

# Value of Your Life

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

There was once a young monk who wanted to know the value of his life and so he went and asked his wise teacher.

The wise teacher didn't give him an answer. Instead he told the young monk to go on a little journey: "Before I give you the answer, I want you to go outside to the garden and find a large stone. Then, take the stone down to the market to sell it. If someone asks you for the price of the stone, stay silent, and instead just stretch out two fingers in response. If someone offers you money for it, don't sell the stone! Bring it back to me, and I will tell you the answer to your question."

The young monk carried the large stone to the market to sell. The market was crowded that day, and all the people were very curious about the mysterious young monk and his stone.

Suddenly a housewife came over and asked: "How much are you selling that stone for?"

The young monk stretched out two fingers.

The housewife said: "Two dollars?"

The young monk shook his head, and the housewife replied: "So it's twenty dollars? Well, ok! I've been looking for a good paper weight to use at home."

The young monk couldn't help but think to himself: *Someone is willing to fork out twenty dollars to buy this worthless stone! There are thousands more in the hills where that came from!*

However, the young monk followed his master's instructions, kept the stone and went back to report what had happened.

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When the young monk came back to his wise teacher he said, "Master, you won't believe it. Today there was a housewife who offered twenty dollars to buy my stone. Now can you tell me: what is the value of my life? "

"Not yet," he said, "tomorrow morning I want you to try to sell the stone again. This time, take the stone to the museum. Come back to me afterwards and I will tell you the answer to your question."

The next morning, in the museum, a group of curious onlookers stood whispering amongst themselves. The stone the monk carried looked like an ordinary stone, but surely if the monk brought it here, it must have some hidden value.

One of the men at the museum asked the young monk how much he was selling the stone for.

Once again, the young monk didn't say anything, and just showed him two fingers.

The man asked: "Two hundred dollars?"

The young monk shook his head, and the man replied: "Of course! Two thousand dollars then. I will carve this stone into a statue and make it a work of art."

The young monk was taken back by this offer and rushed back to the monastery before anyone could say another word.

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When the young monk returned to the monastery he told his teacher that someone offered two thousand for the stone. Then, once again he asked his teacher to tell him what the value of his life was.

His teacher laughed and said: "Not so fast! I have one last task for you. Tomorrow, I want you to try one more time. This time, take the stone down to the art collector's shop. When you come back, I promise to give you your answer."

So the next morning, the young monk brought his stone to the art collector's store. It seemed that the story of the young monk and his mysterious stone had spread throughout the town and everyone in the store talked excitedly to each other in hushed tones.

Finally one person asked, "Young monk, what is the asking price for your wonderful stone?"

Like every time before, the little monk stretched out two of his fingers without replying.

"Twenty-thousand dollars?" another man asked. Completely stunned, the little monk blurted out a garbled reply before covering his wide-open mouth.

Thinking that he had angered the young monk with a low-ball price, the man immediately corrected himself: "Oh, no, no... I meant to say, Two-hundred thousand dollars!"

The young monk was so stunned that he picked up the stone and ran all the way back to the monastery, leaving the entire crowd in an uproar.

When he arrived at the monastery he describe his experience at the art collector: "Master! We're rich! Someone just offered two-hundred thousand dollars for the stone! Surely, now you can finally tell me the greatest value of my life!"

The wise teacher smiled and said: "You have already discovered the answer to your own question.

The greatest value of your life is just like this stone.

At the market, you are only worth twenty dollars,

At the museum, you are worth two-thousand dollars,

But if you place yourself at the art collector, you're worth two-hundred thousand dollars!

So, the value of your life is dependent upon where you place yourself."

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

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### OPENING CLASS

The ability to conjure up a negative self-image is part of human experience and on some level, we all carry a not-enough story around with us.

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*I'm not smart enough, pretty enough, fit enough  
I'm not a good enough father or mother  
I'm not successful enough*

And we spent countless hours– sometimes even years– trying to get “rid” of the not-enough story.

But the reality is: **You are not called to get rid of your not good enough story; you are called to stop living it.**

### DURING CLASS

Notice what thoughts, vrittis, are coming up now. Can you toggle your mind back to your breath?

It's not about not having negative thoughts. It's not about getting rid of your not-enough story. You are being called to stop living it. You are being called to step into the moment as you are because that is enough.

Who would you be if you weren't re-living your not-enough story? I

f you let your values, not some external measure of worth, guide you what would you be doing differently?

### CLOSING CLASS

You are not called to get rid of your not-enough story; you are being called to stop living it.

You are enough. You are stronger than you think, braver than you seem and blessed with everything you need.

### EXTRAS

Ask your students to positively challenge their inner critic– the little voice in their head that wants to try and convince them that they aren't good enough or worthy of happiness or love.

Each time we give power to that little voice we sabotage our happiness and that little voice wins. And the way to beat the voice is to build awareness so we can challenge the thoughts that don't align with how we want to feel.

Ask your students to notice where they are when they hear negative self-talk, to notice what they are doing. Then, to try removing themselves from what they're “being told” by challenging their misbeliefs as untrue.