

8/5/2022 GRIND

A businessman walks the airport concourse, on his way to baggage claim. His flight is late in arriving, and his mood is melancholy.

This is the end of a long business trip; his energy spent and his emotions raw. If not for the late arrival, he'd head to the local pub for a nightcap.

On the flight, he reads a book about business and "realizing success". About how to make your life really matter. He liked its emotional and motivational intensity, and made a mental list of his own life priorities and goals. And all the places he had fallen short. And where and how he needed to improve.

He picked up his suitcase and knew that if he was lucky, and the timing worked with the airport parking shuttle, he'd be home by nine. He would be there in time to say good night to his daughter Leia. He smiled and quickened his steps.

It had been a longstanding ritual; after each of his business trips, he would bring his daughter a gift, some token of his trip, some reminder that he thought of her. Or, more truthfully, some way to make up for the fact that he was gone.

During his layover (in a sprawling Texas airport), he stopped in one of the souvenir shops (designed for forgetful or bored or guilt-ridden travelers), and picked up a t-shirt with a picture of a funny looking armadillo.

"What size is right for a six-year-old girl?" he asked the clerk.

"Is that all you're buying?" She shrugged and said. "Credit or cash?"

Just a few minutes before nine, the businessman pulled his car into his driveway. He dropped his suitcase at the door, kissed his wife and headed for his daughter's room.

"Daddy," she said, "We waited up. Mom said it was okay. We're so glad to see you. We

made a space. Come sit here with T-Bear and me, and let us hug you."

He leaned over, gave his daughter a kiss, and lifted the gift shop sack onto the bed. "I brought you something."

"That's okay Daddy." She said. "Tonight T-Bear and I don't need anything. We just want you to sit here with us, and tell us a story. All we want, is one good story."

He hugged his daughter and kissed T-bear on the head, not altogether sure about the protocol for kissing teddy bears. He was quiet for a good deal of time, enjoying the warmth of his daughter as she leaned against his chest, the reassurance of her cadenced breathing and the sweet fragrance of her hair and shampoo.

He forgot about the book he read on the plane.

He forgot about the list he made to maximize success.

He forgot about the expectations and goals that awaited him on his office desk.

He rested.

And he knew: this moment alone matters.

This sacred moment.

"I missed you and T-Bear," he said. And then he began, "Okay. I have just the story. Once upon a time, in a faraway land, there lived a princess. Princess Leia. She looked a lot like you."

"Oh Daddy," Leia said, "I think this is going to be a good story."

"Remember on this one thing, said Badger. The stories people tell have a way of taking care of them. If stories come to you, care for them. And learn to give them away where they are needed. Sometimes a person needs a story more than food to stay alive. That is why we put these stories in each other's memories. This is how people care for themselves." (Barry Lopez, Crow and Weasel)

Yes. Because here's the deal: there is power in stories that ground us, that remind us

who we are. From that grounded place, grows hope and gratitude, and courage and resilience, and compassion and kindheartedness. Stories that can be too easily battered by the undercurrent of the non-essential.

In Arnold Lobel's Frog and Toad story "Alone", Frog goes to an island to be alone. This makes Toad very sad, and he sets about to make things right, to fix things, to cheer Frog up. He makes a lunch and hitches a ride with a turtle to Frog's island.

"Toad slipped off the turtle. With a splash, he fell into the river.

Frog pulled Toad up onto the island. Toad looked into the basket.

The sandwiches were wet. The pitcher of iced tea was empty.

'Our lunch is spoiled,' said Toad. 'I made it for you Frog so that you would be happy.' 'But Toad,' said Frog, 'I am happy. I am very happy. This morning when I woke up I felt good because the sun was shining. I felt good because I was a Frog. And I felt good because I have you for a friend. I wanted to be alone. I wanted to think about how fine everything is.'" (Frog and Toad are Friends)

When life depletes me, I forget where my identity and worth is tethered. So, I internalize the bluff of "never enough". Now burdened by unrealistic expectations, and better than decent odds for some kind of disappointment.

Simply by missing the gift that is today. The gift of enough... mercy, grace, a place for safety and sanctuary.

Are there too many people in our world who are without safety and sanctuary? Yes, indeed. And we can bring our voices and resolve to the table only when we're grounded and connected.

My buddies Frog and Toad do my heart good. Stories that ground us, connect us. We are not on this journey alone.

So, this week no agenda.

And I felt nourished by gratitude.

And here's the very best part; I didn't even try to figure out how it happened.

I don't have any great tools to give you.

Except this one: Meister Eckert's advice, "If you can only learn one prayer, make it this one: Thank you."

Not a bad place to start.

Gratitude for stories that make my heart glad and keep it soft.

Gratitude allowing me to live this life, and not the one I always figure that I'll trade this one in for.

Gratitude allowing me to partake in the joys of the everyday, to see the sacred in the very, very ordinary.

Now, let us find ways to say Thank God, to be nourished by gratitude.

It is August. So, summer is real, and we know the heat is. Needing reminders of summer's simple, iconic joys, reading a book [Own Your Past Change Your Future by Dr. John Delony@2022] alfresco, running through a sprinkler, a generous mouthful of ice cream. Once more I will wade in water.



Nick pops in and out but wow, he's got a beautiful tat. I think it the colors that are brighter that I admire most. Audrey, Angel, Diane and Nick have visited lately.



Sandy finally had that surgery and is fine. She and Fred just had birthdays and Saturday is Lucia's birthday.

Our on-line is looking so great, thank you Price.

KatieD+ daileystory@gmail.com

P.S. Stories are in my attic books, my treasured 'stuff'.