

Stepping Stones

..... retelling of a Russian folktale (adapted and modified by Amy Fox)

There once was a woman who lived in a cozy little cottage by the river. No one knew how old she was, or when she had first come to live by the riverside. Everyone got on well with her and respected her age and her wisdom. But she herself had a restless soul. She knew – perhaps she had always known – that there was something important she still had to discover.

The more she pondered this mystery, the more she realized that she must follow the direction in which her soul was drawing her; wherever it might lead. And the more she pondered this "beckoning", the more she realized that it was drawing her to the other side of the river.

The river was wide. It was deep. It was turbulent. You couldn't wade across it. You couldn't swim across it. There was no bridge across it. Yet everything in her heart convinced her that she must cross it, that whatever it was that her heart most desired lay on the other side.

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The day dawned when she went down to the water's edge and put her mind to the task of crossing it. As she stood there, a young man came up beside her. In his arms he carried a big stone, and he set it down in the river at her feet, inviting her to use it as a stepping stone. Trusting him entirely, she did so. And there she stood all day, perched on her stepping stone.

The next day he came again, and the next, and the next, each time bringing another stepping stone, until, after a while, she had already walked halfway out into the river.

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Then one morning he didn't come. With a rising sense of panic, she looked round to see what had happened to him. He was a bit late that morning, and it was then that she saw, for the first time, where he was getting the stepping stones.

He was systematically deconstructing her cozy little cottage on the riverbank to create the means for her to cross the river.

To embrace her future, she realized, she must relinquish the securities of her past. And yet the past that she had so cherished was essential to the making of the pathway to the future. And so it happened that when she had come to terms with her loss, she was able to allow it to become the gateway to new possibility.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

OPENING CLASS

As you begin to arrive on your mat, what is beckoning you forward?

See if you can begin to breathe space into that taking a fuller, deeper inhale here....fuller, deeper exhale out, feeling the release.

Keep breathing into this space, allowing your breath to strengthen, taking each breath today for the strength to take your next step forward.

DURING CLASS

Sometimes our stepping stones are steps of faith. Sometimes our stepping stones are gut instincts we take a chance on. Sometimes our stepping stones are direct invitations from others or our circumstances.

Let yourself arrive here. Maybe close your eyes and hear your breath. Allow yourself to find stillness so you can go inside and find the answers you need.

CLOSING CLASS

Anything we desire in life requires sacrifice and if we wish to embrace the beauty of our future, we must relinquish the security of our past.

What this week do you have to let go of?

What this week do you need to trust more deeply?

What this week are you stepping forward into?

EXTRAS

At its core, surrender or letting go is about the willingness to meet life as it is, to stop trying to fight and change how things are. When we're able to soften into that place, the gift that remains is gratitude, grace and abundance.

You can pose the following questions to your class as part of a closing mediation or you could simply invite your students to ask themselves these questions as they come up against things they are fighting to fix or control in their lives:

- What would my life be like right now if I let everything just be as it is?
- If I don't try to fix or control this moment, what is my actual experience in this moment?
- Where can I set aside expectations or prerequisites that I'm carrying?
- Where can I lean into this moment? Where can I breathe into the space of now?