

The True Nature of Poor

..... source unknown (adapted and written by Amy Fox)

There was a boy whose family was very wealthy. One day his father took him on a trip to the country, where he aimed to show his son, how poor people live.

After several hours of traveling they arrived at a farm of a very poor family and they spent there several days. On their return home, the father asked his son if he enjoyed the trip.

"Oh, it was great, dad," the boy replied.

"Did you notice how poor people live?"

"Oh yes," said the boy.

"So, what did you learn?" the father asked.

The son said, "Well, we have only one dog, and they have four. In our garden there is a pool and they have a river that has no end. We've got expensive lanterns, but they have stars above their heads at night. We have the patio, and they have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have the endless fields that go beyond our sight. We buy food, but they grow it. We have high fence to protect us and they have friends who all protect each other."

The father was stunned and speechless.

Then the boy added: "Thanks dad, for showing me see how poor we are."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

OPENING CLASS

"Gratitude helps you see what is there, instead of what isn't."

So often in life, we overlook the things that truly make us rich.

As you arrive on your mat today, begin to make your "rich" list— what are the things that you already have in your life that you are grateful for? Where are things going well?

DURING CLASS

After Telling the Story

Gratitude isn't about waiting for things to be right or perfect – or even for them to change. Gratitude is a habit. It's a way of looking at the world and all the good things in it, regardless of whether or not our current situation is to our liking. It's a heart-centered practice and approach to life that allows us to attract more things into our life for which to be grateful.

What in this moment can you celebrate? Maybe it's that you have a body with which to practice today, even if your practice doesn't look like yesterday's practice. Perhaps it's that you have a strong heart pulsing blood through your veins, giving you the gift of life and movement.

Start with the little things. The little things will become the big things. And the more we celebrate, the more we find to celebrate.

CLOSING CLASS

Take one hand to your heart, one hand to your belly. Feel the rise and fall of your chest, the swell and empty of your belly. Notice your breath.

See if you can locate the subtle beating of your heart.

These two simple things, things we often take for granted because they automatically happen for us, are gifts, never the guarantee. None of us know if we have five years or five minutes from now. May you make the most of this moment.

May you celebrate and cherish what you already have in your life.

You are enough. You have enough. And where you are in this moment, is exactly where you are meant to be.

EXTRAS

Neuroscientist Dr. Michael Merzenich discovered that our thoughts and experiences are inseparable from how our brain wires itself. Research suggests that making a habit of complaining can wire the brain so that negativity becomes ingrained. Because the brain is so malleable it's also possible to rewire this orientation to positivity.

Complaining doesn't attract what we want; it perpetuates what we don't want because it keeps us focused on the problem, not the solution. Complaining in any form makes both the complainer and the listener feel worse. Regardless of our method of complaint, negative thoughts release chemicals in the body that cause stress.

Conversely, positive thoughts release feel-good chemicals. Challenge your students to do a week of gratitude where each day, they write out three things for which they are grateful. At the end of the week, have them check in and notice what has shifted.