

A man who speaks too loudly speaks to himself  
Truth needs no violent defense  
It finds its own home

Disappointment is a glorious teacher  
Expectation is disease  
Quality is now

Branches twist in the wind reaching for the light  
The balance of relationships brings health  
Man is as the same

Chains of insecurity, the dungeon of fear  
Tightly squeeze a flower and it dies  
Free the butterfly

Each choking vine can be trimmed away  
Who will swing the axe removing  
It from my neck

## **The Families**

On a beautiful spring day the traveler entered a small farming town. He stayed there three years visiting three separate farms, working and earning his food and lodging.

The Morlones lived in a small but family-sustaining farm just on the outskirts of town. Ms. Morlone, as she liked to be called, shared the house with her children, and sometimes her husband as he traveled a lot. She welcomed the traveler to stay provided he help with the gardens as she was falling behind in their care. Within

minutes of the traveler unpacking Ms. Morlone was complaining about living alone and having to do so much.

"I never get any time for myself" she would say with much frustration in her face.

The traveler could feel her pain and anger and he offered to stay and help with the spring planting. There is always a lot to do to get the earth ready for the seed and to nurture the little seedlings through to the point of being strong and sturdy plants.

Ms. Morlone said that planting is a family affair. She called the children to help and reluctantly they joined. Ms. Morlone worked very hard, turning the soil, adding organic fertilizer, and sowing the seeds. The children helped for a little while, but they kept wandering. They couldn't seem to concentrate. Ms. Morlone would yell, they'd return for a while and then drift off again. Finally Ms. Morlone stopped yelling and tried to finish the task herself. The traveler helped and the seeds got planted.

Spring slowly turned to summer and the traveler carefully attended to the nurturing of the plants. He would say to Ms. Morlone, "I will take care of the garden so you can take care of the children." She had the extra time she wanted, but now complained that the children didn't behave and that she didn't have the money she needed to do other things.

Summer turned to fall and the garden produced a bountiful harvest, more than the family needed. "What am I going to do with all this food?" exclaimed Ms.

Morlone. The traveler offered the idea of taking the extra to the market. Ms. Morlone agreed. The traveler helped with the harvest and helped get the extra to market. The produce was so beautiful that it fetched a handsome price. Ms. Morlone now had extra money, but complained that winter was coming. The traveler thanked her for her hospitality and then moved on.

That winter the traveler moved in to help the Needham's with their spring preparations. They had a small respectable place in the country and were thinking of raising more crops than last year so that they could move toward making money in the produce market. Expanding a small family garden into a commercial enterprise is a major undertaking. They could use the help offered by the traveler.

As spring approached couple sat down to plan out the work before them. It took them a long time to arrive at a plan because they couldn't seem to agree. He wanted to remove a portion of the flowerbed and then extend the garden plantings into the forest. She wanted to keep the flowerbed as it was, use more of the grass yard, and then extend into the forest. The more they discussed, the more they had arguments. Finally as spring was fully upon them they sensed the urgency to plant. They decided that since both of them wanted to remove part of the forest they would start there.

Clearing a forest is no easy task. Trees have to be cut, roots and stumps cleared, debris removed. It can be a big project. The traveler marveled at how well the family worked to get the soil ready for planting. But it didn't last. The couple argued about how much forest to clear, because both had different views on how

much yard space they were going to plant. Since the argument became heated they stopped clearing new land and began to prepare the new land for planting. The two separated and started planting on their own in two separate halves of the new garden space.

The older of the two children wanted to help, so she went to the mother and asked if she could plant. The mother, without looking up, shoved some seeds in her hand and said, "Go plant the first row and don't bother me!" No other instructions were given. The child knew not to bother mom or dad when they were acting "that way". The child went off to plant.

A little bit later the younger child asked his father if he could help. The father, concentrating on his work, shoved some seeds in the child's hand and said, "Go plant the first row and don't bother me!" The child felt the cold distance of his father but was happy to be involved.

Both children were happy they could help their parents. The traveler did not interfere in these matters, but simply helped the garden remain healthy and productive.

As the harvest time approached it was clear to the couple that their harvest was going to be very bountiful, but not what they expected -- two crops in the same row, twice the amount needed of one crop and half the amount needed of another. More arguments followed and some of the crops did not get harvested prior to the winter snow. In addition, because the large crop created a surplus, and market prices were

low, monetary problems soon followed. This made the prospect of facing winter difficult and the couple argued even more. The children watched and were sad.

The traveler left, apologizing that he couldn't have helped more.

In the final spring of his stay in this farming community, the traveler stayed with the Kinderstones. Their home was small but comfortable. During his stay the traveler saw that the Kinderstones played together, shared their lives together and worked hard together. The traveler became an integral part of the family and of their crop planting and harvesting. There was harmony and love in the home.

When harvest time approached the bounty of the crop surprised everyone. It was the best harvest they ever had. They all celebrated and joy filled each heart. They sold some of the harvest at market and did very well. For his help the Kinderstones offered the traveler part of money, and some prepared goods from the harvest. He could not take all of what was offered, but he took what he could carry in hopes of sharing it with others along his journey.

As the traveler left he felt great sadness and great joy. He was sad that some families had forgotten how to grow and happy to have known one family that did.

Do and teach by action it speaks the loudest  
Mouth only as you can do  
Be, then speak softly

## Relationships

Love is openness, freedom, giving and taking  
Love embraces without enslaving  
Two becomes as one

I turn to myself but see only dark clouds  
Intimacy brings rays of clarity  
Reflecting off the soul

There are no bad faces only bad places  
Knowing the truth hurts us  
Not knowing hurts others

The harshness of harshness carves caverns  
In the landscape of hope  
Safety forgotten

Cradled in the sanctity of unconditional love  
A soft power unfolds within  
We find ourselves

Love is not infatuation or being a martyr  
Individuality shared  
Cared, not ensnared

Together, sharing equally, being one  
Careers not killing partnership  
Loves foundation

Empathy is not sympathy, different sources  
One is knowing the other thinking  
Soul versus head view

## Family

Children are young seedlings planted in the home  
Nurtured by the parents who provide  
Support to the seedling.

Buried deep the roots penetrate and shape  
Rocky or fertile soil they feed  
Fruits take and ripen.

As we live our acts are teachers  
Even the smallest of things  
Words fall away

You can shelter them from the hazards  
Or give the awareness  
Ego versus teaching

Birds learn to fly and lions hunt without tears  
Man learns to explore wisdom  
Through love with freedom

The clay is sculpted with gentle strokes  
Aggression leaves deep gashes  
A distorted work

Love, a young seedling, without light it dies  
Too much light and again it died  
Beauty in the balance

Gently shape and mold youth to bend  
To hear the wind and seek sun  
To avoid disaster

## The Calling

After working on the farms the traveler went from place to place taking on jobs where he could help others. There was no fame to be found in this. There was no wealth. It was a matter of service to a calling. It was a message that came from deep within his soul. He had to reach out to help others because it was a part of his essence, his being, his reason to exist. If he did not do this then he would get sick, sometimes very sick. Yet he was unsure of himself, of what he had to offer, and how to offer.

As he traveled in and out of different helping jobs he kept discovering that there were people, given the title “boss” or “administrator”, who made decisions about how help was to be offered. These supervisors had their own ideas of what was right for the traveler to do as a helper.

The traveler worked as a helper in a multi-building complex designed to assist people in recovery from trauma. These were people who were sometimes seriously injured, both physically and mentally, from traumatic accidents. Often their families were also affected. The facility provided medical, educational, and behavioral services. The traveler was excited about working there as there were daily opportunities for him to offer help.

The people he offered help to were sometimes so impaired that they couldn't remember, or couldn't speak, or walk, or use their hands. Some couldn't control

their behaviors and were deemed “dangerous” by the management. Yet these injured people were drawn to the traveler. They were calm in his presence. The traveler quickly developed a reputation of being able to work with the most difficult, regardless of the apparent danger. The management would call him away from his duties to help defuse tense situations. Most of the staff respected the traveler for this ability. But the management was often skeptical.

One day the traveler was called to help with a crisis. A patient, Joe, was “out-of-control”. He was yelling in the cafeteria and threatening to harm others. When the traveler arrived Joe had two table knives, one in each hand, and was saying he would use them against anyone that came near. The man in charge, Bill, said, “We have five staff waiting to take him down. We just need you to get him out of the cafeteria. We don’t want anyone else to get hurt.”

The traveler had only met Joe once before, and only briefly. Looking at him across the cafeteria, eyes a bit glazed, and muscles taught like a tiger waiting for its prey, he seemed frightening at first. Joe was a weight lifter and from the streets of a big city. This made him seem even more frightening. The staff were all keeping their distance. How was the traveler to handle the situation?

As the traveler approached he could feel his heart beating louder and louder. The room seemed to fade away and there were only two people present. He walked toward Joe quietly speaking his name. Joe turned toward him, metal flashing, and said, “Don’t come near me. I know how to use these.”

“Joe, I know that you are upset. I just want to talk with you about how I can help”, said the traveler in a quiet tone that almost resonated peace.

Quickly Joe shot back, “Look man, I don’t want to hurt you. You had better just stay away.”

“I know that you don’t want to hurt me” softly spoke the traveler as he slowly moved closer to Joe. With open hands in front the traveler said, “Why don’t you hand those over to me and we will go outside and talk. I will help you get the help you want.”

Joe said nothing.

The traveler kept moving closer, “You can hand me those now. We will go outside and talk about how I can help you. You will be fine.”

Joe handed him the knives and walked out calmly. As the five staff started to descend like vultures for the kill, the traveler put up his hand making a stop gesture. They backed away. The two then sat and talked about what was troubling Joe. The holiday season was coming and Joe was told he couldn’t make a home visit because they said he had been “bad”.

When the two men parted Bill called the traveler aside and said, “You know the policy here. We must follow through on interventions. It was wrong for you to

stop the staff from doing their job. It is the way people learn not to behave in inappropriate ways.”

Yes the traveler knew of the management’s approach of using restraints and other behavioral “techniques”, but it seemed that he was often called to defuse situations connected to this approach. He also knew that there was something more than punishment and reward at work in the event that just took place. So many times he had seen this something else help people who were victims of trauma, something that went beyond the behavioral approach. But the management didn’t know this something else. They had never experienced it and to them it did not exist.

The traveler had no response for Bill.

The traveler thought he had gained some wisdom while working at the trauma center. He thought he had learned about how help should and should not be offered. He knew that there was something else besides punishment and reward. He had seen it work. He was encouraged by staff, families, and the people he helped to do more. He decided to become a consultant so he could share this wisdom with others.

As a consultant he visited many human service agencies. He taught, gave presentations and designed helping programs. When he presented the program the helping staff were enthusiastic and initially reported that the programs were of help to those in need. But, his visits to these places were brief. He would leave helpful

information, people would say they understood, and then he would return a month later to repeat the same process. When he confronted people about their resistance to change as a part of their becoming better helpers, he was attacked, and in some cases so severely that his good reputation was questioned. The focus of his consulting work was than more on him defending then on improving helping.

Discouraged about the experiences he had, the traveler decided to quit the consulting business and spend time in isolation meditating and writing. He did this for many months, and was so immersed in his work that he failed to recognize the illness taking over his body and mind. He lost the ability to concentrate, to write, even to meditate. He would curl up in a ball and stay in that position for most of the day, getting up only to take care of his basic needs. There seemed no sense in doing anything else. No one was going to change. Those who were trying to be helpers were not interested in learning how to become better. They were only interested in doing it their own way. He had no purpose for doing anything.

One day while lying in his suffering he heard an inner voice say, “Get up! Go to the park and walk!” The message repeated over and over and would not let him alone in his suffering.

There was a scenic park not far from where the traveler was living at that time. He went to that park, hoping at least to quiet the nagging voice in his head. It was late afternoon on a mild summer day. It was a weekday and the park was nearly empty. He took the long path leading out around a small lake. Half way around the lake he stopped at the lake’s edge, to close his eyes and to breathe a

moment of peace. When he opened his eyes he was surprised to see dozens of iridescent fish swirling in the water at his feet. When he looked up the lake appeared on fire with a bright golden glow. This glow lit up the trees near him and bathed him in a sense of peace that was beyond description. He fell to his knees.

He then heard a voice, but this time the voice was not from within his head. The voice said, "You are my son and I am proud of you. Now go forth and do as I command."

The calling pressed upon us is from both in and out  
It cannot be shed without harm  
It is not of the self

## **Beyond Ego**

To see with new eyes is to walk with the blind  
Ego forces us to hide and join  
Not open to life

The signs are learned through seeing and doing.  
Signs will show the detours  
To avoid disaster

The wise are free, the foolhardy in chains  
Greatness found with the unknown  
Truth finds its own way

In the still pool the moon reflects perfectly.  
Storms distort the image but the  
Moon is still perfect

Creativity from going out and then going in  
Premature focus becomes myopic  
Narrow vision fails

A caterpillar in cocoon in neither crawling  
Nor is it spreading new wings  
It is just changing

The being is its own as it sees itself  
A living entity of uniqueness  
Pieces are just vistas

No man can have two masters and commit to both  
Broken chains let loose the unknown  
Discovering self

## The Journey

No man can fly to the top of the mountain  
There are so many paths to be walked  
Yet all are the same

The ship without one captain has many captains  
Going in many directions, guided by luck  
Destiny is often chaos

No man can see with his eyes pressed to the wall  
The best defense is clear vision  
Avoiding the storm

Ahead is the climb to the top of the mountain.  
Many paths and freedom to choose  
The peak doesn't move

Looking only at the horizon, we stumble  
At only our feet, we walk blind  
Unity is harmony

Infinite are the boundaries of the journey  
One's path provides one view  
Narrow and infinite

The every day highway ride disappears from view  
Carve a new path through the woodland  
Visions and wisdom