

Becoming a butterfly

"What in the world do I really want?" she sighed. "It seems different every few minutes. But I know that there must be more."

One day, a gray-haired caterpillar hanging upside down on a branch surprised her. He seemed caught in some hairy stuff. "You seem to be in trouble," she said. "Can I help?"

"No, my dear, I have to do this to become a butterfly." Her whole insides leapt on hearing the word 'butterfly'.

"Tell me, sir," Yellow asked, "what is a butterfly?"

"It's what you are meant to become. It flies with beautiful wings and joins the earth to heaven. It drinks only nectar from the flowers and carries the seeds of love from one flower to another. Without butterflies, the world would have fewer flowers."

Yellow gasped: "It can't be true! How can I believe there's a butterfly inside you or me? Do you need to die to become a butterfly?"

"Yes and no," the gray caterpillar said. "This may look like dying but actually you will still live. Life is changed, not taken away. Isn't that different from those who die without ever becoming butterflies?"

"And if I decide to become a butterfly," said Yellow hesitantly, "what do I do?"

"Watch me. I'm making a cocoon. It's a halfway house where the change takes place. It's a big step, since you can never return to caterpillar life. And the change is so slow that anyone who might peek in may feel that nothing is happening. But the butterfly is already becoming. And once you are a butterfly, you can really love: the kind of love that makes new life."

The gray-haired caterpillar continued to cover himself with silky threads. As he wove the last bit around his head he called: "We're all waiting for you!"

(Extract from a book *Hope for the flowers* by Trina Paulus)

The Mouse Trap

A mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package. “What food might this contain?” the mouse wondered. He was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap.

Retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning: “There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!”

The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said “Mr.Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me. I cannot be bothered by it.”

The mouse turned to the pig and told him “There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!” The pig sympathized, but said “I am so very sorry, Mr.Mouse, but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured you are in my prayers.”

The mouse turned to the cow and said “There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!” The cow said “Wow, Mr. Mouse. I’m sorry for you, but it’s no skin off my nose.”

So, the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer’s mousetrap alone.

That very night a sound was heard throughout the house – like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey. The farmer’s wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit the farmer’s wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital and she returned home with a fever.

Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup’s main ingredient. But his wife’s sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig. The farmer’s wife did not get well; she died. So many! people came for her funeral, the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them.

The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness. So, the next time you hear someone is facing a problem and think it doesn’t concern you, remember: when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another. Each of us is a vital thread in another person’s tapestry.

The carrot, the egg, and the coffee bean

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling.

It seemed that, as one problem was solved, a new one arose. Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to a boil. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans.

She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. In about twenty minutes, she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the young woman replied. The mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity - boiling water - but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak.

The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened! The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" the mother asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?" Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong but, with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit but, after a death, a breakup, or a financial hardship, does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and a hardened heart? Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavour.

If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?

(Author unknown)

It takes Courage

It takes strength to be firm,
It takes courage to be gentle.

It takes strength to conquer,
It takes courage to surrender.

It takes strength to be certain,
It takes courage to have doubt.

It takes strength to fit in,
It takes courage to stand out.

It takes strength to feel a friend's pain,
It takes courage to feel your own pain.

It takes strength to endure abuse,
It takes courage to stop it.

It takes strength to stand alone,
It takes courage to lean on another.

It takes strength to love,
It takes courage to be loved.

It takes strength to survive,
It takes courage to live

(Author unknown)

In kindergarten your idea of a good friend was the person who let you have the red crayon when all that was left was the ugly black one.

In first grade your idea of a good friend was the person who went to the bathroom with you and held your hand as you walked through the scary halls.

In third grade your idea of a good friend was the person who shared their lunch with you when you forgot yours on the bus.

In sixth grade your idea of a friend was the person who went up to your new crush, and asked them to dance with you, so that if they said no you wouldn't have to be embarrassed.

In eighth grade your idea of a good friend was the person who helped you pack up your stuffed animals and old baseball cards so that your room would be a "high schooler's" room, but didn't laugh at you when you finished and broke out into tears.

In eleventh grade your idea of a good friend was the person who gave you rides in their new car, convinced your parents that you shouldn't be grounded, consoled you when you broke up with your significant other and found you a date to the prom.

At graduation your idea of a good friend was the person who was crying on the inside but managed the biggest smile one could give as they congratulated you.

The summer after university your idea of a good friend was the person who
Helped you clean up from that party.
Helped you sneak out of the house when you just couldn't deal with your parents.
Assured you that now that your partner were back together, you could make it through anything.

The time you got your first job your idea of a good friend
helped you pack up for you moving to another town and just silently hugged you as you looked through blurry eyes at years of memories you were leaving behind.

Now, your idea of a good friend is still the person who
Gives you the better of the two choices.
Helps you fight off those who try to take advantage of you.
Thinks of you at times when you are not there.
Reminds you of what you have forgotten.
Helps you put the past behind you but understands when you need to hold on to it a little longer.
Stays with you so that you have confidence.
Goes out of their way to make time for you.
Helps you clear up your mistakes.
Helps you deal with pressure from others.
Helps you become a better person.

1. "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness." – [Mark Twain](#)
2. "The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page." – [St. Augustine](#)
3. "There are no foreign lands. It is the traveler only who is foreign." – [Robert Louis Stevenson](#)
4. "The use of traveling is to regulate imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things may be, to see them as they are." – [Samuel Johnson](#)
17. "When we get out of the glass bottle of our ego and when we escape like the squirrels in the cage of our personality and get into the forest again, we shall shiver with cold and fright. But things will happen to us so that we don't know ourselves. Cool, unlying life will rush in." – [D. H. Lawrence](#)
30. "If you reject the food, ignore the customs, fear the religion and avoid the people, you might better stay at home." – [James Michener](#)
36. "Like all great travelers, I have seen more than I remember, and remember more than I have seen." – [Benjamin Disraeli](#)
44. "Travel does what good novelists also do to the life of everyday, placing it like a picture in a frame or a gem in its setting, so that the intrinsic qualities are made more clear. Travel does this with the very stuff that everyday life is made of, giving to it the sharp contour and meaning of art." – [Freya Stark](#)
50. "Adventure is a path. Real adventure – self-determined, self-motivated, often risky – forces you to have firsthand encounters with the world. The world the way it is, not the way you imagine it. Your body will collide with the earth and you will bear witness. In this way you will be compelled to grapple with the limitless kindness and bottomless cruelty of humankind – and perhaps realize that you yourself are capable of both. This will change you. Nothing will ever again be black-and-white." – [Mark Jenkins](#)