

Fable of the Wise Farmer

..... Taoist parable (adapted and modified by Amy Fox)

There was once a wise farmer, who, with his son, had a small piece of land and one horse. One day, the horse managed to jump the fence and ran away to freedom.

The farmer's nosy neighbor came up to the fence, shaking his head.

"You had just one horse," said the neighbor, "and now he's gone. Such bad luck!"

The wise farmer nodded slowly, taking in his neighbor's words, "Well, who knows if it's good or bad?"

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The next day, the wise farmer's horse miraculously reappeared, except that he wasn't alone: in tow was a second, wild horse.

The neighbor hurried over excitedly, jabbering away: "You had one horse, then you lost it, and now you have two! This is such good luck!"

The farmer smiled sagely before replying, "Who knows if it's good or bad?"

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The following day, the farmer's only son took on the job of breaking in the wild horse. The horse bucked, throwing the son to the ground and breaking his leg.

"Tut, tut, tut," the neighbor muttered in dismay, "What a week! You lose a horse, get it back, gain an extra horse and now your only son, your only help on the farm, is injured! This is such terrible, terrible luck."

Once again the wise farmer shrugged his shoulders and said, "Who knows if it's good or bad?"

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A week later, the army marched through town, conscripting all young and able men for military duty. The farmer's son, who was in a cast and on crutches, was not required to go to war. The neighbor exhaled in relief upon hearing the news. "Oh, what good luck for you and your family! Your son doesn't have to go to war! Such good luck."

Of course, the farmer responded in only the way he could...

"Who knows if it's good or bad?"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

OPENING CLASS	DURING CLASS
<p><i>"Everything is falling together perfectly, even though it looks as if some things are falling apart. Trust in the process you are now experiencing."</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">– Neale Donald Walsch</p> <p>How often in life are you quick to pass judgement on something and label it as "good" or "bad"? How often do you use past failure as a prediction for future impediment? And where for the next hour can you allow yourself to be where you are– a place that is neither good or bad or right or wrong– a place that is simply an exploration of your body?</p>	<p><i>Before Telling the Story</i></p> <p>Notice your mind– your inner conversation– in this moment. Where are you passing judgement on this shape or on your practice?</p> <p>Labels put things in boxes and ultimately limit us in our thinking. Where can you remove any labels you're placing on your body, your practice, your life?</p> <p><i>After Telling the Story</i></p> <p>Things not working out allows what's meant for you to come to you because what's truly meant for you, won't pass you by.</p> <p>See if you can be open to where you are in this moment...who knows if it's good or bad?</p>
CLOSING CLASS	EXTRAS
<p>The thing about hindsight is it is always 20/20, something we only know after an event or thing has passed. And so the reminder for us as we close out our practice is to remember that none of us know what this moment means; we only know the moment as we give meaning to it.</p> <p>As you go about your week and encounter life, may you remind yourself: <i>Who knows if it's good or bad?</i></p>	<p>According to psychologists, there are 7 Types of Coincidences. One of the 7 Types of Coincidences is something known as serendipity and serendipity is the type of coincidence that occurs when you feel like you are in the right place at the right time.</p> <p>Ask your students to take note of serendipitous occurrences throughout their week. Beyond that, ask your students to reflect on the areas of their life where they are quick to pass judgement and where in their life they are more open and receptive. For the areas in which they are resistant and quick to pass judgement, to see if they can be open to the possibility of being where they are.</p>