

Week One: Inspiration/Why Am I Here?

This week's opening story

SILENCE AND LONGING

by Rita Paskowitz

There was once a place of silence and longing-
An entire village sharing the loss of one villager...
Without ever giving that loss a name.

It was as though the sun...
Had permanently set behind a mountain...
And left its shadow to the town...
Until there were children who had grown into adults...

People walked with their eyes to the ground...
Passing without any recognition of others...
Or of themselves.

And the only sound that was heard...
Was the sighing of the wind...
As it shaped that loss into words...
Understood only by the trees...
Because the villagers did not believe...
They could be spoken.

But one day...
Sitting beneath and ancient oak...
An old woman
Childless...
Alone...
And lost in the murmuring of her mind-
Heard her secret rustling through the leaves.

"Mother..."
Said the voice of the infant...
That had died within her womb.
I know, Mother...
And I love you, too.

Your HUGGS Journal

Create a cozy place and start writing even for five minutes each night! To see your thoughts and feelings in writing can be very powerful in your journey of healing and wholeness. What did tonight's experience mean to you? Go to your journal!



*We look forward
to seeing you next week!*

Discussion Questions

What does the story say to you?

With what/whom in the story do you identify?

What is the importance of saying things out loud?

What in your life needs to be said out loud—by you and/or by others?

Food For Thought

*I Care for Myself by embracing
wellness in the midst of brokenness.*

I can do this by _____

Week Two: Intention/Where Am I?

This week's opening story A Traditional Tale

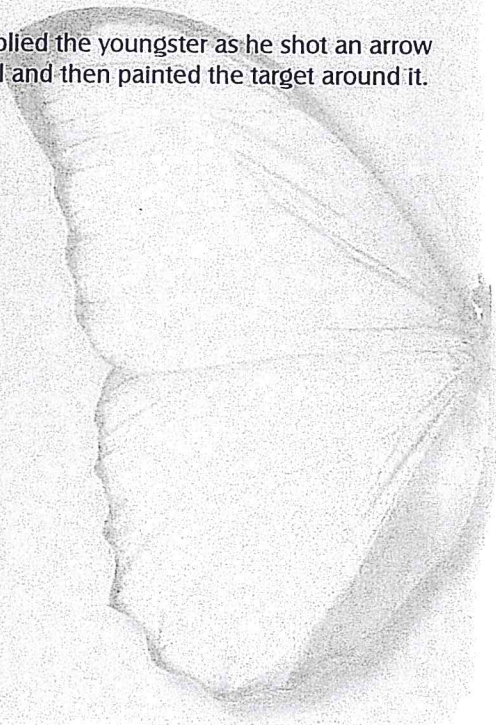
While riding through his kingdom, the king noticed an odd sight. On every barn he passed he saw a target with an arrow sticking straight out of the bull's eye.

"I must learn this great archer's secret," he told his squire. "Find the man and bring him to me at once!"

To the king's amazement, his squire returned with a young boy in tow.

There must be some mistake!" said the King. "How could this child hit the bull's-eye every time?"

"It's simple," replied the youngster as he shot an arrow into a blank wall and then painted the target around it.



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Discussion Questions

What does the story say to you?

To whom do you relate more—the king or the youngster—and why?

If the bull's eye means complete wellness, where on the target do you see yourself today?

What tools have you acquired to reach the goal of wellness?

What tools do you hope to acquire in order to reach the goal of wellness?

Food For Thought

*Care For Myself by
developing one new healthy habit.*

I can do this by _____

Week Three: Identity/Who Am I?

This week's opening story A Traditional Tale

A man found an eagle's egg and put it into the nest of a backyard hen. The eaglet hatched with the brood of chicks and grew up with them.

All his life, the eagle did what the backyard chickens did, thinking he was a backyard chicken. He scratched the earth for worms and insects. He clucked and cackled. And he would thrash his wings and fly a few feet into the air.

Years passed and the eagle grew very old. One day, he saw a magnificent bird far above him in the cloudless sky. It glided in graceful majesty among the powerful wind currents with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings.

The old eagle looked up in awe. "Who's that?" he asked.

"That's the eagle, the king of the birds," said his neighbor.

"He belongs to the sky. We belong to the earth—we're chickens."

Discussion Questions

What does the story say to you?

With what/whom in this story do you identify?

What is holding you back from being all that you can be?

What tools do you hope to acquire in order to reach the goal of wellness?

Food For Thought

*I Care for Myself by
finding strength from within.*

I can do this by _____

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Week Four: Interpretation? How do I understand this?

This week's opening story

Origin Unknown

Once there was a man who was successful in everything he tried. He had a loving wife and family, and work for which he was famous. And yet, he just was not happy.

"I want to know Truth," he said to his wife.

"Then you should seek her, she replied. "Right after you put everything in my name, of course."

And so he did.

On his quest for Truth, he looked everywhere-up hills and down in valleys; in small villages and large towns; along the coast of the great wide sea and into dark, grim wastes and meadows lush with flowers. He looked for days and for weeks and for months.

And then one day, high atop a mountain, in a small cave, he found her.

Truth was an ancient old woman with but a single tooth left in her head. Her hair hung down her shoulders in three greasy strands. The skin on her face was the brown of old parchment and as dry, stretched thinly over prominent bones.

But when she signaled to him with a hand crabbed with age, her voice was low and lyrical and pure, and it was then he knew he had found Truth.

He stayed a year and a day with her, and he learned all that she had to teach. And when the year and a day was up, he stood at the mouth of the cave ready to leave for home.

"My Lady Truth," he said, "you have taught me so much-I must do something for you before I leave for home."

Truth put her head to one side and considered. Then she raised an ancient finger.

"When you speak of me," she said coyly, "tell them I am young and beautiful."

Discussion Questions

What does the story say to you?

With which character do you most closely associate?

What un-beautiful truths are you having to deal with regarding your loss?

What tools do you hope to acquire in order to reach the goal of wellness?

Food For Thought

I Care for Myself by being active.

I can do this by _____

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Week Five: Information/What do I do with what I know?

This week's opening story

A BUDDHIST TALE

Long ago in India a young woman gave birth to a child. She loved the baby as dearly as life itself and yet the child sickened and eventually died. The mother refused to accept its death and begged all the healers in her village to give her a potion, a spell or a tonic—something to bring her child back to life.

At last she came, weeping, to the Buddha. He looked at the dead child and then nodded at the mother. "Yes," he said, "I can make you a potion to bring this child back to life, but the ingredient required is very hard to find."

"Bring me a mustard seed," he said.

"A mustard seed," she interrupted, "That will be easy!"

"A mustard seed from the house that has not known death," he continued.

The woman hurried off to the nearest household. She asked for mustard seed and they ran for their mustard seed supply. As they were about to hand her the tiny seed, she remembered to ask, "Your household has not suffered death, has it?"

"OH yes, we lost both of our parents in the last three years" was their reply.

The woman hurried on to the next house, but the response was the same. "Yes, I lost my husband last year."

At every home the answer was repeated—people lost children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives. There was not one household that had not known death.

Finally the woman stopped and looked at her child. Her baby was dead, like the other people who had been lost in her village. The tears welled up in her eyes, but now she could let them fall because she knew that losing and suffering are as common to people as mustard seed is to cooking.

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Discussion Questions

What does the story say to you?

With what character do you identify?

If you identify with the woman, at what point in the story do you see yourself?

Food For Thought

I Care for Myself by nourishing my body.

I can do this by _____

Week Six: Involvement/Where do I go from here?

This week's opening story A Tale from China

One day an elephant saw a hummingbird lying flat on its back on the ground.

"What on earth are you doing, Hummingbird?" asked the elephant.

The hummingbird replied, "I heard that the sky might fall today.

I am ready to do my best to hold it up."

The elephant laughed and mocked the tiny bird.

"Do you think THOSE little feet could hold up the SKY?"

"Not alone," admitted the hummingbird. "But each of us must do what he can.

And this is what I can do."

Discussion Questions

What does the story say to you?

With what character do you identify?

What are the things you are holding up like the hummingbird?

Food For Thought

*I Care for Myself by choosing caring ways
Now and Beyond.*

I can do this by _____

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