience and many stories to tell of mighty rivers such as the Colorado. With a leader like Buzz, there was no reason to fear any of the great rapids on the Motu. The first half day, in the gentle upper reaches, was spent developing teamwork and co-ordination. Strokes had to be mastered, and the discipline of following commands without question was essential. In the boiling fury of a rapid, there would be no room for any mistake. When Buzz bellowed above the roar of the water, an instant reaction was essential. We mastered the Motu. In every rapid we fought against the river and we overcame it. The screamed commands of Buzz were matched only by the fury of our paddles, as we took the raft exactly where Buzz wanted it to go. At the end of the journey, there was a great feeling of triumph. We had won. We proved that we were superior. We knew that we could do it. We felt powerful and good. The mystery and majesty of the Motu had been overcome.

The second time I went down the Motu, the experience I had gained should have been invaluable, but the guide on this journey was a very softly spoken Kiwi. It seemed that it would not even be possible to hear his voice above the noise of the rapids. As we approached the first rapid, he never even raised



his voice. He did not attempt to take command of us or the river. Gently and quietly he felt the mood of the river and watched every little whirlpool. There was no drama and no shouting. There was no contest to be won. He loved the river. We sped through each rapid with grace and beauty and, after a day, the river had become our friend, not our enemy. The quiet Kiwi was not our leader, but only the person whose sensitivity was more developed than our own. Laughter replaced the tension of achievement.

Soon the quiet Kiwi was able to lean back and let all of us take turns as leader. A quiet nod was enough to draw attention to the things our lack of experience prevented us from seeing. If we made a mistake, then we laughed and it was the next person's turn. We began to penetrate the mystery of the Motu. Now, like the quiet Kiwi, we listened to the river and we looked carefully for all those things we had not even noticed the first time. At the end of the journey, we had overcome nothing except ourselves. We did not want to leave behind our friend, the river. There was no contest, and so nothing had been won. Rather we had become one with the river. It remains difficult to believe that the external circumstances of the two journeys were similar. The difference was in an attitude and a frame of mind. At the end of the journey, it seemed that there could be no other way. Given the opportunity to choose a leader, everyone would have chosen someone like Buzz. At the end of the second journey, we had glimpsed a very different vision and we felt humble - and intensely happy.

Source: <http://adventures365.in/blog/my-adventure-story-river-rafting-experience-kolad/>-

- Livelihoods May 2014

70. The American Dream

An American businessman was standing at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellow fin tunas. The American complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish.

"How long did it take you to catch them?" the American asked. "Only a little while" the Mexican replied. "Why don't you stay out longer and catch more fish?" the American then asked. "I have enough to support my family's immediate needs" the Mexican said. "But" the American then asked, "What do you do with the rest of your time?" The Mexican fisherman said: "I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take a siesta with my wife, Maria, stroll into the village each evening where I sip wine and play guitar with my amigos. I have a full and busy life, senior."

The American scoffed: "I am a Harvard MBA and could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds you could buy a bigger boat and, with the proceeds from the bigger boat, you could buy several boats. Eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats. Instead of selling your catch to a middleman, you would sell directly to the consumers, eventually opening your own can factory. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal fishing village and move to Mexico City, then LA and eventually NYC where you will run your expanding enterprise."

The Mexican fisherman asked: "But senior, how long will this all take?" To which the American replied: "15-20 years." "But what then, senior?" The American laughed and said: "That's the best part. When the time is right, you would announce an IPO - an Initial Public Offering - and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich. You would make millions."



"Millions, senior? Then what?" The American said slowly: "Then you would retire. Move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take a siesta with your wife, stroll to the village in the evenings where you could sip wine and play your guitar with your amigos...".

Source: <https://www.booksie.com/posting/leon-rt/the-american-dream-376785>

- Livelihoods June 2014

71. A Foot Has No Nose

Of the many interactions I had with my mother those many years ago, one stands out with clarity. I remember the occasion when mother sent me to the main road, about twenty yards away from the homestead, to invite a passing group of seasonal work-seekers home for a meal. She instructed me to take a container along and collect dry cow dung for making a fire. I was then to prepare the meal for the group of work-seekers.

The thought of making an open fire outside at midday, cooking in a large three-legged pot in that intense heat, was sufficient to upset even an angel. I did not manage to conceal my feelings from my mother and, after serving the group, she called me to the veranda where she usually sat to attend to her sewing and knitting.

Looking straight into my eyes, she said "Tsholofelo, why did you sulk when I requested you to prepare a meal for those poor destitute people?" Despite my attempt to deny her allegation, and using the heat of the fire and the sun as an excuse for my alleged behavior, mother, giving me a firm look, said ""Lonao ga lo na nko" - "A foot has no nose". It means: you cannot detect what trouble may lie ahead of you.

Had I denied this group of people a meal, it may have happened that, in my travels sometime in the future, I found myself at the mercy of those very individuals. As if that was not enough to shame me, mother continued: "Motho ke motho ka motho yo mongwe".

The literal meaning: **"A person is a person because of another person".**

Source: <http://shortandinspirational.blogspot.com/2014/11/a-foot-has-no-nose.html>

- Livelihoods July 2014

72. Helping Hands

A mother, wishing to encourage her son's progress at the piano, bought tickets to a performance by the great Polish pianist Ignace Paderewski. When the evening arrived, they found their seats near the front of the concert hall and eyed the majestic Steinway waiting on the stage. Soon the mother found a friend to talk to, and the boy slipped away.

At eight o'clock, the lights in the auditorium began to dim, the spotlights came on, and only then did they notice the boy - up on the piano bench, innocently picking out "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." His mother gasped in shock and embarrassment but, before she could retrieve her son, the master himself appeared on the stage and quickly moved to the keyboard. He whispered gently to the boy, "Don't quit. Keep playing." Leaning over, Paderewski reached down with his left hand and began filling in the bass part. Soon his right arm reached around the other side and improvised a delightful obbligato.



Together, the old master and the young novice held the crowd mesmerized with their blended and beautiful music.

In all our lives, we receive helping hands - some we notice, some we don't. Equally we ourselves have countless opportunities to provide helping hands - sometimes we would like our assistance to be noticed, sometimes we don't.

Little of what we all achieve is without learning from others and without support from others and what we receive we should hand out.

Source: <https://english-magazine.org/index.php/english-stories/1555-short-story-a-helping-hand.html>

- Livelihoods August 2014

73. The Little Wave

The story is about a little wave, bobbing along in the ocean, having a grand old time.

He's enjoying the wind and the fresh air - until he notices the other waves in front of him, crashing against the shore. "My God, this terrible", the wave says. "Look what's going to happen to me!"



Then along comes another wave. It sees the first wave, looking grim, and it says to him: "Why do you look so sad?" The first wave says: "You don't understand! We're all going to crash! All of us waves are going to be nothing! Isn't it terrible?"

The second wave says: "No, you don't understand. You're not a wave, you're part of the ocean."

Source: [By Mitch Albom.](#)

- Livelihoods September 2014

74. Going the Extra Mile

I was 20 years and had just finished my first degree when I asked my father's advice on how to approach the world of work. He had a long and distinguished career in the Indian Army and rose to



become commander-in-chief of a million men. He was a soldier's soldier and his men adored him. His manner was strict and firm, but he was very friendly. He appreciated and trusted people and gave them freedom. "Come and see me in my office if you want to talk to me about work" he said. So, I made an appointment with his ADC and went to see him. He had a huge office and I felt very small.

"You are starting out and you will be given a lot of tasks to fulfill" he said. "The first thing is always to do something to the best of your ability. Then the second time you do it, give it that little bit extra". What he was saying was: "Take the initiative; be innovative; be creative. Always go the extra mile."

Source: [Karan Bilimoria, founder and chief executive of Cobra Beer, speaking to Sheridan Winn for "Business Life".](#)

- Livelihoods October 2014

75. The Day Dreaming Priest

Long time ago there lived a priest who was extremely lazy and poor at the same time. He did not want to do any hard work but used to dream of being rich one day. He got his food by begging for alms.

One morning he got a pot of milk as part of the alms. He was extremely delighted and went home with the pot of milk. He boiled the milk, drank some of it and put the remaining milk in a pot. He added slight curds in the pot for converting the milk to curd. He then lay down to sleep.

Soon he started imagining about the pot of curd while he lay asleep. He dreamt that if he could become rich somehow all his miseries would be gone. His thoughts turned to the pot of milk he had set to form curd. He dreamt on; "By morning the pot of milk would set, it would be converted to curd. I would churn the curd and make butter from it.

I would heat the butter and make ghee out of it. I will then go to that market and sell that ghee, and make some money. With that money i will buy a hen. The hen will lay may eggs which will hatch and there will be many chickens. These chickens will in turn lay hundreds of eggs and I will soon have a



poultry farm of my own." He kept on imagining. "I will sell all the hens of my poultry and buy some cows, and open a milk dairy. All the town people will buy milk from me. I will be very rich and soon I shall buy jewels. The king will buy all the jewels from me.

I will be so rich that I will be able to marry an exceptionally beautiful girl

from a rich family. Soon I will have a handsome son. If he does any mischief, I will be very angry and to teach him a lesson, I will hit him with a big stick. "During this dream, he involuntarily picked up the stick next to his bed and thinking that he was beating his son, raised the stick and hit the pot. The pot of milk broke and he awoke from his day dream.

Moral: There is no substitute for hard work. Dreams cannot be fulfilled without hard work.

Source: <https://www.nriol.com/indianparents/indian-tales/day-dreaming-priest-story.asp>

- Livelihoods November 2014

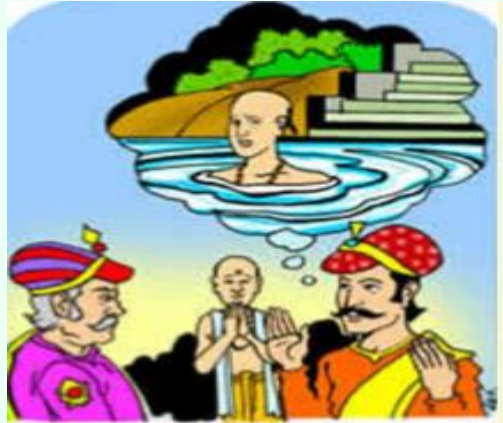
76. The Slow Cooking Khichri

Mind is an ass, and at times it needs whipping. What is true of an ordinary human being will hold good even to great men. Emperor Akbar was no exception to this rule. Birbal was there to lash the mind of his master whenever it went awry. On a cold wintry evening, Akbar and Birbal were taking a walk along the lake. Birbal was thinking loudly:

"A man would do anything for money." Akbar put his hand in the lake, and immediately, withdrew it, because the water was biting cold. Akbar thought aloud too:

"I don't think anyone would spend an entire night in the cold water of this lake either for money or for no money."

Birbal accepted this as a challenge that he would prove his words --"A man would do anything for money." So, he set out to locate a person who would spend an entire night in the royal pond for a thousand gold coins. At last, he found a poor man who was desperate enough to accept the challenge. The man entered the royal pond. Akbar had his guards posted there to make sure that the man really did as promised. The poor man was able to withstand the ordeal of spending an entire night in the cold water for money. Next morning, he approached the emperor in royal court for his reward. But Akbar teased the poor man with a lot of verifications to ascertain whether he had really spent the entire night in the lake. He finally asked him how the man managed to spend the night in the lake. The poor man innocently replied, "There was a street lamp nearby, and I concentrated on the lamp. And so was I away from the cold."



By this reply he thought that the emperor would be all the more pleased. But Akbar disappointed him, saying "No reward. You have taken the warmth from the street lamp". The poor man's confusion was confounded, and he left the court most frustrated.

Hearing this, Birbal wanted to do something to set right the wrong done to the poor man. That evening Birbal invited Akbar for a tasty Kichiri in his humble abode. Akbar, though an emperor, kindly and secular as he was, accepted Birbal's invitation thereby, Akbar and a few of his trusted confidants arrived at Birbal's house. After a long bout of Shatranj (Chess), the emperor's party was ready for dinner. Now and then, Birbal went in to check if the Kichiri was ready in the kitchen. But the Kichiri was not getting cooked at all.

Akbar and the crew, waiting for dinner, were infuriated. All went to see what was happening in the kitchen: There they saw some burning twigs on the floor, and a bowl filled with Kichiri hanging five feet above the fire. Then emperor Akbar could not help but laugh: "How can the Kichiri be cooked, if it is so far away from the fire?"

Birbal answered most thoughtfully. "In the same way as the poor man received heat from a street lamp." The king understood the meaning of Birbal's reply. Thereby, Emperor Akbar called for the poor man to the court to award the promised reward.

Source: <http://panchatantra.org/akbar-birbal-stories/akbar-birbal-the-slow-cooking-khichri.html>

- Livelihoods December 2014

77. Tenali Ramalingam And Two Thieves

It was the practice of King Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu to visit the jails once a while and review the living standards of the convicted. During one of his visits, two of the jail inmates pleaded for cutting down their punishment period. They explained that theft was one of the 64 arts in the epics and Vedas and started defining the art of stealing. However, they argued that they would shed the lifestyle and shift for one or the other profession to eke out their living.

Rayalu thought for a moment brushing his moustache royally. It's alright thieves. First let me know about your expertise in the art and then decide. You both have to burgle at Ramalinga's house and return. If you emerge successful, then you will be set free immediately Rayalu ordered them. Hey you both listen. You should not deliver any physical blows to the households, take care he added one condition. The same night they were 'officially' let out for robbing Ramalinga's residence. Ramalinga was nurturing a beautiful backyard garden fondly. The thieves' duo crossed over the backyard compound wall and took shelter in the bean bushes to watch the surroundings first. Ramalinga was not just another ordinary man in the crowd. He spotted the duo hiding in the bushes. He called his wife loudly, "My dear wife! Come here fast. The whole town is on fire with the news about some convicts jumping jail and are said to be at large well within the town. We should immediately protect all our jewelry and other valuables..." watching carefully around the bushes, increasing the pitch "...bring that bundle with all our gold and jewelry." A minute later, Ramalinga and his wife with great effort brought a heavy bundle into the backyard and dropped it into the well. Dhhhhhabbb.....sppplsh sounds of a heavy weight dropping into the water in the well echoed for few seconds. The thieves looked at each other with sparkles in their eyes. They never thought it would

be so easy to rob Ramalinga.



Meanwhile, the couple went inside the house and closed the door. After sometime, snores were heard from the bedroom of the house. Slowly the thieves drew themselves out of the bushes, taking care they do not make any noise and went close to the

well. While one of them stood guard, the other one slipped into the well. In a minute, the thief came out of the well and discussed with the other that there is much water in the well. The jewelry bundle cannot be taken out as it is. It would be better if some water was drawn out to snatch away the bundle, they decided. Immediately they started drawing water from the well one after the other bucket. Water started flowing continuously in the backyard spreading all the ways. In the shade of trees and darkness, Ramalinga covering his head with a shawl took one farm tool and started guiding the water to the plants and trees in the yard. As it was too dark and the thieves were concentrating on drawing the water alone, they did not notice Ramalinga doing this. After drawing water from the well for three to four hours continuously, the thieves were tired. One of them again went into the well and came back, "You, come I need help to bring the bundle out, it is too heavy." Both of them slipped into the well together again. With great effort both of them brought the bundle out and fell on the ground like

logs of woods after opening it. To their dismay, it was not a bundle of jewelry but a bundle of small boulders and rocks. They never understood until then that Ramalinga hid his precious items somewhere in the house and dropped this into the well.

Ramalinga called them, “Hey dear thieves! Please draw few more buckets of water from the well. Only two of the plants are to be watered. Please hurry up it is close to dawn. Kindly help me quick and little more” like sprinkling chilies on the wounds of burglars. Both of them were stunned on hearing Ramalinga’s voice. They told each other, “Run! It is Ramalinga!” and sped away crossing the wall with all the tired bodies. The so-called argument of the thieves about the art of stealing and their expertise did not work on Ramalinga at least.

Source:<http://panchatantra.org/tenali-ramalinga/tenali-ramalinga-kavi/tenali-ramalingam-and-the-two-thieves-1.html>

- Livelihoods January 2015

78. The Rescue of a Deer

The crow and the mouse put a brake to their conversation when they saw a frightened deer darting towards the lake. The crow flew to the top of a tree. The mouse scampered into his hole and the turtle sank into the water. From the treetop, the crow could see the deer now clearly and told his other friends, "Friends, he is only a deer who is thirsty. These footfalls are not those of a man."

The turtle replied, "The deer is panting. It seems someone is chasing him. He has not come to quench his thirst. Surely, some hunter might be after him. Please go to the top of the tree and look if you can find any hunter."

Assured that these are friends only, the deer named Chitranga, now said, "Friend, you have guessed correctly. I have escaped the arrow of the hunter and reached here with difficulty. I am in search of a shelter the hunter cannot reach. Please show me a place safe from the hunter."

Mandharaka, the turtle, said, "the scriptures have mentioned two ways of escaping danger. One is to use your muscle power and another is to run as fast as you can. Now, run into the forest before the hunter could come."

"That is not necessary," said Laghupatanaka, the crow.

"I have seen the hunters taking a good catch of food and going the way they came. O Mandharaka, you can now come out of the water."

With Chitranga, the deer, they became now four friends, happily spending time in each other's company. The learned have said that when you have plenty of cordial conversation, to be happy you do not need a woman. The man who has no store of good words is not capable of uttering them.

One day, Chitranga had not come when the other three had gathered at the lakeside for their daily discourse. They thought, "Poor Chitranga has not come so far. Is it possible that a lion or a hunter has killed him? Or, is it possible that he has fallen into a pit?" Well-wishers naturally suspect the worst when their near and dear ones are not seen for a while.

Mandharaka told the crow, "Friend, you know neither Hiranyaka nor I can move fast. You alone can fly and see more things than we can. Please go immediately and find out what is happening to our friend."

The crow did not fly too long before he saw Chitranga trapped in a hunter's net near a small pond. Moved by his plight, the crow said, "Friend, what happened to you?" Trying to check tears in his eyes, the deer said, "Death is chasing me. It is good that you came to see me."

The crow said, "Friend, don't lose courage when we are here. I will rush back and bring Hiranyaka here." Laghupatanaka flew fast to where the mouse and the turtle were anxiously waiting for him to come and tell them what happened to the deer. On hearing his account, Hiranyaka immediately decided that he should go and bite off the strings of the hunter's net.

He got on to the back of the crow and together they flew to the spot where the deer lay helplessly in the hunter's net. When the deer saw his friends rushing to his aid, he realized how necessary it was to collect good friends and how nobody could overcome troubles without the help of good friends.

Hiranyaka asked the deer, "How did you, such a learned being, get into this hole?" The deer replied, "Friend, this is not a time for a debate. The hunter may come any time. First, get me out of this net."

The mouse laughed and said, “Why are you scared of the hunter when I am here? But tell me how did you let yourself trapped in this way?”

The deer replied, “Friend, when luck is not with you, you will lose discretion. As the elders say when death is lurking for you and when wickedness overtakes you, your thoughts too take a crooked path. Nobody can save you from what God has in store for you.”

As they were discussing their plan to escape, Laghupatanaka and Hiranyaka saw that the turtle also was coming. The crow said, “Look, this slow-footed guy is coming. Neither can we save the deer or ourselves. See this fellow’s foolishness. If the hunter comes, I can fly away and you can beat a fast retreat. But how can this turtle escape?”

The hunter came when they were debating this point. The mouse did a fast job of biting off the strings of the net and the deer rushed into the thick forest. The mouse too disappeared into the nearest hole. But the poor turtle was slowly plodding its way to safety. But the hunter saw him and bound him to his bow and slung it across his shoulder and began going home.

Hiranyaka saw this from a distance and began reflecting, “Troubles do not come in singles. I have already lost everything I have. I have lost my relatives and my retinue. Now, this loss of a great friend! We come close to each other only to part. Everything in this world is temporary. Yet, I am grateful to



God, for, he has created this sweet relationship we call friendship.”

Meanwhile, the deer and the crow came, disturbing the mouse’s reverie. Recovering, Hiranyaka said, “Let’s not brood over the past. Let us first look for a way to rescue the turtle.” The crow said, “Listen, and do as I tell you. Chitranga will go to a small lake on the hunter’s way taking him home. He should pretend he is dead and I will sit on his head and pretend pecking his eyes. Seeing the motionless deer, the hunter will then rest the turtle on the

ground and reach for the deer. Hiranyaka should at once reach the turtle and bite off the strings binding him to the bow.”

“All right, we will do as you say,” said the mouse and the deer. Meanwhile, the hunter, seeing the motionless deer, thought it was dead. Leaving the turtle on the ground, he came to the deer. The deer at once ran away and the crow flew away. At the other end, the mouse bit off the strings binding the turtle to the bow. The turtle entered water and the mouse ran to his hole.

Disappointed, the hunter returned to where he had rested the turtle. When he found that the turtle had escaped, he cried bitterly and went home. After making sure that they were far away from the hunter’s reach, the four friends gathered and celebrated their reunion.

Concluding his discourse, Hiranyaka said, “It is a lesson to mankind on the value of friendship. One should not try to cheat friends. The elders have said that he who is faithful to his friends shall never taste defeat”.

Source: <http://panchatantra.org/gaining-friends/the-rescue-of-a-deer-1.html>

- Livelihoods February 2015

79. The Royal Cook

Emperor Akbar was a great man of wit and wisdom. Those twin abilities made him consolidate his position as the undisputed king of kings that posterity should remember. However, he felt himself unhappy that he was not able to beat his favourite minister, Birbal, in wit. He hoped against hope in outwitting Birbal at least once.

He summoned all his ministers except Birbal a few minutes before the session in the royal court. He handed them over each an egg and told them secretly his plan how to play a practical joke on Birbal to embarrass him. All of them were happy that they could see Birbal keep his chin-down in the open court.



When Birbal arrived on time, Akbar narrated to the courtiers a concocted dream he had the previous night.

"In my dream, I was told that I would be able to identify honest ministers among my staff of ministers. All of my ministers should go to the royal garden pond and dive there and come back. All the honest ones will come back with one egg each".

Birbal was in confusion for some time. Slowly he realized that it was a trick aimed at playing on him by Akbar to hoodwink him. But there was no other option than to stand this acid test.

At the sounding of bells, the contest started; one by one, the ministers left for the pond, and came out with an egg each on hand. Birbal's turn came. There was a flash in his mind. He rushed into the garden pond and dived. Unlike his other ministers, he brought no egg.

Birbal surfaced the water crowing like a cock and kept on crowing as he came back:

Cock-a-doodle-doo, cock-a-doodle-doo"

That horrible cry almost tore the assembly hall.

Akbar felt annoyed at this ranting, along with all the members in the assembly.

"Stop cracking like a cock, and show me your egg."

Birbal stopped his cocking and coolly said in the following words:

"Jahapana, only hens lay eggs. But I am a cock and I can't produce any egg."

The entire court burst out in a peal of laughter that resounded the hall.

Emperor Akbar said to himself: "It is not easy to fool this wise man." So, he embraced Birbal and rewarded him profusely.

Source: <http://www.english-for-students.com/the-lazy-dreamer.html>

- Livelihoods March 2015

80. The Lazy Person

The rain gods had been smiling the whole night. The roads were muddy and the potholes were filled to the brim. It was the day for the market and Raju the farmer was riding his cart along the country road. He had to reach the market early so that he can sell his hay. It was very difficult for the horses to drag the load through the deep mud. On his journey suddenly the wheels of the horse cart sank into the mire. The more the horses pulled, the deeper the wheel sank. Raju climbed down from his seat and stood beside his cart. He searched all around but could not find anyone around to help him.



Cursing his bad luck, he looked dejected and defeated. He didn't make the slightest effort to get down on the wheel and lift it up by himself. Instead he started cursing his luck for what happened. Looking up at the sky, he started shouting at God, "I am so unlucky! Why has this happened to me? Oh God, come down to help me." After a long wait, God finally appeared before Raju. He

asked Raju, "Do you think you can move the chariot by simply looking at it and whining about it? Nobody will help you unless you make some effort to help yourself. Did you try to get the wheel out of the pothole by yourself? Get up and put your shoulder to wheel and you will soon find the way out." Raju was ashamed of himself. He bent down and put his shoulder to the wheel and urged on the horses. In no time the wheel was out of the mire. Raju learnt his lesson. He thanked God and carried on his journey happily.

Moral: "God helps those who help themselves."

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods April 2015

81. Live and Work

Father was a hardworking man who delivered bread as a living to support his wife and three children. He spent all his evenings after work attending classes, hoping to improve himself so that he could one day find a better paying job. Except for Sundays, Father hardly ate a meal together with his family. He worked and studied very hard because he wanted to provide his family with the best money could



buy. Whenever the family complained that he was not spending enough time with them, he reasoned that he was doing all this for them. But he often yearned to spend more time with his family. The day came when the examination results were announced. To his joy, Father passed, and with distinctions too! Soon after, he was offered a good job as a senior supervisor which paid handsomely. Like a dream come true, Father could now afford to provide his family with life's little luxuries like nice clothing, fine food and vacation abroad. However, the family still did not get to see father for most of the week. He continued to work very hard, hoping to be promoted to the position of manager. In fact, to make himself a worthy candidate for the promotion, he enrolled for another course in the open university.

Again, whenever the family complained that he was not spending enough time with them, he reasoned that he was doing all this for them. But he often yearned to spend more time with his family. Father's hard work paid off and he was promoted. Jubilantly, he decided to hire a maid to relieve his wife from her domestic tasks. He also felt that their three-room flat was no longer big enough, it would be nice for his family to be able to enjoy the facilities and comfort of a condominium. Having experienced the rewards of his hard work many times before, Father resolved to further his studies and work at being promoted again. The family still did not get to see much of him. In fact, sometimes Father had to work on Sundays entertaining clients. Again, whenever the family complained that he was not spending enough time with them, he reasoned that he was doing all this for them. But he often yearned to spend more time with his family. As expected, Father's hard work paid off again and he bought a beautiful condominium overlooking the coast of Singapore. On the first Sunday evening at their new home, Father declared to his family that he decided not to take anymore courses or pursue any more promotions. From then on, he was going to devote more time to his family. Father did not wake up the next day.

Source: <https://academictips.org/blogs/live-or-work/>

- Livelihoods May 2015

82. Struggles of Life

Once upon a time a daughter complained to her father that her life was miserable and that she didn't know how she was going to make it. She was tired of fighting and struggling all the time. It seemed just as one problem was solved, another one soon followed. Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire.

Once the three pots began to boil, he placed potatoes in one pot, eggs in the second pot and ground coffee beans in the third pot. He then let them sit and boil, without saying a word to his daughter. The daughter, moaned and impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing. After twenty minutes he turned off the burners. He took the potatoes out of the pot and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. He then ladled the coffee out and placed it in a cup.

Turning to her, he asked. "Daughter, what do you see?" "Potatoes, eggs and coffee," she hastily replied.

"Look closer", he said, "and touch the potatoes." She did and noted that they were soft.

He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. Its rich aroma brought a smile to her face.



"Father, what does this mean?" she asked. He then explained that the potatoes, the eggs and coffee beans had each faced the same adversity—the boiling water. However, each one reacted differently. The potato went in strong, hard and unrelenting, but in boiling water, it became soft and weak. The egg was fragile, with the thin outer shell protecting its liquid interior until it was put in the boiling water. Then the

inside of the egg became hard. However, the ground coffee beans were unique. After they were exposed to the boiling water, they changed the water and created something new.

"Which one are you?" he asked his daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a potato, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Moral: In life, things happen around us, things happen to us, but the only thing that truly matters is how you choose to react to it and what you make out of it. Life is all about leaning, adopting and converting all the struggles that we experience into something positive

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/struggles-of-our-life/>

- Livelihoods June 2015

83. The Giving Tree

Once upon a time, there lived a big mango tree. A little boy loved to come and play around it every day. He climbed to the tree top, ate the mangoes, took a nap under the shadow... He loved the tree and the tree loved to play with him. Time went by, the little boy grew, and he no longer played around the tree. One day, the boy came back to the tree with a sad look on his face. "Come and play with me," the tree asked the boy. "I am no longer a kid; I don't play around trees anymore." The boy replied, "I want toys. I need money to buy them." "Sorry, I don't have money... but you can pick all my mangoes and sell them so you will have money." The boy was so excited. He picked all the mangoes on the tree and left happily. The boy didn't come back. The tree was sad. One day, the boy grown into a man returned



The tree was so excited. "Come and play with me," the tree said. "I don't have time to play. I have to work for my family. We need a house for shelter. Can you help me?" "Sorry, I don't have a house, but you can chop off my branches to build your house." So, the man cut all the branches off the tree and left happily. The tree was glad to see him happy but the boy didn't come back afterward. The tree was again lonely and sad. One hot summer day, the man returned and the tree was delighted. "Come and play with me!" The tree said. "I am sad and getting old. I want to go sailing to relax myself. Can you give me a boat?" "Use my trunk to build your boat. You can sail far away and be happy." So, the man cut the tree trunk to make a boat. He went sailing and didn't come back for a long time. Finally, the man returned after he had been gone for so many years. "Sorry, my boy, but I don't have anything for you anymore. No more mangoes to give you." The tree said. "I don't have teeth to bite," the man replied. "No more trunk for you to climb on." "I am too old for that now," the man said. "I really can't give you anything, the only thing left is my dying roots," the tree said with sadness. "I don't need much now, just a place to rest. I am tired after all these years," the man replied. "Good! Old tree roots are the best place to lean on and rest. Come sit down with me and rest." The boy sat down and the tree was glad and smiled. Moral: The tree in the story represents our parents. When we are young, we love to play with them. When we grow up, we leave them and only come back when we need help. Parents sacrifice their lives for us. Never Forget their sacrifices. Give them Love and Care before it's too late.

Source: [Book by Shel Silverstien](#)

- Livelihoods July 2015

84. Keep Your Dream

I have a friend named Monty Roberts who owns a horse ranch in San Isidro. He has let me use his house to put on fund-raising events to raise money for youth at risk programs. The last time I was there he introduced me by saying, "I want to tell you why I let Jack use my horse. It all goes back to a story about a young man who was the son of an itinerant horse trainer who would go from stable to stable, race track to race track, farm to farm and ranch to ranch, training horses. As a result, the boy's high school career was continually interrupted. When he was a senior, he was asked to write a paper about what he wanted to be and do when he grew up. "That night he wrote a seven-page paper describing his goal of someday owning a horse ranch. He wrote about his dream in great detail and he even drew a diagram of a 200-acre ranch, showing the location of all the buildings, the stables and the track. Then he drew a detailed floor plan for a 4,000-square-foot house that would sit on a 200-acre dream ranch. "He put a great deal of his heart into the project and the next day he handed it in to his teacher. Two days later he received his paper back. On the front page was a large red F with a note that read, 'See me after class.' "The boy with the dream went to see the teacher after class and asked, 'Why did I receive an F?' "The teacher said, 'This is an unrealistic dream for a young boy like you. You have no money. You come from an itinerant family. You have no resources.



Owning a horse ranch requires a lot of money. You have to buy the land. You have to pay for the original breeding stock and later you'll have to pay large stud fees. There's no way you could ever do it.' Then the teacher added, 'If you will rewrite this paper with a more realistic goal, I will reconsider your grade.' "The boy went home and thought about it long and hard. He asked his father what he should do. His father said, 'Look, son, you have to make up your own mind on this. However, I think it is a very important decision for you.' "Finally, after sitting with it for a week, the boy turned in the same paper, making no changes at all. He stated, "You can keep the F and I'll keep my dream." Monty then turned to the assembled group and said, "I tell you this story because you are sitting in my 4,000-squarefoot house in the middle of my 200-acre horse ranch. I still have that school paper framed over the fireplace." He added, "The best part of the story is that two summers ago that same schoolteacher brought 30 kids to camp out on my ranch for a week." When the teacher was leaving, he said, "Look, Monty, I can tell you this now. When I was your teacher, I was something of a dream stealer. During those years I stole a lot of kids' dreams. Fortunately, you had enough gumption not to give up on yours."

Moral: Don't let anyone steal your dreams. Follow your heart, no matter what. No Dream is too big or too small when one works hard to live it. One should always try making dreams come true no matter what.

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/keep-your-dream/>

- Livelihoods August 2015

85. The Cracked Pot

“A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and 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 master’s 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 in his master’s house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end 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, and I want to apologize to you. “Why?” asked my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master’s house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don’t get full value from your efforts,” the pot said. The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion, he said, “As we return to the master’s house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path.” Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it somewhat.

But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure. The bearer said to the pot, “Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot’s side? That’s because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you’ve watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master’s table. Without you being just the way, you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house.” Moral: Each of us has our own unique flaws. We’re all cracked pots. In this world, nothing goes to waste. You may think like the cracked pot that you are inefficient or useless in certain areas of your life, but somehow these flaws can turn out to be a blessing in disguise.”

Source: <https://alltimeshortstories.com/life-the-cracked-pot/>

- Livelihoods September 2015

86. Growth and Stability

Father is flying a kite. His son is watching him carefully. After sometime son says "Dad. Because of the string the kite is not able to go any further higher. " Hearing this, the father smiles and breaks the string. The kite goes higher after breaking of the thread and then shortly after that it comes and falls on the ground. The child is very dejected and sad. The father sits next to him and calmly explains " Son, in life we reach a certain level of prosperity and then we feel that there are certain things in our life that are not letting us grow any further like Home, Family, Culture Friendship etc. We feel we want to be free from those strings which we believe are stopping us from going higher. But, remember son. Going higher is easier than staying at the higher level. And friends, family and culture etc. are the things that will help us stay stable at the high heights that we have achieved. If we try to break away from those strings our condition will be similar to the kite."



Moral: "never go away from culture, family, friends and relationships as they help keep you stable while you are flying high." Life is Beautiful.

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods October 2015

87. Appreciation of Hard Work

One young academically excellent person went to apply for a managerial position in a big company. He passed the first interview; the director did the last interview, made the last decision. The director discovered from the CV that the youth's academic achievements were excellent all the way, from the secondary school until the postgraduate research, Never, had a year when he did not score. The director asked, "Did you obtain any scholarships in school?" The youth answered "none". The director asked, "Was it your father who paid for your school fees?" The youth answered, "My father passed away when I was one year old, it was my mother who paid for my school fees". The director asked, "Where did your mother work?" The youth answered, "My mother worked as clothes cleaner. The director requested the youth to show his hands.

The youth showed a pair of hands that were smooth and perfect". The director asked, "Have you ever helped your mother wash the clothes before?" The youth answered, "Never, my mother always wanted me to study and read more books. Furthermore, my mother can wash clothes faster than me". The director said, "I have a request. When you go back today, go and clean your mother's hands, and then see me tomorrow morning". The youth felt that his chance of landing the job was high. When he went back, he happily requested his mother to let him clean her hands. His mother felt strange, happy but with mixed feelings, she showed her hands to the kid. The youth cleaned his mother's hands slowly. His tear fell as he did that. It was the first time he noticed that his mother's hands were so wrinkled, and there were so many bruises in her hands. Some bruises were so painful that his mother shivered when they were cleaned with water. This was the first time the youth realized that it was this pair of hands that washed the clothes every day to enable him to pay the school fee. The bruises in the mother's hands were the price that the mother had to pay for his graduation, academic excellence and his future. After finishing the cleaning of his mother's hands, the youth quietly washed all the



remaining clothes for his mother. That night, mother and son talked for a very long time. Next morning, the youth went to the director's office. The Director noticed the tears in the youth's eyes, asked: "Can you tell me what have you done and learned yesterday in your house?" The youth answered, "I cleaned my mother's hand, and also finished cleaning all the remaining clothes".

The Director asked, "please tell me your feelings". The youth said, "Number 1. I know now what is

appreciation. Without my mother, there would not the successful me today.

Number 2. By working together and helping my mother, only I now realize how difficult and tough it is to get something done.

Number 3. I have come to appreciate the importance and value of family relationship".

The director said, "This is what I am looking for to be my manager. I want to recruit a person who can appreciate the help of others, a person who knows the sufferings of others to get things done, and a

person who would not put money as his only goal in life. You are hired”. Later on, this young person worked very hard, and received the respect of his subordinates. Every employee worked diligently and as a team. The company’s performance improved tremendously.

Moral: If one doesn’t understand and experience the difficulty it takes to earn the comfort provided by their loved ones, then they will never value it. The most important thing is to experience the difficulty and learn to value hard work behind all the given comfort

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/appreciation-of-hard-work/>

- Livelihoods November 2015

88. Looking at Mirror

One day all the employees reached the office and they saw a big advice on the door on which it was written: “Yesterday the person who has been hindering your growth in this company passed away. We invite you to join the funeral in the room that has been prepared in the gym”. In the beginning, they all got sad for the death of one of their colleagues, but after a while they started getting curious to know who was that man who hindered the growth of his colleagues and the company itself. The excitement in the gym was such that security agents were ordered to control the crowd within the room. The more people reached the coffin, the more the excitement heated up. Everyone thought: “Who is this guy who was hindering my progress? Well, at least he died!” One by one the thrilled employees got closer to the coffin, and when they looked inside it, they suddenly became speechless.

They stood nearby the coffin, shocked and in silence, as if someone had touched the deepest part of their soul. There was a mirror inside the coffin: everyone who looked inside it could see himself. There was also a sign next to the mirror that said: “There is only one person who is capable to set limits to your growth: it is YOU.” You are the only person who can revolutionize your life. You



are the only person who can influence your happiness, your realization and your success. You are the only person who can help yourself. Your life does not change when your boss changes, when your friends change, when your partner changes, when your company changes. Your life changes when YOU change, when you go beyond your limiting beliefs, when you realize that you are the only one responsible for your life. “The most important relationship you can have is the one you have with yourself”.

Moral: The world is like a mirror: it gives back to anyone the reflection of the thoughts in which one has strongly believed. The world and your reality are like mirrors lying in a coffin, which show to any individual the death of his divine capability to imagine and create his happiness and his success. It’s the way you face Life that makes the difference.

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/looking-at-mirror/>

- Livelihoods December 2015

89. Helping Others

Once there was a small boy named Shankar. He belonged to a poor family. One day, he was crossing through the forest carrying some woods. He saw an old man who was very hungry. Shankar wanted to give him some food, but he did not have food for his own. So, he continued on his way. On his way he saw a deer who was very thirsty. He wanted to give him some water, but he did not have water for himself. So, he went on his way ahead. Then he saw a man who wanted to make a camp but he did not have woods. Shankar asked his problem and gave some woods to him. In return, he gave him some food and water. Now he went back to the old man and gave him some food and gave some water to the deer. The old man and the deer were very happy. Shankar than happily went on his way.



However, one day Shankar fell down the hill. He was in pain but he couldn't move and no one was there to help him. But the old man who he had helped before saw him, he quickly came and pulled him up the hill. He had many wounds on his legs. The deer whom Shankar had gave water saw his wounds and quickly went to forest and brought some herbs. After sometime his wounds were covered. All were very happy that they were able to help each other.

Moral: If you help others, then they will also help you.

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/helping-others/>

- Livelihoods January 2016

90. The Three Types of People

A teacher shows three toys to a student and asks the student to find out the differences. All the three toys are seemed to be identical in their shape, size and material.

After keen observation, the student observes holes in the toys. 1st toy it has holes in the ears. 2nd toy has holes in ear and mouth. 3rd toy has only one hole in one ear than with the help of needle the student puts the needle in the ear hole of 1st toy.



The needle comes out from the other ear. In the 2nd toy, when the needle was put in ear the needle came out of mouth. And in the 3rd toy, when the needle was put in, the needle did not come out. First toy represents those people around you who gives an impression that they are listening to you, all your things and care for you. But they just pretend to do so. After listening, as the needle comes out from the next ear, the things you said to them by counting on them are gone. So be careful while you are speaking to this type of people around you, who does not care for you.

Second toy represent those people who listens to you all your things and gives an impression that they care for you. But as in the toy, the needle comes out from mouth. These people will use your things and the words you tell them against you by telling it to others and bringing out the confidential issues for their own purpose. Third toy, the needle does not come out from it. These kinds of people will keep the trust you have in them. They are the ones who you can count on.

Moral: Always stay in a company of a people who are loyal and trustworthy. People, who listen to what you tell them, are not always the ones you can count on when you need them the most.

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/the-three-types-of-people/>

- Livelihoods February 2016

91. The Lazy Farmer

The rain gods had been smiling the whole night. The roads were muddy and the potholes were filled to the brim. It was the day for the market and Raju the farmer was riding his cart along the country road. He had to reach the market early so that he can sell his hay. It was very difficult for the horses to drag the load through the deep mud. On his journey suddenly the wheels of the horse cart sank into the mire. The more the horses pulled, the deeper the wheel sank. Raju climbed down from his seat and stood beside his cart. He searched all around but could not find anyone around to help him. Cursing his bad luck, he looked dejected and defeated. He didn't make the slightest effort to get down on the wheel and lift it up by himself. Instead he started cursing his luck for what happened. Looking up at the sky, he started shouting at God, "I am so unlucky! Why has this happened to me? Oh God, come down to help me." After a long wait, God finally appeared before Raju.



He asked Raju, "Do you think you can move the chariot by simply looking at it and whining about it? Nobody will help you unless you make some effort to help yourself. Did you try to get the wheel out of the pothole by yourself? Get up and put your shoulder to wheel and you will soon find the way out." Raju was ashamed of himself. He bent down and put his shoulder to the wheel and urged on the horses. In no time the wheel was out of the mire. Raju learnt his lesson. He thanked God and carried on his journey happily.

Moral: God helps those who help themselves.

Source: <https://www.kidsworldfun.com/short-stories/the-lazy-farmer.php>

- Livelihoods April 2016

92. My Mom Had One Eye

There was a Kid who lived with his mother. Kid used to hate her mother because she had only one eye. He used to feel embarrassed. Mother used to work as cook to support the family and his kid studies. One day mother went to kid school to meet him but kid was so embarrassed. He thought to himself, "How could she do this to me?" He ignored her and ran out. Next day a boy from kid's class commented to him, "EEEE, your mother has only one eye!!" Kid was so embarrassed that he wanted his mother to disappear. That day after reaching home confronted his mother and said, "Because of you people make fun of me. Why don't you die?" Even after listening to this his mother didn't respond. All his childhood kid just thought of getting out of that house anyhow. So, he studied hard and got a job abroad. There he got married, had kids and all the comforts and was very happy with his life away from his mother. One day his mother came to visit him. She hadn't seen him since he left and for the first time, she was going to meet her grandchildren. As she rang the bell and stood by the door her grandchildren opened the door and after seeing her, they laughed at her not knowing who she is. When his son came at door and saw her. He started screaming at her, "How can you come to my house uninvited and scare my kids. Get out now and never come again."

To this his mother replied, "Oh, I am so sorry. I may have gotten to wrong address." and left. One day he got a letter from his college about reunion. He was excited to got here. After attending reunion, he



went to old shack. There his mother neighbor told him that she passed away and gave him a letter left for him. He opened the letter and started reading it. "My dearest son, I think of you all the time. I miss you a lot. I am really sorry that I came to your house and scared your children. I was so glad to hear that you were gone to come back for reunion. I don't know if I will be

able to get out of bed to see you. I am sorry that I was a constant embarrassment when you were growing. You don't know that when you were little, you got into an accident and lost one of your eyes. As your mother I couldn't stand watching you to grow up having just one eye. So, I gave you mine. Take care my Dear. Love you."

Moral: You never know what your Parents had been through to see you Happy. So Never Judge them and Respect and Care for them Always.

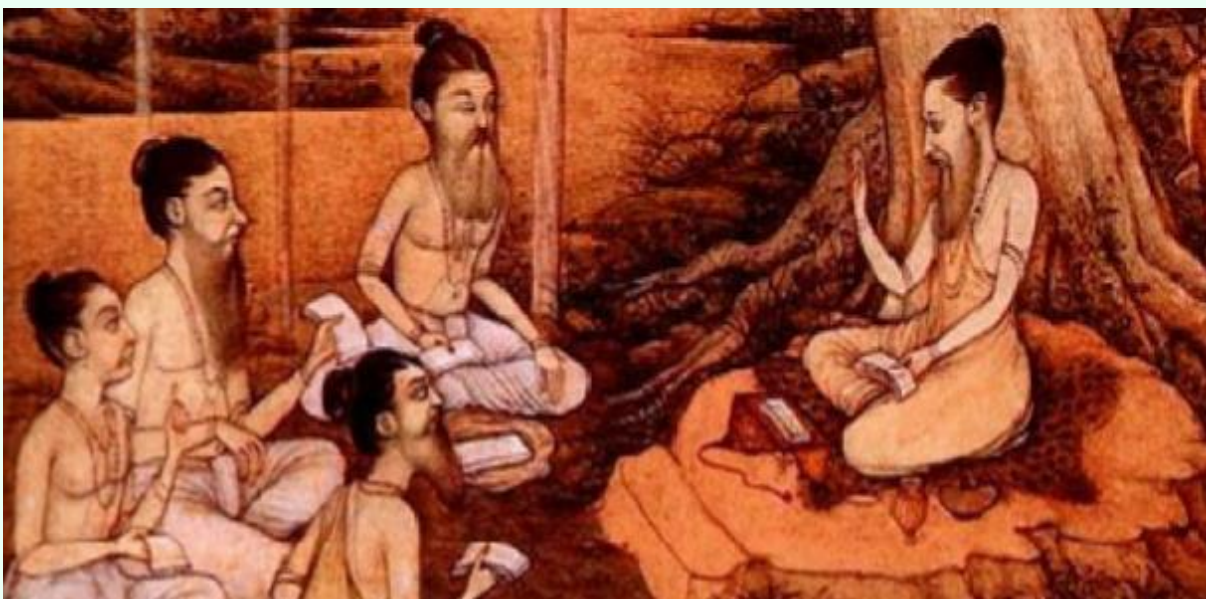
Source: <https://academictips.org/blogs/my-mom-only-had-one-eye/>

- Livelihoods May 2016

93. Master and Disciples

One day, all the disciples went to their master' and said, "Master, Master, we all are going on a pilgrimage. Master: Why you want to go on a pilgrimage trip? Disciples: So that we can improve our devotion. Master: OK. Then do me a favor. Please take this Karela (bitter gourd) along with you and wherever you go and whichever temple you visit, place it in the alter of the Deity, take the blessings and bring it back. So, not only the disciples but the Karela also went on pilgrimage, temple to temple. And finally, when they came back, the Master said, "cook that Karela and serve it to me." The disciples cooked it and served it to the master. After having the first bite, the master said, "Surprising"!!!! Disciples: What's so surprising?

Master: Even after the pilgrimage the Karela is still bitter. How come???' Disciples: But that's the very nature of the Karela, Master.



Master: That's what I am saying. Unless you change your nature, pilgrimage will not make any difference. So, you & I, if we do not change ourselves no teacher or guru can make a difference in our lives. If you think positively, Sound becomes music, Movement become dance, Smile becomes laughter, Mind becomes meditative and Life becomes a celebration!

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods June 2016

94. A Young Girl and Her Father

A young girl and her father were walking along a forest path. At some point, they came across a large tree branch on the ground in front of them. The girl asked her father, "If I try, do you think I could move that branch?" Her father replied, "I am sure you can, if you use all your strength."

The girl tried her best to lift or push the branch, but she was not strong enough and she couldn't move it. She said, with disappointment, "You were wrong, dad. I can't move it." "Try again with all your strength," replied her father. Again, the girl tried hard to push the branch. She struggled but it did not move. "Dad, I cannot do it," said the girl. Finally, her father said, "Young lady, I advised you to use 'all your strength'. You didn't. You didn't ask for my help."



~~~ Some reflections on this story.

*Our real strength lies not in independence, but in interdependence*

*No individual person has all the strengths, all the resources and all the stamina required for the complete blossoming of their vision*

*To ask for help and support when we need it is not a sign of weakness, it is a sign of wisdom*

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods July 2016

## 95. The Dream That Came True

I have a friend named Andrew Levis who owns a horse ranch in Los Angeles. He has let me use his house to put on fund-raising events to raise money for youth at risk programs. The last time I was there he introduced me by saying, "I want to tell you why I let Jack use my horse. It all goes back to a story about a young man who was the son of an itinerant horse trainer who would go from stable to stable, race track to race track, farm to farm and ranch to ranch, training horses. As a result, the boy's high school career was continually interrupted. When he was a senior, he was asked to write a paper about what he wanted to be and do when he grew up. "That night he wrote a seven-page paper describing his goal of someday owning a horse ranch. He wrote about his dream in great detail and he even drew a diagram of a 200-acre ranch, showing the location of all the buildings, the stables and the track.

Then he drew a detailed floor plan for a 4,000-square-foot house that would sit on a 200-acre dream ranch. "He put a great deal of his heart into the project and the next day he handed it in to his teacher. Two days later he received his paper back. On the front page was a large red F with a note that read, 'See me after class.' "The boy with the dream went to see the teacher after class and asked, 'Why did I receive an F?' "The teacher said, 'This is an unrealistic dream for a young boy like you. You have no money. You come from an itinerant family. You have no resources. Owning a horse ranch requires a lot of money. You have to buy the land. You have to pay for the original breeding stock later you'll have to pay large study fees. There's no way you could ever do it.' Then the teacher added, 'If you will rewrite this paper with a more realistic goal, I will reconsider your grade.' "The boy went home and thought about it long and hard. He asked his father what he should do. His father said, 'Look, son, you have to make up your own mind on this. However, I think it is a very important decision for you.' "Finally, after sitting with it for a week, the boy turned in the same paper, making no changes at all. He stated, "You can keep the F and I'll keep my dream."



Andrew then turned to the assembled group and said, "I tell you this story because you are sitting in my 4,000-squarefoot house in the middle of my 200-acre horse ranch. I still have that school paper framed over the fireplace." He added, "The best part of the story is that two summers ago that same schoolteacher brought 30 kids to camp out on my ranch for a week." When the teacher was leaving, he said, "Look, Andrew, I can tell you this now. When I was your teacher, I was something of a dream stealer. During those years I stole a lot of kids' dreams. Fortunately, you had enough gumption not to give up on yours."

**Moral: Work hard, dream big! Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself.**

**Source:** <https://yourstoryclub.com/short-stories-for-kids/short-story-for-teenagers-dream-came-true/index.html>

- Livelihoods August 2016



## 96. A River Cuts the Rock

An eight-year-old child heard her parents talking about her little brother. All she knew was that he was very sick and they had no money left. They were moving to a smaller house because they could not afford to stay in the present house after paying the doctor's bills. Only a very costly surgery could save him now and there was no one to loan them the money. When she heard her Daddy say to her tearful mother with whispered desperation, 'Only a miracle can save him now', the little girl went to her bedroom and pulled her piggy bank from its hiding place in the closet. She poured all the change out on the floor and counted it carefully. Clutching the precious piggy bank tightly, she slipped out the back door and made her way six blocks to the local drugstore. She took a quarter from her bank and placed it on the glass counter. "And what do you want?" asked the pharmacist. "It's for my little brother," the girl answered back. "He's really very sick and I want to buy a miracle." "I beg your pardon?" said the pharmacist.

"His name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head and my daddy says only a miracle can save him. So how much does a miracle cost?" "We don't sell miracles here, child. I'm sorry," the pharmacist said, smiling sadly at the little girl. "Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn't enough, I can try and get some more. Just tell me how much it costs." In the shop was a well-dressed customer. He stopped down and asked the little girl, "What kind of a miracle does your brother need?" "I don't know," She replied with her eyes welling up. "He's really sick and mommy says he needs



an operation. But my daddy can't pay for it, so I have brought my savings". "How much do you have?" asked the man. "One dollar and eleven cents; but I can try and get some more", she answered barely audibly. "Well, what a coincidence," smiled the man, "A dollar and eleven cents - the exact price of a miracle for little brothers." He took her money in one hand and held her hand with the other. He said, "Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let's see if I have the kind of miracle you need." That well-dressed man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specializing in neuro-surgery. The operation was completed without charge and it wasn't long before Andrew was home again and doing well. "That surgery," her mom whispered, "was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost." The little girl smiled. She knew exactly how much the miracle cost. One dollar and eleven cents...plus the faith of a little child. Perseverance can make miracles happen! A river cuts the rock not because of its power, but because of its consistency. Never lose hope & keep walking towards your vision.

an operation. But my daddy can't pay for it, so I have brought my savings". "How much do you have?" asked the man. "One dollar and eleven cents; but I can try and get some more", she answered barely audibly. "Well, what a coincidence," smiled the man, "A dollar and eleven cents - the exact price of a miracle for little brothers." He took her money in one hand and held her hand with the other. He said, "Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let's see if I have the kind of miracle you need." That well-dressed man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specializing in neuro-surgery. The operation was completed without charge and it wasn't long before Andrew was home again and doing well. "That surgery," her mom whispered, "was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost." The little girl smiled. She knew exactly how much the miracle cost. One dollar and eleven cents...plus the faith of a little child. Perseverance can make miracles happen! A river cuts the rock not because of its power, but because of its consistency. Never lose hope & keep walking towards your vision.

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods September 2016

## 97. Learn to Appreciate

Once upon a time, there was a man who was very helpful, kindhearted, and generous. He was a man who will help someone without asking anything to pay him back. He will help someone because he wants to and he loves to. One day while walking into a dusty road, this man saw a purse, so he picked it up and noticed that the purse was empty. Suddenly a woman with a policeman shows up and gets him arrested. The woman kept on asking where did he hide her money but the man replied, "It was empty when I found it, Mam."



The woman yelled at him, "Please give it back, it's for my son's school fees." The man noticed that the woman really felt sad, so he handed all his money. He could say that the woman was a single mother. The man said, "Take these, sorry for the inconvenience." The woman left and policeman held the man for further questioning. The woman was very happy but when she counted her money later on, it was doubled, she was shocked. One day while woman was going to pay her son's school fees towards the school, she noticed that some skinny man was walking behind her. She thought that he may rob her, so she approached a policeman standing nearby. He was the same policeman, who she took along to inquire about her purse. The woman told him about the man following her, but suddenly they saw that man collapsing. They ran at him, and saw that he was the same man whom they arrested few days back for stealing a purse.

He looked very weak and woman was confused. The policeman said to the woman, "He didn't return your money, he gave you his money that day. He wasn't the thief but hearing about you son's school fees, he felt sad and gave you his money." Later, they helped man stand up, and man told the woman, "Please go ahead and pay your son's school fees, I saw you and followed you to be sure that no one steals your son's school fees." The woman was speechless.

**Moral: Life gives you strange experiences, sometime it shocks you and sometimes it may surprise you. We end up making wrong judgments or mistakes in our anger, desperation and frustration. However, when you get a second chance, correct your mistakes and return the favor. Be Kind and Generous. Learn to Appreciate what you are given.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/learn-appreciate/>

- Livelihoods October 2016



## 98. Sheela And Python

Once there was a lady named Sheela who had a python as Pet. Sheela was very close to her python. She used to feed him, play with him, cuddle him daily. After a few weeks the python stopped eating. After many unsuccessful attempts to feed the python, she went to veterinary doctor.



The doctor examined the python. Doc: "Do you sleep with your python?". Sheela nodded. Sheela: "Yes, he cuddles me completely around my body." The doctor took a moment and said "Madam, your python is not sick. He is planning to eat you. Every time the python cuddles you, it measures your weight and size. And plans how to kill you and digest you." The doctor continued, "Since we humans are very large to swallow and digest, your python has not been eating anything in order to digest you." To this Sheela got upset and refused to listen further to doctor and went to her home. That night the python attacked her and swallowed her.

**Moral: Not everybody who is close to you, actually loves you. You can learn great things from your mistakes when you aren't busy denying them**

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods November 2016

## 99. Big John and The Bus Driver

One fine day, a bus driver went to the bus garage, started his bus, and drove off along the route. No problems for the first few stops-a few people got on, a few got off, and things went generally well. At the next stop, however, a big hulk of a guy got on. Six feet height, built like a wrestler, arms hanging down to the ground. He glared at the driver and said, "Big John doesn't need to pay!" and sat down at the back. Did I mention that the driver was five feet three, thin, and basically meek? Well, he was.! Naturally, he didn't argue with Big John, but he wasn't happy about it.



The next day the same thing happened-Big John got on again, made a show of refusing to pay, and sat down. And the next day, and the one after that and so forth.! This grated on the bus driver, who started losing sleep over the way Big John was taking advantage of him. Finally, he could stand it no longer. He signed up for body building courses, karate, judo, and all that good stuff. By the end of the summer, he had become quite strong; what's more, he felt really good about himself. So, on the next Monday, when Big John once Again got on the bus and

said, "Big John doesn't pay!

" The driver stood up, glared back at the passenger, and screamed, "And why not?" With a surprised look on his face, Big John replied, \*"Big John has a bus pass."\* Be sure of what is a problem in the first place before working hard to solve one.

\*Quite often in life we over-evaluate the problems and start working on huge solutions spending time, money, efforts, energy and focus, whereas, in actual, problems eventually are not that big! Most of Our life is actually as above story!

Source: <https://mythologystories.wordpress.com/2013/01/16/big-john/>

- Livelihoods December 2016

## 100. The Right Person

Once there was a wise King. He had two sons. He appointed eminent scholars to teach them all arts. After a few years of teachings, the King fell ill badly. So, he wanted to select his next King for his Kingdom. He wanted to test his sons' abilities.

He called both of them and gave a room to each of them. He said, "You must fill this room completely with anything you wish. It can be anything! But there should be no space left behind and you should not seek the advice from anyone!"



The next day the king visited the elder's son room. The room was completely filled with hay. The king sighed on the foolishness of the elder son.

Then he went to the younger son's room. But it was kept closed. The King knocked at the door of the room. The second son asked his father to get in and closed the door again. There was darkness everywhere and The King shouted at his second son angrily.

But the second son lighted a candle and said, I have filled this room with light!"

Now the King felt very happy and hugged his son proudly. He understood that the younger son would be the right person to rule The Kingdom after The King.

Source: <http://www.english-for-students.com/The-Right-Person.html>

- Livelihoods January 2017

## 101. Friends Forever

A mouse and a frog were friends. Every morning the frog would hop out of his pond and go to visit his friend who lived in a hole in the side of a tree. He would return home at noon. The mouse delighted



in his friend's company unaware that the friend was slowly turning into an enemy. The reason? The frog felt slighted because though he visited the mouse every day, the mouse on his part, had never made an attempt to visit him. One day he felt he had been humiliated enough. When it was time for him to take leave of the mouse, he tied one end of a string around his own leg, tied the other end to the mouse's tail, and hopped away, dragging the hapless mouse behind him.

The frog dived deep into the pond. The mouse tried to free himself but couldn't, and soon drowned. His bloated body floated to the top. A hawk saw the mouse floating on the pond's surface. He swooped down, and grabbing the mouse in his talons, flew to the branch of a nearby tree. The frog, of course, was hauled out of the water too. He desperately tried to free himself, but couldn't and the hawk soon put an end to his struggles. In Africa they have a saying: 'Don't dig too deep a pit for your enemy, you may fall into it yourself'

Source: <http://www.english-for-students.com/Friends-Forever.html>

- Livelihoods February 2017

## 102. Honesty Is the Best Policy

A milkman became very wealthy through dishonest means. He had to cross a river daily to reach the city where his customers lived. He mixed the water of the river generously with the milk that he sold for a good profit. One day he went around collecting the dues in order to celebrate the wedding of his son. With the large amount thus collected he purchased plenty of rich clothes and glittering gold ornaments. But while crossing the river the boat capsized and all his costly purchases were swallowed



by the river. The milk vendor was speechless with grief. At that time, he heard a voice that came from the river, "Do not weep. What you have lost is only the illicit gains you earned through cheating your customers.

Source: <http://ureadthis.com/honesty-is-the-best-policy-a-moral-story-of-panchtantra/>

- Livelihoods March 2017



### 103. The Story Of The Desert

When God first created the world, there was no desert. The whole world was filled with fertile lands full of beautiful gardens. God created man in order to maintain the world. He said to man, "Every time you commit a sin, there will be a peck of sand falling on the ground". Man thought, "What harm will a peck of sand do? Let me live as I please". He started committing wicked sins and pecks of sand started



falling on the ground. Still man continued sinning. And the effect is that today there are many deserts an around us.

**MORAL: As you sow, so you reap.**

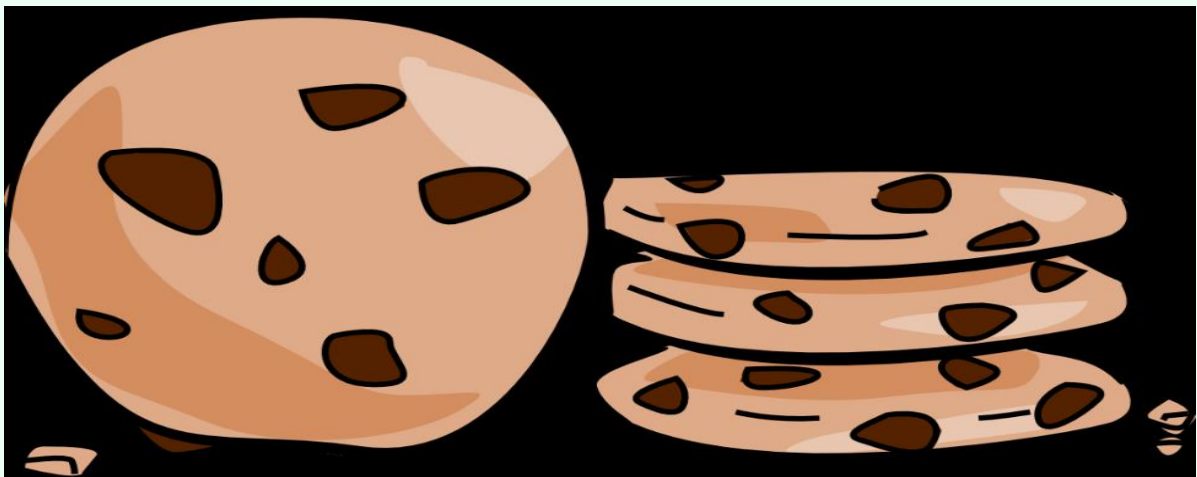
Source: <http://www.english-for-students.com/The-Story-of-The-Desert.html>

- Livelihoods April 2017

## 104. Burnt Biscuits

When I was a kid, my mom liked to make breakfast food for dinner every now and then. And I remember one night in particular when she had made breakfast after a long, hard day at work. On that evening, my mom placed a plate of eggs, sausage and extremely burned biscuits in front of my dad. I remember waiting to see if anyone noticed it! Yet all my dad did was reach for his biscuit, smile at my mom and ask me how my day was at school. I don't remember what I told him that night, but I do remember watching him smear butter and jelly on that biscuit and eat every bite! When I got up from the table that evening, I remember hearing my mom apologize to my dad for burning the biscuits. And I'll never forget what he said: 'Honey, I love burned biscuits.' Later that night, I went to kiss Daddy good night and I asked him if he really liked his biscuits burned. He wrapped me in his arms and said, 'Your Momma put in a hard day at work today and she's real tired. And besides-a little burnt biscuit never hurt anyone!

' You know, life is full of imperfect things and imperfect people. I'm not the best at hardly anything, and I forget birthdays and anniversaries just like everyone else. What I've learned over the years is that learning to accept each other's' faults and choosing to celebrate each other's' differences. It is one of the most important keys to creating a healthy, growing, and lasting relationship. And that's my



prayer for you today. That you will learn to take the good, the bad, and the ugly parts of your life and lay them at the feet of God. Because in the end, he is the Only One who will be able to give you a relationship where a burnt biscuit isn't a big deal!! We could extend this to any relationship. In fact, understanding is the base of any relationship, be it a husband-wife or parent-child or friendship! "Don't put the key to your happiness in someone else's pocket-keep it in your own." So please pass me a biscuit, a burnt one will do just fine. And please pass this along to someone who has enriched your life...

Source: <https://www.littlethings.com/valuable-lesson-burned-biscuits/>

- Livelihoods May 2017

## 105. The Farmer and The Sparrows

Maniappa was a farmer. He worked from dawn to dusk in his field. Amidst the crops in the field, a sparrow had built a nest. She roosted in the nest. She got two children. The little sparrows lived with their mother happily. Days passed by. And the harvesting season fast approached. The corns were ripe. And everywhere people started their harvests. The little sparrows said to their mother, "Mummy! We will have to fly away".

The mother sparrow replied, "Not so soon babies! The farmer is not ready. One day, they heard the farmer saying "I must call my neighbors and make them do the harvest."



The little sparrows said, "Mummy, tonight we shall fly away." The mother said, "Not so soon babies. The farmer won't make it." The words of the mother came true. The neighbors did not turn up the next day. The farmer was heard saying, "I will call my relatives and make them do the harvest". This time also the little ones wanted to fly away. But the mother asked them to relax. Once again, the words of the mother came true. Now, they heard the farmer saying

"Tomorrow I will do the harvest myself". On hearing these words, the mother said, "Come my children. It is time for us to leave this field".

**MORAL: Self-help is always respected.**

Source: <http://www.english-for-students.com/The-Farmer-and-The-Sparrows.html>

- Livelihoods June 2017

## 106. The Musical Donkey

There lived a washer man's donkey, whose name was Uddhata. During the day, the donkey would carry the washer man's bags, but during the night, he was set free to eat the green grass in a nearby field. However, instead of grazing in the nearby fields, he crept into nearby farms and ate vegetables of his choice. Before day-break it would come back to the washer man's house. One night, the donkey met a jackal while wandering in a nearby farm. They became good friends, and started meeting every night. The donkey, being fat, was able to break the fences of the farms.

While he ate on the vegetable, the jackal would enter through the broken fence and ate the poultry on the farm. Before day-break, they would return to their respective home to meet again next night. This continued for many days. One night, the donkey said to the jackal, "Nephew, I feel like singing on nights like tonight, when the moon is full and beautiful. What Raaga (note combination) shall I sing?" The jackal cautioned, "Uncle, we are here to steal. Thieves should keep as quiet as possible. I may add, your voice is not as pleasant as you think, and sounds like conch being blown! Your voice can be heard over a long distance. It will awaken the farmers who are sleeping, and you will have us caught." The jackal assured, "Please uncle, eat as much as you like, and forget about singing!" This annoyed the donkey and he said, "Dear nephew, it is because you are a wild animal that you don't appreciate music.



I shall sing a melodious Raaga. Wait till you hear it!" Observing that the donkey was determined to sing; the jackal did not risk staying there anymore. He said, "Uncle, if you must sing, please wait till I go outside the fence and keep a watch on the farmers." He ran outside the fence, and hide himself. Then, the donkey started to bray at the top of his voice. When the farmers heard the

donkey braying, they could see easily in the full moon-lit farm that the donkey was in their farm. The angry farmers chased the donkey with sticks, and beat him so hard that he fell on the ground. Then, they tied a wooden mortar around his neck and let him go. When the donkey was returning through the broken fence, the jackal laughed, "Musical uncle! That was a great Raaga! I see the farmers have rewarded you with this necklace!

" The wise indeed say: There is always a proper place and time for doing anything."

Source: [https://www.kidsgen.com/moral\\_stories/the-musical-donkey.html](https://www.kidsgen.com/moral_stories/the-musical-donkey.html)

- Livelihoods July 2017

## 107. The Donkey and The Washer man

Shuddapatta was a washerman, who had a donkey to help him with his chores. But he could not take proper care of his donkey. The surroundings where he lived, lacked grass; and the washer man did not have enough to offer the donkey to eat. As a result, the donkey had grown lean and weak. Even Shuddapatta was worried with his donkey's health.

One particular day, Shuddapatta was wandering in the jungle, where he came across a dead tiger. He at once struck an idea. He thought, "It is my luck that I have a dead tiger. I will skin the tiger and take the skin home. I will cover the donkey with the tiger's skin and let him graze in the nearby barley fields after sunset. The farmers will not dare to come near him fearing my donkey as a tiger. This way, he will be able to eat as much as he wants." The washer man did so after sunset, and the donkey returned unharmed after he had eaten to his heart's content. From then onwards, the washer man would cover his donkey with the tiger's skin every night and lead him to the fields. The farmers did spot him, but mistook it for a tiger.

They did not even venture out of their homes in fear. All the time, the donkey ate as much as he liked



and returned home. In the morning, he would stand in the washer man's stall without anybody suspecting anything. As time passed, the donkey regained his health, and the washer man did not have to worry about his food. One night, as he was feeding on the fresh barley crops in the fields, he heard a sound. It was a female donkey braying from a distance. He was attracted and brayed in return. The farmers, who were watching him from inside for fear of the tiger, heard this and realized that it was a donkey and not a tiger. They came out to observe, it was indeed a donkey dressed in tiger's skin. They chased the donkey with sticks, and killed him. The wise indeed say: Do not pretend to be what you are not.

Source: <https://www.namaste.in/en/literature/573eb837b2f1dbd356a23364/57eb8ff4af76df6bbfd6adfd/detail/the-donkey-and-the-washerman---story-from-panchatantra>

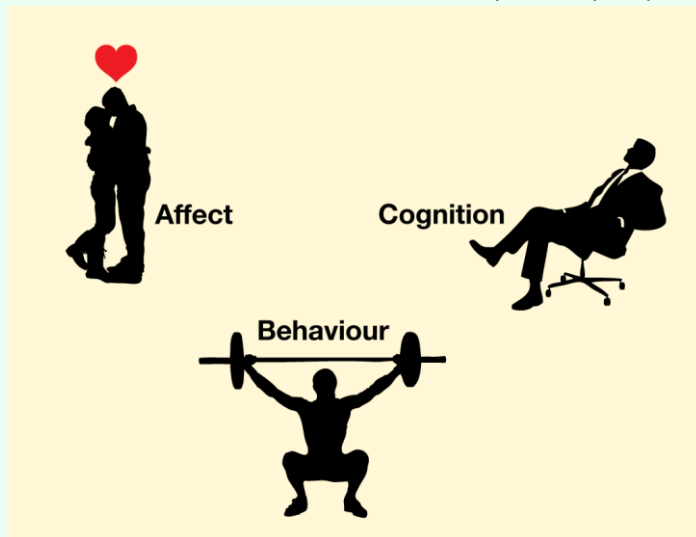
- Livelihoods August 2017



## 108. This Was Bound to Happen

Once a highly successful businessman, running a health insurance company was getting ready to go to his office. When he reached into his car and opened a door, a stray dog sleeping under his car suddenly came out and bit on his leg! The businessman got very angry and quickly picked up a few rocks and threw at the dog but none hit the dog. The dog ran away. Upon reaching his office, the businessman calls a meeting of his managers and during the meeting he puts the anger of dog on them. The managers also get upset by the anger of their boss and they put their anger to the employees working under them. The chain of this reaction keeps going till the lower level of employees and finally, the anger reaches to the office peon.

Now, there was no one working under the peon! So, after the office time is over, he reaches his home, and wife opens the door. She asked him, "Why are you so late today?" The peon upset due to anger threw at him by the staff, gives one slap to his wife! And says, "I didn't go to the office to play football, I went to work so don't irritate me with your stupid questions!" So, now the wife got upset that she



got a scolding plus a slap for no reason.

She puts her anger on his son who was watching TV and give him a slap, "This is all you do, you have no interest in studying! Turn off the TV now!" The son gets upset now! He walks out of his house and sees a dog passing by looking at him. He picks up a rock and hits the dog in his anger and frustration. The dog, getting hit by a rock, runs away barking in pain. This was the same dog that bit the businessman early morning.

**Moral: This was bound to happen. Reap as one has sown. This is how the life works. While we all worry about hell and heaven based on our deeds, we should concentrate more on how we are living and behaving. Do good, Good will come, Do Wrong, Wrong will come.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/this-was-bound-to-happen/>

- Livelihoods September 2017

## 109. The Needy King and A Sage

A Sage was passing through the capital city of the famous king. While he was walking, he noticed a single currency coin on the road. He picked it up. He was satisfied with his simple living and he had no use of that coin. So, he planned to donate it to the one who is in need of it. He strolled around the streets throughout the day but didn't find anyone such. Finally, he reached the rest area and spent a night there.

Next morning, he wakes up in the morning for his daily activities and sees that a king is going for his invasion of another state with his war ready army. When the king saw the sage standing, he ordered his army to be stopped. He came to the Sage and said, "Oh Great Sage, I am going to war to win



another state so that my state can be expanded. So, bless me to be victorious". After thinking, Sage gave a single currency coin to the king! The king was confused and annoyed with this because what use he has for a single coin while he is already one of the richest kings! He curiously asked a sage, "what's the meaning of this one coin?"

A Sage explained, "Oh Great King! I found this coin yesterday while strolling around the streets of your capital city. But I had no use of it. So, I had decided that I will donate it to someone needy. I strolled around till the evening in your capital, but found no one such. Everyone was living a happy life. It seemed that they were satisfied with what they had.

So, I found no one to give this coin. But today, the king of this state, still have the desire to gain more and not satisfied with what he already has, I felt you were in need of this coin." The King realized his mistake and gave up the planned war.

**Moral: We all should learn to be happy with what we have. Yes, we all desire more or better than we already have, but do not waste a chance of enjoying what you already have. There are those who may not have what you have, and there will be some who have lots more than you have. Do not always compare, be happy and lead a healthy life.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/needy-king-sage/>

- Livelihoods November 2017

## 110. The Reflection of Your Actions

A man and his son were going through the forest hills. Suddenly, the boy fell down on the trail and screamed with a pain, “Aah!” Surprisingly, he heard the same voice from the mountain, “Aah!” Curiously, the boy shouted, “Who is this?” But the voice replied the same, “Who is this?”

He got angry, and shouted again, “You are stupid!” And again, the voice replied the same, “You are stupid!”

Annoyed By this, the boy asked his father, “Father, what is going on? Who is this?”

The Father replied, “Son, Pay attention”.

The father shouted, “You are very nice”.

And the voice responded the same, “You are very nice!” The father again shouted, “Thank you”.

And the voice again responded the same, “Thank you!” The son was very surprised but he still could not understand what was happening.



The father explained, “Son, people call it resonance, but this is the truth of the life. The life is a reflection of your actions. What you will give to others, you will receive the same in return.”

**Moral: What we give to others, life gives us the same in return. Your life is not an accident or a coincidence, but it is the shadow of your actions.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/the-reflection-of-your-actions/>

- Livelihoods December 2017

## 111. A Man with A Lamp

Once upon a time, there was a small town. There lived a man by himself who couldn't see. He was blind. Yet, he carried a lighted lamp with him whenever he went out at night. One night as he was coming home after having a dinner outside, he came across a group of young travelers. They saw that he was blind, yet carrying a lighted lamp.

They started passing comments on him and made a fun of him. One of them asked him, "Hey Man! You are blind and can't see anything! Why do you carry the lamp than?!" The blind man replied, "Yes, unfortunately, I am blind and I can't see anything but a lighted lamp which I am carrying is for the



people like you who can see. You may not see the blind man coming and end up pushing me. That is why I carry a lighted lamp". The group of travelers felt ashamed and apologized for their behavior.

**Moral: We should think before judging others. Always be polite and learn to see things from others point of view.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/a-man-with-a-lamp/>

- Livelihoods January 2018

## 112. Finding Happiness

Once, a group of 50 people were attending a seminar. Suddenly, the speaker at the seminar stopped speaking and started giving each person a balloon. Each one was asked to write his/her name on it using a marker pen. Then, all the balloons were collected and put in another room.

Now these delegates were let into that room and asked to find the balloon which had their name written within 5 minutes. Everyone was frantically searching for their name, pushing, colliding with each other, and there was utter chaos. At the end of 5 minutes, no one could find their own balloon. Now each one was asked to randomly collect a balloon and give it to the person whose name was written on it. Within minutes everyone had their own balloon.



The speaker then began: This is exactly what is happening in our lives. Everyone is frantically looking for happiness all around, not knowing where it is. Our happiness lies in the happiness of others. Give them their happiness, and you will get your own happiness. And this is the purpose of human life

Source: <https://academictips.org/blogs/finding-happiness/>

- Livelihoods March 2018



## 113. One Who Read the Future

A man who lived a long time ago believed that he could read the future in the stars. He called himself an Astrologer and spent his time at night gazing at the sky. He was always busy worrying about future and villagers often came to him, hoping to know what their future holds. One evening he was walking along the open road outside the village. His eyes were fixed on the stars. He thought he saw there that the end of the world was at near. He lost in his thoughts about the future.

As he was looking at the stars, he kept walking without looking down. Suddenly, he fell into a ditch full of mud and water. He was sinking in the muddy water, and madly trying to claw at the slippery sides of the hole in his effort to climb out. He was unable to crawl out and fearing for his life, he started screaming for help. His cries for help soon brought the villagers running.



As they pulled him out of the mud, one of them said, “You pretend to read the future in the stars, and yet you fail to see what is at your feet! This may teach you to pay more attention to what is right in front of you, and let the future take care of itself.” “What use is it,” said another, “to read the stars, when you can’t see what’s right here on the earth?”

**Moral: We all want our future to be bright and happy, but the time doesn’t stop for anyone. Each tomorrow turns into today, your present is also a part your future. There is always a tomorrow to look forward to and improve, but you can’t go back to yesterday. So, maintain the balance of your present life while you work for a better tomorrow.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/moral-story-one-who-read-the-future/>

- Livelihoods April 2018

## 114. Wealth Without A Value

A Miser had buried his gold in a secret place in his garden. Every day he went to the spot, dug up the treasure and counted it piece by piece to make sure it was all there. He made so many trips that a Thief, who had been observing him, guessed what it was the Miser had hidden, and one night quietly dug up the treasure and made off with it. When the Miser discovered his loss, he was overcome with grief and despair.

He groaned and cried and tore his hair. A passerby heard his cries and asked what had happened. "My Gold! O my Gold!" cried the Miser, wildly, "someone has robbed me!" "Your gold! There in that hole? Why did you put it there? Why did you not keep it in the house where you could easily get it when you had to buy things?"

"Buy!" screamed the Miser angrily. "Why, I never touched the gold. I couldn't think of spending any of it." The stranger picked up a large stone and threw it into the hole. "If that is the case," he said, "cover up that stone. It is worth just as much to you as the treasure you lost!"



**Moral: Saving, spending wisely and appropriately is a good sign if you do it for a good purpose. Otherwise, a possession is worth no more than the use we make of it.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/wealth-without-value/>

- Livelihoods May 2018

## 115. Pundit and The Rich Man

There was Pundit in the village. He was well-versed in all Scriptures. He knew everything, but he was poor. He did not have a house. He used to get his meals also with great difficulties. Even his clothes were very much worn out. So, the Pundit used to beg for his meals. He went from House-to-House begging. "Please give me alms". On seeing his old clothes many people were thinking that he is mad. So, saying "Go Away" they shut the door. For many days he did not even eat.

Once somehow, he obtained new clothes. A rich man gave those clothes to the Pundit. Wearing those new clothes, he went for begging as before. To the very first house he went, the householder said, "Sir, please come in. Please have your food in our house". Saying thus, with great respect, he took the Pundit inside for food. The Pundit sat down to eat. Varieties of soups, Sweet meals, Vedas, and Sweet foods were served for eating.



Having prayed first, the Pundit took a sweetmeat with his hand and began to feed his new clothes saying, "Eat, eat!" On seeing that all the householders were surprised and were not able to understand. So, they asked thus, "The clothes do not eat right? The why O, Great Pundit, do you offer food to the clothes?" Then that Pundit answered thus, "Indeed because of these new clothes you offered me food today. Yesterday itself in this very house you asked me to go away. Since I obtained food due to these clothes, I am grateful to them. This is why I am feeding them." The householders were a little ashamed.

**Moral: Never judge anyone by their outlook.**

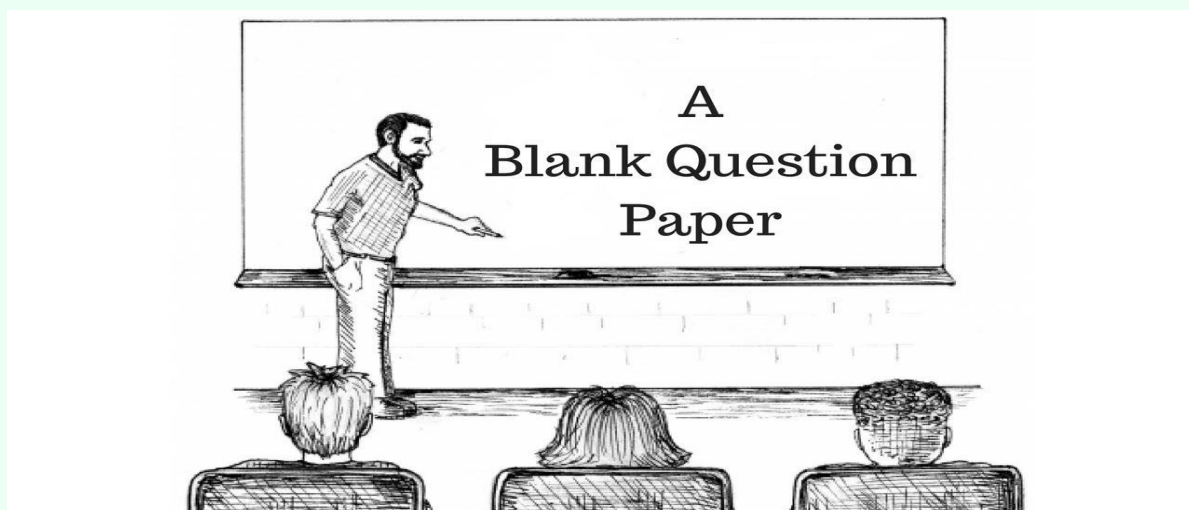
Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/pundit-and-rich-man/>

- Livelihoods June 2018

## 116. A Blank Question Paper

One day, a professor entered the classroom and asked his students to prepare for a surprise test. They waited anxiously at their desks for the test to begin. The professor handed out the question paper with the text facing down as usual. Once he handed them all out, he asked his students to turn the page and begin. To everyone's surprise, there were no questions, just a black dot in the center of the page. The professor seeing the expression on everyone's faces, told them the following, "I want you to write what you see there." At the end of the class, the professor took all the answer papers, and started reading each one of them aloud in front of all the students.

All of them with no exceptions described the black dot, trying to explain its position in the middle of the sheet etc. After all the papers had been read, the classroom was silent. The professor began to explain, "I am not going to grade on you this, I just wanted to give you something to think about. No one wrote about the white part of the paper. Everyone focused on the black dot and the same happens in our lives. We have a white paper to observe and enjoy, but we always focus on the dark spots. We always have reasons to celebrate; nature renewing itself every day, our friends around us, the job that provides our livelihood, and the miracles we see every day.



However, we insist on focusing only on the dark spots, the lack of money, the complicated relationship with a family member, the health issues that bother us, the disappointment with a friend etc. The dark spots are very small compared to everything we have in our lives, but they are the ones that pollute our minds. Take your eyes away from the black spots in your life. Enjoy each one of your blessings, each moment that life gives you. Be happy and live a life positively!"

**Moral: As the professor explained, life is a mixed bag of good and bad things. We all have positives and negatives along the way, but we must always concentrate more on the positives for leading a healthy and happy life. Life goes on no matter what, so do not waste your time thinking about the negatives!**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/blank-question-paper/>

- Livelihoods July 2018

## 117. Father Son Conversation

One day, the father was doing some work and his son came and asked, “Daddy, may I ask you a question?” Father said, “Yeah sure, what it is?” So, his son asked, “Dad, how much do you make an hour?” Father got bit upset and said, “That’s none of your business. Why do you ask such a thing?” Son said, “I just want to know. Please tell me, how much do you make an hour?” So, the father told him that “I make Rs. 500 per hour.” “Oh”, the little boy replied, with his head down. Looking up, he said, “Dad, may I please borrow Rs. 300?” The father furiously said, “if the only reason you asked about my pay is so that you can borrow some money to buy a silly toy or other nonsense, then march yourself to your room and go to bed. Think why you are being so selfish. I work hard every day and do not like this childish behavior.” The little boy quietly went to his room and shut the door. The man sat down and started to get even angrier about the little boy’s questions. How dare he ask such questions only to get some money? After about an hour or so, the man had calmed down and started to think, “Maybe there was something he really needed to buy with that Rs. 300 and he really didn’t ask for money very often!” The man went to the door of little boy’s room and opened the door.



“Are you sleeping, son?” He asked. “No daddy, I’m awake,” replied the boy. “I’ve been thinking, maybe I was too hard on you earlier”, said the man. “It’s been a long day and I took out my aggravation on you, Here’s the Rs.300 you asked for”. The little boy sat straight up, smiling “oh thank you, dad!” He yelled. Then, reaching under his pillow he pulled some crippled-up notes. The man, seeing that the boy already had money, started to get angry again. The little boy slowly counted out his money, then looked up at his father. “Why do you want money if you already had some?” the father grumbled. “Because I didn’t have enough, but now I do,” the little boy replied. “Daddy I have Rs. 500 now. Can I buy an hour of your time? Please come home early tomorrow. I would like to have dinner with you”. Father was dumbstruck.

**Moral: It’s just a short reminder to all of you working so hard in life! We should not let time slip through our fingers without having spent some time with those who really matter to us, those close to our hearts. If we die tomorrow, the company that we are working for could easily replace us in a matter of days. But the family & friends we leave behind will feel the loss for the rest of their lives. And come to think of it, we pour ourselves more into work than to our family.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/father-son-conversation/>

- Livelihoods August 2018



## 118. An Old Man in The Village

An old man lived in the village. He was one of the most unfortunate people in the world. The whole village was tired of him; he was always gloomy, he constantly complained and was always in a bad mood.

The longer he lived, the more bile he was becoming and the more poisonous were his words. People avoided him, because his misfortune became contagious. It was even unnatural and insulting to be happy next to him. He created the feeling of unhappiness in others. But one day, when he turned eighty years old, an incredible thing happened. Instantly everyone started hearing the rumor:

“An Old Man is happy today, he doesn’t complain about anything, smiles, and even his face is freshened up.”



The whole village gathered together. The old man was asked: Villager: What happened to you? “Nothing special. Eighty years I’ve been chasing happiness, and it was useless. And then I decided to live without happiness and just enjoy life. That’s why I’m happy now.

**Moral: Don’t chase happiness. Enjoy your life.**

Source: <http://www.dailytenminutes.com/2018/07/1-old-man-lived-in-village-moral-stories.html>

- Livelihoods September 2018

## 119. Thinking Out of The Box (Creative Thinking)

In a small Italian town, hundreds of years ago, a small business owner owed a large sum of money to a loan-shark. The loan-shark was a very old, unattractive looking guy that just so happened to fancy the business owner's daughter. He decided to offer the businessman a deal that would completely wipe out the debt he owed him. However, the catch was that we would only wipe out the debt if he could marry the businessman's daughter.

Needless to say, this proposal was met with a look of disgust. The loan-shark said that he would place two pebbles into a bag, one white and one black. The daughter would then have to reach into the bag and pick out a pebble. If it was black, the debt would be wiped, but the loan-shark would then marry her. If it was white, the debt would also be wiped, but the daughter wouldn't have to marry the loan-shark. Standing on a pebble-strewn path in the businessman's garden, the loan-shark bent over and picked up two pebbles. Whilst he was picking them up, the daughter noticed that he'd picked up two black pebbles and placed them both into the bag.



He then asked the daughter to reach into the bag and pick one.

The daughter naturally had three choices as to what she could have done:

1. Refuse to pick a pebble from the bag.
2. Take both pebbles out of the bag and expose the loan shark for cheating.
3. Pick a pebble from the bag fully well knowing it was black and sacrifice herself for her father's freedom.

She drew out a pebble from the bag, and before looking at it 'accidentally' dropped it into the midst of the other pebbles. She said to the loan-shark; "Oh, how clumsy of me. Never mind, if you look into the bag for the one that is left, you will be able to tell which pebble I picked." The pebble left in the bag is obviously black, and seeing as the loan-shark didn't want to be exposed, he had to play along as if the pebble the daughter dropped was white, and clear her father's debt.

**Moral of the story: It's always possible to overcome a tough situation throughout of the box thinking, and not give in to the only options you think you have to pick from.**

Source: <https://carebear.in/period-time/july-2019/day1/short-story-thinking-out-of-the-box>

- Livelihoods October 2018

## 120. I Resign

One day a new employee went to the HR and said, "I'm not interested in coming to the office anymore." The HR responded, "But why?" Then the man said, "there are many things in this workplace that disheartens me. There are people talking bad about their own colleagues behind their backs, many of them envy each other and most of them spend time in gossiping. There are serious organizational politics and I find the environment very negative."

The HR replied "okay", and asked if he could do a favor before he left? To which the man agreed. He asked the man to take a glass full of water and walk three times around the office area without spilling a drop on the floor. After that he may leave the office if you wish to.

The man felt a little odd but agreed to do it as it was just matter of few minutes. He walked three times around the office floor and then he reached HR saying that he is done with it. The HR asked "When you were walking around the Office floor did you see any employee speaking badly about another Employee? Any Gossips? Any disturbances?"

The Employee replied, "no." The HR further asked, "did you see any Employee looking at other employees in wrong way?". "No" said the man.

HR: "You know why?" "You were focused on the glass, to make sure you didn't tip it and spill any water. The same goes with our life. When our focus is on our priorities, we don't have time to see the mistakes of others."

**Moral: Concentrate on priorities and not on other's Mistakes**

Source: [Anonymous](#)

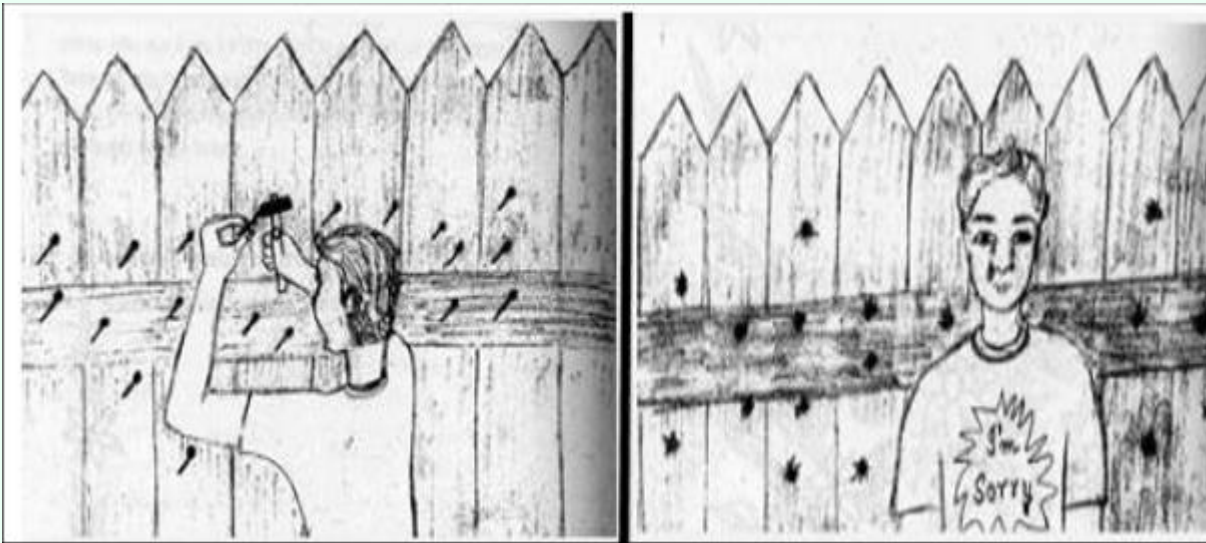
- Livelihoods November 2018



## 121. Control Your Temper (Anger)

There once was a little boy who had a very bad temper. His father decided to hand him a bag of nails and said that every time the boy lost his temper, he had to hammer a nail into the fence. On the first day, the boy hammered 37 nails into that fence. The boy gradually began to control his temper over the next few weeks, and the number of nails he was hammering into the fence slowly decreased. He discovered it was easier to control his temper than to hammer those nails into the fence.

Finally, the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father the news and the father suggested that the boy should now pull out a nail every day he kept his temper under control. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence.



“you have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out. It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there.”

**Moral of the story: Control your anger, and don't say things to people in the heat of the moment, that you may later regret. Some things in life, you are unable to take back.**

Source: <http://weareghaint.blogspot.com/2017/10/control-your-temper-anger-short-story.html>

- Livelihoods December 2018

## 122. Your Chance of a Greater Good

It was an early morning. Mr. Khanna was getting ready for his office when His wife asked him to put just a few clothes out for a laundry today. He asked his wife, “Why?” She told him, “Because our maid is planning to visit her Grand Daughter today, she will have to leave early to catch the bus and she will not be coming for two days”. Mr. Khanna asked her, “Where is she going for two days?” She told him, “Tomorrow is the Birthday of her Grand Daughter, so she is going to spend time with her and celebrate.” Mr. Khanna told her, “Ok, no problem”. But then his wife asked him, “Oh one more thing! Should I give her Rs. 500 as a bonus?” Mr. Khanna said, “Why now? We will give her during the Christmas”.

His Wife said, “Well, she is hardly able to manage her expenses and she is visiting her Grand Daughter, so not sure how she will be able to manage as these days inflation is high. I feel she can use a little bonus”. Mr. Khanna said, “Oh dear, I feel you are getting too sensitive and worrying too much”. His wife said, “Don’t Worry, I will cancel our plan to go out and have a pizza, that way we can give her extra Rs. 500 as a bonus”. Mr. Khanna said with a smile, “You are ready to take the pizza out of my mouth... Well, do as you feel if you willing to let go of 6 sliced pizza, it’s fine”. So, after a couple of days, when the maid had returned, she was cleaning the floor.

Mr. Khanna was sitting on his chair. He asked her, “Did you enjoy a good time with your Grand Daughter?” The Maid replied, “Yes Sir, I enjoyed a lot, I spent whole Rs. 500 in 2 days!” Mr. Khanna



said, “Oh really! How did you spend Rs.500 so quickly?” The Maid replied with a happy smile, “For Rs. 150, I bought a Dress for my Grand Daughter, bought sweets for Rs. 50, Paid Rs. 100 for Bus Tickets, bought bangles for Rs. 50 for my daughter, for my son in law I bought a belt for Rs. 50 and last Rs. 100, I gave to my Grand Daughter to purchase pencil and papers for her school”. Mr. Khanna was surprised. He started thinking about the 6 slices of pizza. Each slice started hitting in his mind. He started comparing

the cost of the pizza with his maid’s expense. He was lost in thoughts that how she bought something for everyone in her family and spent a quality time with them for her Grand Daughter’s birthday. And all these just for the cost of the pizza.

He realized something that day. Moral: We have a right to do what makes us happy and spend our hard-earned money as we like for our happiness. No one has right to envy at how you spend money earned by your hard work. But, if you feel you had wasted your hard-earned money for something to gain nothing even if it was occasionally, you have a chance to do something of a greater good for someone by following above story. You may not be obligated to do so, but your little goodwill can light up someone’s life in many ways.

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/chance-greater-good/>

- Livelihoods January 2019



## 123. Greed

A student asked his teacher, “What is Greed?” The teacher said, “In order to answer your question, go through the chocolate factory next to our school and pick the one chocolate you like the most. But there is a rule. As you pass through the factory, you cannot turn back. You must pick the chocolate as you go forward only.” The student went to the chocolate factory. As he walked through, He saw the one chocolate wrapped nicely, he instantly liked it but he wondered that he may find much bigger one



further. So, He walked further, then he saw another chocolate. But again, he thought the same. When he started to reach near the end of the factory, he couldn't see any chocolates as big as the one he didn't pick earlier and started to regret his decision of letting it go. Finally, he gave up. He went back to the teacher with an empty hand and gave an explanation of what he did. The teacher told him, “You did like the one chocolate very much but still you kept looking for a bigger one. And later you realized that what you let go off was the best chocolate you could find there. That my dear is called Greed.”

**Moral: We let go of many good things in our life because of our greed of having even better things. Our Human Nature is such that we always want better and better. But in the search of better, we let go of many good things which could have given us similar satisfaction and made us happy. Learn make your choice wisely.**

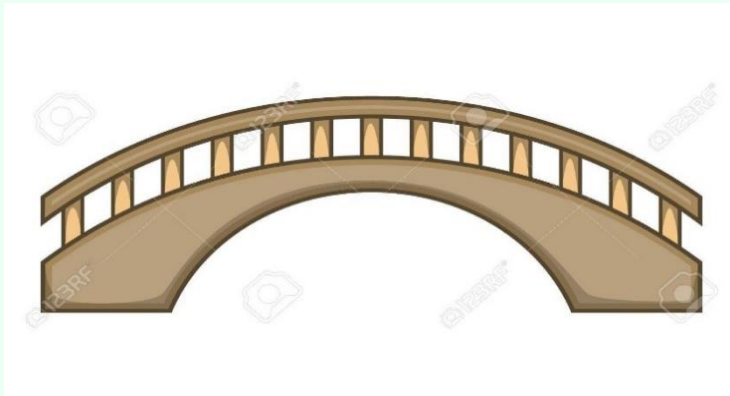
Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/tag/greed/>

- Livelihoods February 2019

## 124. The Bridge

Once upon a time two brothers who lived on adjoining farms fell into conflict. It was the first serious rift in 40 years of farming side by side. They had been sharing machinery, trading a labor and goods as needed without a hitch. Then the long collaboration fell apart. It began with a small misunderstanding and it grew into a major difference which exploded into an exchange of bitter words followed by weeks of silence. One morning there was a knock on elder brother's door. He opened it to find a man with a carpenter's toolbox. "I am looking for a few days of work", he said. "Perhaps you would have a few small jobs here and there.

Could I help you?" "Yes!" said the elder brother. "I do have a job for you. Look across the creek at that farm. That's my neighbor, in fact, it's my younger brother and we don't get along. Last week he dug a wider passage for water into his farm. But he ended up creating a very wide creek in between our farms and I am sure he did it just to annoy me. I want you to build me something so that we don't have to stand and see each other's face from across." The carpenter said "I think I understand the situation. I will be able to do a job that will please you." The elder brother had to go to town for supplies, so he helped the carpenter get the materials ready and then he was off for the day. The carpenter worked hard all that day measuring, sawing, nailing.



At sunset when the elder brother returned, the carpenter had just finished his job. The elder brother's eyes opened wide and his jaw dropped. It was not what he had even thought of or imagined. It was a bridge stretching from one side of the creek to the other! A fine piece of work, beautiful handrails. And to his surprise, his younger brother across

the creek was coming to meet him with a big smile and arms wide open to hug him. "You are really kind and humble my brother! After all I had done and said to you, you still shown that blood relations can never be broken! I am truly sorry for my behavior", the younger brother said as he hugged his elder brother. They turned to see the carpenter hoist his toolbox on his shoulder. "No, wait! Stay a few days. I have a lot of other projects for you," said the older brother. "I'd love to stay on", the carpenter said, "but, I have many more bridges to build!"

**Moral: There is no shame in accepting your mistake or forgiving each other. We should be kind and humble. We should try to stay together as a family and not break away from it over the petty arguments**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/the-bridge/>

- Livelihoods March 2019

## 125. Bond of Love and The Truth

A very loving couple had been married for over 10 years without any child and it was becoming their 11th year. Steve and Sarah stayed with each other and greatly hoped that they will have a child before their 11th year of marriage runs out because they were under persuasion from friends and family members to get a divorce. But they couldn't let go because of the strong bond of love between them. Months passed and one day, while Dave was returning from work, he saw his wife walking down the road with a man.

Months passed and one day, while Dave was returning from work, he saw his wife walking down the road with a man. The man had his arms around her neck and they looked very happy. For over a week, he saw the same man with his wife at various places and one evening while Dave was returning from work, he saw the man drop her off at the house after giving her a kiss on the cheek. Dave was angry and sad but he didn't spoke of it with his wife.

Two days later, after a hectic day at work, Dave was taking water with a glass jug from the dispenser when the phone rang. He picked it up and the person said, "Hello dear, I'll be coming to your house this evening to see you as promised." Dave hung up the phone. It was a male voice and he was sure the person was the man he had always seen his wife with. He suddenly became shaky with the thought that he has lost his wife to another man. The glass jug fell from his hand and shattered into pieces. His wife came running into the room asking, "Is everything okay?" In anger, he gave his wife a push and she fell. She wasn't moving or getting up. Dave then realized that she fell where he broke the glass jug. A large piece of glass had pierced her.



He felt her breath, pulse, and heartbeat but there she lay lifeless. In a total confusion, he saw an envelope in her hand. He took it, opened it and was shocked by its content—it was a letter. It read: "My loving husband, words cannot express how I feel so I had to write it down. I have been going to see a doctor for over a week and I wanted to be sure before I give you the news. The doctor confirmed it that I am pregnant with a twin and our baby is due 2 months from now. The same doctor is my long-lost brother whom I lost contact with after our marriage. He has promised to take care of me and our baby and give us the best without collecting a dime. He also promised to have dinner with us today. Thanks for staying by my side. Your loving wife. The letter fell from his hand. There was a knock at the door and the same man he had seen with his wife came in and said, Hello Dave, I suppose I'm right. I am Max, the brother of your wife" Suddenly, Max noticed his sister lying in a pool of her blood. He rushed her to the hospital and she was in a coma. She had lost her twins.

**Moral: We should not be too quick to take unnecessary actions in our relationship or marriage when we haven't questioned our partner or spouse on what we saw or heard about them. We all have our faults. We shouldn't be too fast to judge others. Not everything you see, hear or believe about someone is true. Always learn to control yourself under any condition or situation, irrespective of what you've heard or seen.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/bond-love-truth/>

- Livelihoods April 2019

## 126. The Needs and Desires

Once upon a time, there lived a King who, despite his luxurious lifestyle, was neither happy nor content. One day, the King came upon a servant who was singing happily while he worked. This fascinated the King, why was he, the Supreme Ruler of the Land, unhappy and gloomy, while a lowly servant had so much joy.

The King asked the servant, "Why are you so happy?" The man replied, "Your Majesty, I am nothing but a servant, but my family and I don't need too much, just a roof over our heads and warm food to fill our tummies." The king was not satisfied with that reply. Later in the day, he sought the advice of his most trusted advisor.

After hearing the King's woes and the servant's story, the advisor said, "Your Majesty, I believe that the servant has not been made part of the 99 Club." "The 99 Club? And what exactly is that?" the King inquired. The advisor replied, "Your Majesty, to truly know what the 99 Club is, place 99 Gold coins in a bag and leave it at this servant's doorstep." So, the King ordered to do it. When the servant saw the bag, he took it into his house. When he opened the bag, he let out a great shout of joy, So many gold coins! He began to count them.

After several counts, he was at last convinced that there were 99 coins. He wondered, "What could've happened to that last gold coin? Surely, no one would leave 99 coins!" He looked everywhere he could, but that final coin was elusive. Finally, exhausted, he decided that he was going to have to work harder than ever to earn that gold coin and complete his collection. From that day, the servant's life was changed. He was overworked, horribly grumpy, and castigated his family for not helping him make that 100th gold coin.



He stopped singing while he worked. Witnessing this drastic transformation, the King was puzzled. When he sought his advisor's help, the advisor said, "Your Majesty, the servant has now officially joined the 99 Club." He continued, "The 99 Club is a name given to those people who have enough to be happy but are never

content, because they're always yearning and striving for that extra 1 telling to themselves, "Let me get that one final thing and then I will be happy for life."

**Moral: We can be happy, even with very little in our lives, but the minute we're given something bigger and better, we want even more! We lose our sleep, our happiness, we hurt the people around us, all these as a price for our growing needs and desires. We must learn to maintain a balance of our need and desires to enjoy a happy life with what we already have.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/the-needs-and-desires/>

- Livelihoods May 2019

## 127. What Life Is All About

Once upon a time, there was a girl who could do anything in the world she wanted. All she had to do was choose something and focus. So, one day she sat down in front of a blank canvas and began to paint. Every stroke was more perfect than the next, slowly and gracefully converging to build a flawless masterpiece. And when she eventually finished painting, she stared proudly at her work and smiled.

It was obvious to the clouds and the stars, who were always watching over her, that she had a gift. She was an artist. And she knew it too. She felt it in every fiber of her being. But a few moments after she finished painting, she got anxious and quickly stood up. Because she realized that while she had the ability to do anything in the world she wanted to do, she was simply spending her time moving paint around on a piece of canvas.

She felt like there was so much more in the world to see and do so many options. And if she ultimately decided to do something else with her life, then all the time she spent painting would be a waste. So, she glanced at her masterpiece one last time, and walked out the door into the moonlight. And as she walked, she thought, and then she walked some more.

While she was walking, she didn't notice the clouds and the stars in the sky who were trying to signal her, because she was preoccupied with an important decision she had to make. She had to choose one thing to do out of all the possibilities in the world. Should she practice medicine? Or design buildings? Or teach children? She was utterly stumped.



Twenty-five years later, the girl began to cry. Because she realized she had been walking for so long, and that over the years she had become so enamored by everything that she could do—the endless array of possibilities—that she hadn't done anything meaningful at all. And she learned, at last, that life isn't about possibility—anything is possible. Life is about making a decision—deciding to do something that moves you.

So, the girl, who was no longer a girl, purchased some canvas and paint from a local craft store, drove to a nearby park, and began to paint. One stroke gracefully led into the next just as it had so many moons ago. And as she smiled, she continued painting through the day and into the night. Because she had finally made a decision. And there was still some time left to revel in the magic that life is all about.

Source: [Anonymous](#)

- Livelihoods June 2019



## 128. Responsibility

One night four college students were out partying late night and didn't study for the test which was scheduled for the next day. In the morning, they thought of a plan.

They made themselves look dirty with grease and dirt.

Then they went to the Dean and said they had gone out to a wedding last night and on their way back the tire of their car burst and they had to push the car all the way back. So, they were in no condition to take the test.

The Dean thought for a minute and said they can have the re-test after 3 days. They thanked him and said they will be ready by that time.



On the third day, they appeared before the Dean. The Dean said that as this was a Special Condition Test, all four were required to sit in separate classrooms for the test. They all agreed as they had prepared well in the last 3 days.

The Test consisted of only 2 questions with the total of 100 Points:

- 1) Your Name? \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Points)
- 2) Which tire burst? \_\_\_\_\_ (99 Points)

Options–(a)Front Left (b)Front Right (c)Back Left (d) Back Right

**Moral of the story: Take responsibility or you will learn your lesson.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/tag/responsibility/>

- Livelihoods July 2019

## 129. The Lion and The Poor Slave

A slave, ill-treated by his master, runs away to the forest. There he comes across a lion in pain because of a thorn in his paw. The slave bravely goes forward and removes the thorn gently.

The lion without hurting him goes away.

Some days later, the slave's master comes hunting to the forest and catches many animals and cages them. The slave is spotted by the masters' men who catch him and bring him to the cruel master.

The master asks for the slave to be thrown into the lion's cage.



The slave is awaiting his death in the cage when he realizes that it is the same lion that he had helped. The slave rescued the lion and all other caged animals.

**Moral of the story: One should help others in need, we get the rewards of our helpful acts in return.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/lion-and-poor-slave/>

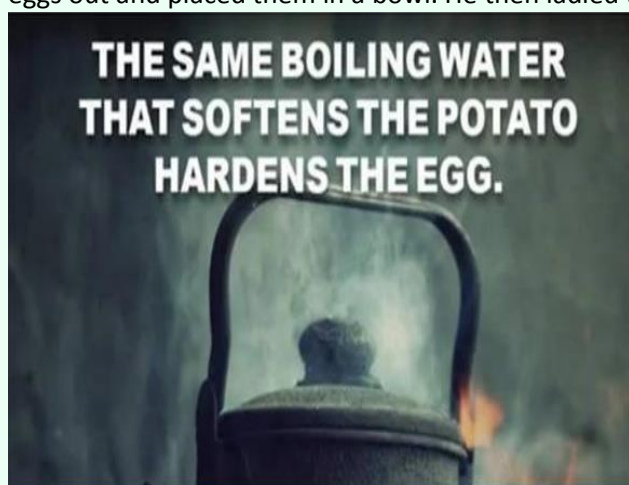
- Livelihoods August 2019

## 130. The Struggles of Our Life

Once upon a time a daughter complained to her father that her life was miserable and that she didn't know how she was going to make it.

She was tired of fighting and struggling all the time. It seemed just as one problem was solved, another one soon followed. Her father, a chef, took her to the kitchen. He filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire.

Once the three pots began to boil, he placed potatoes in one pot, eggs in the second pot and ground coffee beans in the third pot. He then let them sit and boil, without saying a word to his daughter. The daughter, moaned and impatiently waited, wondering what he was doing. After twenty minutes he turned off the burners. He took the potatoes out of the pot and placed them in a bowl. He pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. He then ladled the coffee out and placed it in a cup.



Turning to her, he asked. "Daughter, what do you see?" "Potatoes, eggs and coffee," she hastily replied.

"Look closer" he said "and touch the potatoes." She did and noted that they were soft.

He then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg.

Finally, he asked her to sip the coffee. Its rich aroma brought a smile to her face.

"Father, what does this mean?" she asked. He then explained that the potatoes, the eggs and coffee beans had each faced the same adversity-the boiling water. However, each one reacted differently. The potato went in strong, hard and unrelenting, but in boiling water, it became soft and weak.

The egg was fragile, with the thin outer shell protecting its liquid interior until it was put in the boiling water. Then the inside of the egg became hard.

However, the ground coffee beans were unique. After they were exposed to the boiling water, they changed the water and created something new.

"Which one are you?" he asked his daughter.

"When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a potato, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

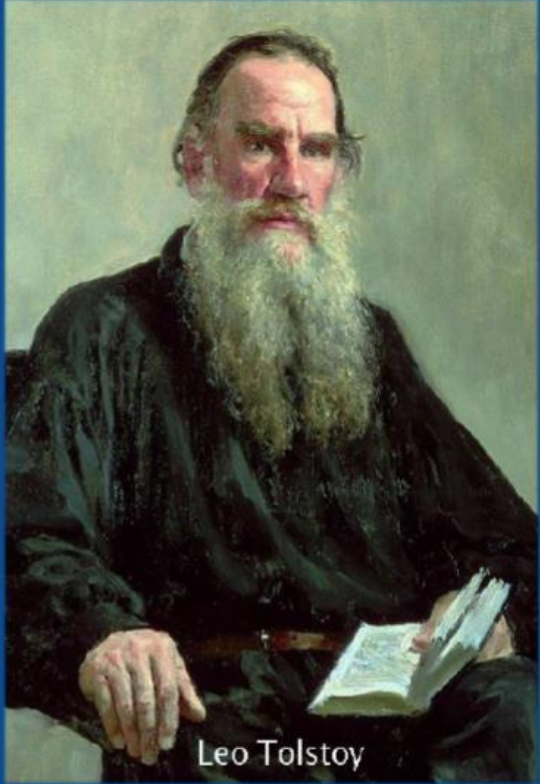
**Moral of the story: In life, things happen around us, things happen to us, but the only thing that truly matters is how you choose to react to it and what you make out of it. Life is all about leaning, adopting and converting all the struggles that we experience into something positive.**

Source: <https://www.moralstories.org/struggles-of-our-life/>

- Livelihoods September 2019

## 131. Three Questions

This Leo Tolstoy story begins with three questions that arise in the mind of a king namely, what is the right time to begin everything? Who are the right people to listen to every time? & What is the most important thing to do every time? As the king goes in search of the answers, what unfolds makes this



Leo Tolstoy

### 3 QUESTIONS

1. What is the most important time to do anything?  
[Now]
2. Who is the most important person to refer to?  
[The person with you]
3. What is the most important job to do?  
[To do good to the person with you]

story an inspiring read. As Rumi quotes, 'what you seek is seeking you', the answers along the king's journey, makes it all worthy indeed.

Source: <https://www.plough.com/en/topics/culture/short-stories/the-three-questions>

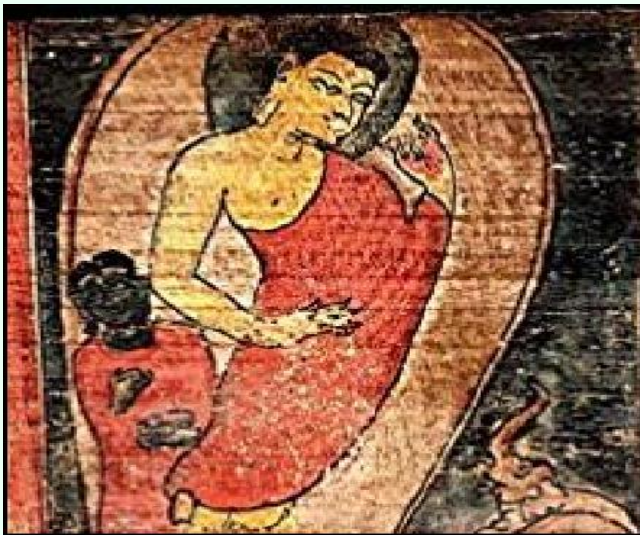
- Livelihoods November 2019



## 132. The King of Milinda – The Chariot

There's an ancient Indian text called 'The king of Milinda'. A monk named Nagasena enters the court of Milinda and replies when asked about his name, "I am known as Nagasena. That is a mere name for no such person exists." The king wants to know what the monk meant by that and therefore, asks the monk if he is any of the five entities that comprise the self, that is, material body, consciousness, feelings, mental formations and perceptions. He asks if we are the material body that has the other four entities.

Nagasena replies no to all of them. Then the king asks if Nagasena was something else, in the sense of a soul that goes on living forever despite death. Nagasena says no, again. The king then accuses Nagasena of having spoken falsehood because it seems that there is no Nagasena. But Nagasena refutes that by saying that he never claimed that there was a Nagasena in the first place. It's Nagasena's turn to defend his claim, he does so by making use of an analogy, simile or comparison to



a chariot. Nagasena asks the king if the chariot is the axle or the wheel or the reins or some other part. The king replies no to all.

Nagasena asks if the chariot was all taken together, to which the king replies no. Now, Nagasena reverses the blow accusing king of having spoken falsehood. He gets a round of applause from everyone. But what is the point Nagasena is trying to make? The chariot exists because of parts held together in proper arrangement; it exists as a mere design. Nagasena quotes the nun Vajira: Just as when the parts are rightly set, the word chariot is spoken. So, where there are

aggregates, it is convention to say 'a being'. Nagasena wasn't talking about the mere conventionality of language, he was talking about wholes and parts. In this sense, wholes are less real, less important than parts; they have a borrowed reality, that which is borrowed from parts. This is important because our perceptions affect our behavior.

Buddhists regard philosophy as a way of alleviating suffering. Therefore, any viewpoint that underestimates the importance of self, its goals, and aspirations, is bound to be helpful. 'Clinging to the self' breeds bad karma and bad karma breeds miseries. Keep in mind that this is just an illustration of a doctrine of self, it isn't a definite answer to the question of self.

Source: [http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/milinda.pdf](http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/milinda.pdf)

- Livelihoods December 2019





*\*Life is Learning - Learning is Life\**

**AKSHARA LIVELIHOODS**

**Address: HIG-II B-12 F-1, APHB Colony Near B R Ambedkar College, Bagh Lingampally,**

**Hyderabad, Telangana 50004**

**[alpl.hr07@gmail.com](mailto:alpl.hr07@gmail.com)**

**Our Websites: [www.aksharakriti.org](http://www.aksharakriti.org) ; [www.livelihoods.net.in](http://www.livelihoods.net.in) ; [www.7lcx.com](http://www.7lcx.com)**