

Each mind glows as a small flicker in the dark with  
The potential to light a city but barely  
Lighting their path

Two enter the between seeking healing  
Discovering the divine  
Loosing the self

Don't hide the sadness of seeing those in the dark  
Feel but do not change to fit them  
Reach out and stay one

## **Sitting with Suffering**

Paul spent a month with the traveler in their mountain retreat. The traveler taught him the basic principles behind the art of being with compassion that is fundamental to helping others. They also practiced prayer and meditation and shared an inner peace as an important part of becoming centered in the art of being. Paul would often say how wonderful he felt and how happy he was to be learning from the traveler. But the traveler knew that teaching needed to be accompanied by example and practice. Paul and the traveler agreed to leave the shelter and to practice the art of healing together. Since they were already on the mountaintop their first trip together was into the cave.

As the two entered the cave Paul became very frightened. It was so dark and difficult to navigate. He could not rely on his senses and all he could hear was his heart pounding. The traveler assured Paul that he would help him find his way

through the darkness because he had traveled here before and knew something about the cave. He asked Paul to quiet himself and to listen carefully for the smallest sign of the cave people. Paul tried but it was difficult to quiet, not only his racing heart, but also the noise of his fearful thoughts. Paul stayed close to the traveler.

After groping through the damp, black, silence of the cave the traveler turned to Paul and asked him if he heard something. Paul whispered, “No.” They took some more steps and then Paul said, with child-like enthusiasm, “I do hear something!”

Paul wanted to leave to run from the darkness toward what he thought he heard, but he didn’t want to leave the company of the traveler. As they walked further the faint noises became a hum, and then a clamor of human voices. A bit further and Paul was sure he heard voices, gradually becoming more and more distinct. Then Paul saw a faint, almost imperceptible, flicker of light. It came, and then it disappeared. Paul spoke, “Master, I hope that I am not imaging this but I think that I saw a faint light.”

The traveler said that he was right and that this was not his imagination. He suggested to Paul to focus on the light and watch how the darkness disappears. Paul tried to do this but found his mind wandering to his feet in the cave water, the spider webs, the dank smells, and the darkness that kept creeping back. As they kept walking together on the journey the light did get brighter, not as bright as the sun, but more like a campfire at night. Then Paul saw the cave people huddled around the glow discussing life.

As soon as they came into the light a figure came running up to the traveler, excited, exclaiming, “Master! Master! You are back! I thought you would never return here.”

It was the mapmaker and he had so much to tell the traveler. After the traveler had showed him a way out the cave’s darkness, the mapmaker returned to his people to share the story of his vision. At first, everyone told him he was delusional or that the traveler had hypnotized him. The mapmaker tried to convince people of the experience but none would listen. They took away his status as the mapmaker and he was shunned. It became very lonely for him but he never stopped believing in what he had experienced with the traveler. He kept seeking someone who would listen and wish to take a journey with him. Finally he met someone, and together they traveled from the cave’s dark world. That person returned to the cave with the mapmaker and has been helping him. As the mapmaker shared this with the traveler there was great joy, and the shedding of tears.

The traveler said, “You have done well. You have reached out with the deepest conviction and courage, combined with compassion, to help another. There is no more blessed an act.”

Paul was perplexed. What was the master talking about? He could not understand why people would live in a cave. It seemed stupid. The way out was so obvious, and certainly life outside was much better. Hearing about how the mapmaker was shunned seemed an act of cruelty. If these stupid people were going to be that cruel, then perhaps they were better off living in the cave.

The traveler then turned to Paul and asked him, “Would you like to stay here and work with the mapmaker?”

The mapmaker thought this was a wonderful idea. There would be a peer by his side to help him reflect on how he was trying to help others. They could learn and grow together while also helping others.

Paul responded to the traveler, “I learned so much from you when we were sharing the shelter on the mountain top. Your words are wise and I felt reborn. But the journey into the cave was not something that I expected and I do not wish to ever return. I would like to learn more about what you shared with me while we were in the shelter.”

The traveler gently replied, “I have taught you all that I can. Perhaps the mapmaker can show you the way out.”

“What do you mean you have taught me all that you can?” asked Paul.

The traveler sat in silence and said nothing. Then breaking the silence Paul said, “I don’t want to spend time with the mapmaker.”

For a moment there was disappointment on the face of the mapmaker, but it quickly faded. He had become familiar with people rejecting his mapmaking skills. He knew many people still inside the cave who had shunned him more than once. The mapmaker turned to the traveler and said, “I have a student here who very much

wants to meet you. We have made some progress and she has been helping me with the others.”

Leaving Paul, the travel walked a short distance with the mapmaker and they both stopped. A short distance away was a beautiful woman sitting next to another woman and talking. The mapmaker whispered in the traveler’s ear that the beautiful woman’s name was Marion and she was the prospective student. Together they listened.

*Marion: I have walked with the one you used to call the mapmaker. He has shown me a great and beautiful sight.*

*Woman: You have been mislead my child. I have lived here much longer than you and I can tell you that there is no such sight. It is a fantasy created in you mind by wishful thinking.*

*Marion: It didn’t seem that way at the time. It seemed very real. But I couldn’t stay there. I was frightened and had to return to the people I know.*

*Woman: We have been like your family and this has been your home. Chasing after some state of mind that you were persuaded to believe in will never replace the reality of this place. This type of self created vision can be frightening because it seems so real, but is it not. This conflict of our self created reality with the actual reality creates inner turmoil. You simply need to let go of the dream.*

*Marion: But it did not seem like a dream, or like I created it from my own desires or in response to being persuaded. I didn’t even know about such a radiant place, and I certainly would not have been able to describe how it affected me simply by using my imagination.*

*Woman: Our culture is full of myths and fantast tales of heroes taking journeys and doing battle with the darkness. This battle is followed by some reward, something pleasurable. It seems to me that your dream is just the same.*

*Marion: Perhaps, but then why am I so scared to return to what is simply a dream?*

*Woman: Here is where you have formed all the relationships you have known. In the dream where these relationships there?*

*Marion: No.*

*Woman: It can be very frightening to leave the relationships that you have around you – for any reason.*

*Marion: I understand. Thank-you, I will think about what you have said.*

Marion stands, turns, sees the mapmaker, and beams with a big smile. She immediately walks over and introduces the traveler.

*Marion: I have heard so much about you. I have really wanted to meet you. I have so many questions. The mapmaker has helped me, but I think I need more help.*

*Traveler: What makes you think you need more help?*

*Marion: I feel like I'm stuck in some kind of battle. I don't seem to fit in here anymore. I know everyone, but no one seems to know me anymore. I can talk to everyone but the conversations seem shallow, meaningless, and sometimes just boring. I have no idea why I feel this way. Perhaps I'm going crazy.*

*Traveler: The mapmaker tells me that you went on a journey with him. Can you tell me what happened?*

*Marion: The mapmaker was very patient with me. Especially since I told him, several times, I wanted nothing to do with him. He told me he could sense something about me that was special. I thought maybe he was trying to flirt with me. I wasn't quite sure what he meant.*

*Traveler: You were cautious, having known the way men behave around you. Yet you were also curious.*

*Marion: Yes, exactly. There was something different about the mapmaker that made me curious. But I didn't know what that was. I had decided to find out and had made up my mind that the next time I saw him I would agree to meet him. When we met we just talked and it seemed like he got to know me real quickly, at a level that was different, very different from my relationships with men. I got scared and politely said I had to leave.*

*Traveler: You felt a deep connection with the mapmaker, like he knew what you were feeling at that moment and this was both comfortable and scary.*

*Marion: That's right, it was both scary and it felt real nice at the same time. That was confusing to me and then the confusion only made me feel more frightened. I had to take time to sort that out. I found that it felt good to be truly known and accepted, but that I was afraid to be known like that. That is not how men know me and it was not something I was used to.*

*Traveler: Yet you went back to see the mapmaker again.*

*Marion: Yes, I felt like I had to.*

*Traveler: You felt like there was something inside you that was "calling" you?*

*Marion: It was a calling that I could not seem to resist, nor could I make any sense out of it. It wasn't a physical thing. I knew what that felt like. It wasn't like anything I have felt before and it wouldn't leave me. I had to go and find out what it was.*

*Traveler: What did you discover?*

*Marion: The mapmaker told me that it was something inside of me, something that was calling me to take a journey. He reminded me that he had said to me earlier that he had seen something special about me. He said that this is what he had seen. The more I sat with him the stronger I could feel this inner pressure. Sometimes it was just below my navel, some times in my chest, but most of all it was inside the way I was feeling about life at that moment.*

*Traveler: You could feel something affecting your body but also something was affecting how you were feeling, both the physical and the emotional were like pressure.*

*Marion: Yes I felt both like a pressure, and sometimes the pressure was very intense. I didn't know what to do. I wanted to get up and leave, but the mapmaker explained to me that this was the beginning of a journey if I wanted to take it. For some reason that is unexplainable to me, I said yes. It is then that we got up and walked away from the family light, away from the comfort I had known. We walked into the darkness.*

*It was so scary I was shaking and trembling. I could barely put one foot in front of the other, but I could feel the mapmaker right beside me, ever in the pitch black darkness. He would point out things, like a boulder to walk around or a*

*crevasse to step over. Sometimes it would take me a few tries but I did manage to make it around these things.*

*Then I felt a warmth. The mapmaker said we were getting closer. The warmth felt different, comforting, but also unusual. I stopped walking. The mapmaker stopped with me. He then asked if I could see a small light in the distance. I looked up and then I saw it and as soon as I did the pressure inside me grew so intense that I thought I was going to explode. I ran back to the family light.*

*Traveler: Have you been back?*

*Marion: No, but I can't stop thinking about it. I have talked to everyone here but no one seems to have any idea. They think its all in my head.*

*Traveler: It looks like it has been a very difficult struggle for you.*

*Marion: It has, and I don't think I can take much more of it. I have to do something about it. Do you think you can help me?*

*Traveler: I can - if you want to walk with me.*

*Marion: I am ready.*

The three walked into the darkness. Marion made it easily around the boulder and over the crevasse. The journey was swift up to the appearance of the warmth and the light. At that point Marion felt overwhelmed again and wanted to leave. The traveler had her sit and the two explored the moment and allowing the warmth to penetrate the overwhelming feeling. Marion could feel the strength, wisdom and compassion of the traveler along with her own courage. The mapmaker could also feel the same. Together the three stood and slowly made their way out of the cave.

Compassion is the combination of deep empathy and wisdom  
Wisdom is action toward well being  
Well being is divine

### **Starting to Understand**

An idea becomes through action and action  
Needs correct doing which comes from  
Knowing correct being

Every mistake will meet its natural fate  
We do not need to make it great  
Let it go to create

The journey never ends but continues with courage  
There are smiles and tears and ecstasy  
And sometimes wisdom

The wise are knowing but think they are not  
A fool thinks he is all knowing  
To be or not

The narrow minded man sleepwalking through life  
Hides the absolute truth and doesn't move  
Gestalt and Tao lost

No idea can be constructive until it is heard  
Used, and molded in the user's hands  
So speak in this way

Progress discovered in the use of man's creation.  
Chains cast off for a new vision which  
Can lift up our lives

Freedom is discovered in wisdom discovered  
in the sweat of one's existence  
Discover yourself

## Teaching

Time used wisely brings in a bountiful harvest  
Time wasted is a seed thrown on a rock  
The wind takes it away

Sweating to wrestle something out of confusion  
Then not looking we suddenly discover  
A pattern unfolding

Ideas -- a match to begin the creative fires  
To reach the mountaintop we start  
With the first step

The rain makes its way to the sea, changing and  
Being changed yet unchanged  
Then it returns

Truth is not dressed in fancy clothes, nor eaten easily  
Like gold it must be beaten and shaped  
Before it is worn

Traveling speed is changed for those sharp curves  
We climb while dreaming to soar  
Speaking empty actions

Some awaken with the thunderclap, or the alarm  
Some with a touch, or a whisper  
Some stay asleep

When the sleeper awakens he sees everything as new  
The nature of importance is changed and  
Being replaces doing

## **Separate Paths**

Marion, Paul and the traveler set out on separate paths to discover the same thing – truth, enlightenment, and the relief of suffering. They had been on a journey to the sacred mountain together and were returning to the world to continue their journey. Paul and Marion both wanted to learn more about the experience they had shared with the traveler, and to continued that quest. The traveler continued his journey of being the traveler.

Paul's search went to the halls of wisdom that were said to house the learned ones. He spent many years within these halls seeking wisdom. Paul read volumes and wrote and lectured. He received recognition that he was learned. All who entered the halls knew him as an educated man. Paul achieved a proud standing in the learned community. From his room in the hall he sent out his words to his small but dedicated audience. Paul was committed to his audience and they to him, and he was pleased with his accomplishments. Paul was committed to his inquisition into the question of the learned view on the relief of suffering and to his audience's respect for his opinion on this subject. It was the life he believed he wanted.

The traveler's path was different than Paul's. The traveler was a bit older, and his learning had been on the streets. He received no certification for this learning. The traveler spent his time in the community the struggles of the common man. He also saw these struggles within himself and faced them as a man would face the lions in Daniel's den. He traveled thousands of miles and met hundreds of people. In each meeting the traveler offered a kind heart and compassionate healing with the intent of relieving suffering. Many were healed, and in turn, the traveler discovered his own healing. He spent many an evening huddled around a cozy fire enveloped in the sharing of experiential wisdom with others. The traveler began to gather a small but dedicated following. He appreciated their support. It was the life he believed he wanted.

Then during the traveler's journey he came upon the learned halls. He asked the people, "Who lives within these halls?" The people said the experts, the wise ones, lived there. He then asked, "Is there a man who would wish to share wisdom, to listen to what I have learned and to share what he has learned with me?" The people said that they had heard Paul speak and they considered him to be such a man. No one mentioned any other name. The traveler thought this man must be wise and perhaps this is the same Paul he knew many years ago. He went into the halls seeking this person.

As he walked the halls, the traveler saw many signs that the men who lived here embraced the path of knowledge. Walls of books, students engaged in study, pictures of famous men he knew, and instruction in techniques he had seen other

practitioners use. He arrived at the office of Paul and saw more signs -- pictures and sayings hung on the walls. The traveler had incorporated many of these inspirational sayings into his teachings while helping others. As the traveler waited he thought, "This man must be a wise man. I am sure we will have much to learn from each other. It will be nice to share the journey." The traveler anxiously awaited this wise man, hoping he was the man the traveler once knew as his student.

Paul walked into the room and the traveler looked at him very carefully. He seemed to look like the student he once knew, but there were so many changes he was not sure. Paul spoke, "It is my old teacher who has finally come down from the mountain. It is good to see you. How can I be of service?"

"It is you! I wasn't sure at first. You have changed", the traveler said with caution. There appeared an air of assuredness with Paul that the traveler had not seen at their early meetings.

Paul responded, "I have accomplished much since our last meeting. I am now recognized as a noted authority in the area of helping people with suffering. This places many demands on me and I am very busy." Paul then turned to his papers and began shuffling them about. He made little eye contact with his old mentor.

The traveler told Paul of his desire to share healing wisdom with others and reminded Paul of the times they had spent together. Paul said that he had moved beyond that superstition and was now a man of science. Paul then said rather

brusquely, “Thank you for stopping in to see me. I think that if you really wish to help others then you should attain the needed credentials. We can help you do that.”

The traveler started to speak, “But I ....”

Paul continued, “I will write the name of a man who can help you with this.”

As Paul was writing the traveler thought, what has happened here? This meeting is not what he expected. Everyone said that this was a learned man and yet he seemed closed to any discussion of the interpretation and use of healing wisdom. Why couldn't the two of them share? Wasn't it the sharing of wisdom that promotes growth for the betterment of mankind?

The traveler realized that nothing here would promote wisdom. He simply said, “Thank you for your help”.

After the traveler left, Paul remarked about the meeting in his journal:

“Today this man named they call the traveler came to visit me. I knew him once as a local teacher in the community. He said that he had some wisdom to share in the area I have been studying. But I could not determine the validity of his knowledge. I could see that he had traveled and met people but he had nothing else to say. He spoke of personal knowing and of “gifts”. He said that others have been healed through his work. But I had no evidence that such healing actually took place. I was concerned that he had no scientific foundation upon which to base his claim of healing wisdom. I feared that he could become a cult leader. I

recommended that he pursue more formal training in order to help him develop further.”

The traveler left discouraged and feeling rejected by his former student. He returned to his small band of followers, but their words of support were no help. He left the group and walked into the garden to find solace in his faith. He was in the garden for just a few moments when Marion appeared. She walked up and sat next to him. Not a word was spoken but her comfort was like an oasis for the traveler.

After many years of helping others he knew what he offered did help others. The fact that Paul, a former student, could not understand this was very upsetting. The traveler was very confused. He did not return to see Paul.

Both men continued their separate paths. One day the traveler met a young lad who had been taught by Paul. After some time together the young lad said to the traveler, “I have now been with you for nearly a year and seen your work. I am impressed by your wisdom and your techniques. I have never seen nor read about such an approach but I am sure that Paul and others would benefit from your wisdom. Yet I also know that the learned men of the halls will not accept that which is not presented in the language they understand. Since you do not understand their language, nor they yours, then what they have accomplished and what you have accomplished both go unnoticed by many. This is a disservice to mankind.”

The traveler then realized that the separate paths he believed necessary were not. That somewhere in between there was another path, one representing unity. Discovering this middle path would be another long and challenging journey.

When all is chaos then there is no wisdom, only pain  
In the quiet balance there is order  
And there is peace

### **More Teaching**

There is a time to be tough and a time to be gentle  
A time to listen and a time to speak  
Act with correct timing

Words plant thoughts in the mind, be careful  
Speak with wise compassion and  
Do so with attentiveness

Do not focus on that which is wrong except  
To be happy in using the solution  
Guide, do not dictate

Our self designed expectations of people  
Damage empathic connections  
Leaving us alone.

Reading the map is not the same as the journey  
Practicing is not the same as doing  
Doing is not being

## Awakening

A man is radiant and his light awakens others  
A man is dark and this is shared  
Being begets being

Cast of the chains of mental pabulum and  
Feast upon wisdom's manna  
Let go of the pigeon

Sit still in the quietness of your own essence  
Oneness in being a being becoming  
Humble connectedness

As the inner eye opens the first sight is blinding  
The transformation begins with choice  
To hide or to be

Feel the mind open to new horizons and feel alive  
The cup is never empty - take flight  
Soar with the eagle

Sunshine fighting its way through dark clouds  
Watch the tiny bud open to a full rose  
Witness a soul birth

Our self created expectations bend the image  
Of others and then of ourselves  
A man walks alone