

The Spiritual Contest

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

Once, there was this ancient teacher who grew old and needed to find a disciple to take his place. But how could he choose? He had many dedicated disciples, some who had been with him a very long time. After much thought, he decided that the only right and proper way to decide his successor would be to hold a spiritual contest.

The spiritual contest was simple and straightforward: the person who could cross the stream by the temple without getting their ankles wet would be his successor. But, there was a catch— they could not use any man-made object in order to help them cross the stream.

The disciples wracked their heads. How could they cross a stream and not get their ankles wet? Many disciples tried and just as many failed. Months went by where no one could cross the stream without getting their ankles wet.

It was at this time that a young girl approached the ancient leader and asked if she might have a chance. The wise teacher saw no reason to not give her a chance as all of his own disciples had failed. The young girl just had one small request— for the wise and ancient leader to wait for her as she prepared for this task.

More months went by and finally the young girl told the wise and ancient leader that she was ready. The young girl walked across the stream and when she returned to the ancient leader, her ankles were still dry.

"However did you manage to keep your ankles dry?" he asked the young girl.

"By patiently waiting the passing seasons," she replied. "I watched each of your disciples try to cross the stream, each one failing in their attempt. They were hasty in wanting to become your successor and so they rushed to figure out a way. But, nature teaches us that nothing stays the same and when I waited patiently, fall turned to winter and the stream froze over. It was then that I could cross without getting my ankles wet."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

OPENING CLASS	DURING CLASS
<p>One of the great yoga axioms, or universal truths is, "You are exactly where you are meant to be."</p> <p>See if you can soften into this moment as it is, as you are.</p> <p>No situation in our life, no matter how joyous or painful, is unworthy of our attention and our willingness to relate to it. If in every moment we are exactly where we are meant to be, then this very moment holds the very wisdom needed to take our next step, our next breath.</p> <p>Begin to deepen your breath here...</p>	<p><i>Before Telling the Story</i></p> <p>Notice where you might rushing or forcing. See where you can soften. What if there was no where to be but where you are?</p> <p>In this moment, you are exactly where you are meant to be.</p> <p><i>After Telling the Story</i></p> <p>They say timing in life is everything. If you trust the timing of your life, you are always exactly where you need to be.</p> <p>You are at the right place and at the right time, so you can meet the right people and open the right doors to move forward.</p>
CLOSING CLASS	EXTRAS
<p>Not everything will happen according to your plans and that's ok.</p> <p>This week, may you remember that you are exactly where you are meant to be.</p>	<p>The Buddha, in his first discourse, illuminated the 4 Noble Truths. The 4th Noble Truth is the path out of suffering and in order to find our way out of suffering, we must be willing to feel and experience our present moment reality on deeper and deeper levels. With deep, present moment awareness, we then work to accept our reality with less and less resistance. To take steps on the path means to realize that in any given moment, we are exactly where we are supposed to be. Ultimately, the laws of karma and the universe have put us in this particular experience and it is the perfect experience for us to take steps forward toward liberation.</p>