

***How to...***

***be happy***

- *The story of E. Pochet.* -

Can you imagine being ecstatically happy for no reason at all? Or to find lasting happiness?

I want to share the story of a friend that is still deeply moving me. One day he came over to my house and I immediately noticed he had changed. He said he had tried meditation and had been 'enlightened'.

Now... I was the one who suggested meditation to him, because he was always tense, working too much, sleeping too little... And I had been meditating for a while and was sure it would help him calm down and relax. – Like it did me.

But now... He smiled, seemed completely relaxed, and his face was gleaming, still. Like he was in love or something and and... Yes, happy.

Of course I wanted to know how come.

“I sat”, he said, “and it felt so... stupid. They tell you when meditating you get everything, the pot of gold, the highest price. That it can get you everywhere.

But I was sitting motionless, and of course I knew that would get me nowhere.

And as I sat pondering, over getting everywhere and nowhere, all of a sudden there seemed to be a light in the room. My shadow smiled at me and I felt light and... happy. Simply happy.”

“Wow”, I said, because he was so overwhelmed still. And the gleam seemed to intensify just from speaking about his extraordinary experience.

A week later he came by again and was still gleaming.

“Wow”, I said, “you really found that pot of gold. Is this your normal state of mind now?”

“It wasn’t easy”, said he, “I went home and sat and nothing happened. I sat for many hours every day and got sadder and sadder, because the feeling didn’t come back.

Until I finally had to admit to myself that it was all an illusion. But at the same time – I mean: You saw it! – it was real. Although it must have been an illusion, right? So I sat wondering and pondering about illusion or reality or real illusion, reality being an illusion and my illusion being my reality and... There it was again! The light, and the smiling shadow. It had come back to me.”

“Wow!” Everything he told me made me speechless, and that’s seldom the case. “So you found happiness and enlightenment again?”

“Yes”, he cheered. “Excuse me.” And he returned home to continue his meditation.

After that I didn’t hear from him for many weeks. So I gave him a call to ask how he was doing.

And I was shocked. At first he didn’t speak. For a long time, so I thought we had been disconnected. And when he did answer, his voice was... not really his voice. It sounded... empty, I don’t know if you understand what I mean. A shell.

I was so worried that I drove over to see how he was doing.

I ran up the stairs to the 10th floor - the door wasn’t locked - stepped in breathing heavily and... There was nothing.

The room was completely empty. No furniture any more. No bed, no table, not even a fridge. Just empty.

And besides the window he sat on the floor, in meditation, and didn’t even seem to notice he had a visitor.

And he looked...! Absolutely horrible. He was pale and thin, just bones, his cheekbones sticking out from his face. He hadn’t eaten in days, it was obvious, and badly needed a shower.

Since he didn’t seem to be present, I very slowly approached him and tried to give my voice an empty and undetermined sound too, when I said “hi” as if nothing was wrong.

“Hi”, he answered, but didn’t move or look at me.

“What happened?”, I inquired.

“I am conscience.”

“Sure you are conscience, with a body, and that body needs a shower and food.”

“No, you don’t understand. I am only conscience.”

“Surely not, I can’t touch conscience, but I can touch you.”

“No, you’re wrong”, he insisted. “I am not not conscience, so I am conscience and can never be happy again in my life.”

“I think you’ll feel better after a shower and a nice dinner”, I replied, and realised that I had to go prepare dinner for my folks. So I left, very puzzled and very concerned.

In the supermarket I bought some extra fresh, sweet and juicy fruits, and early the next morning I went back to his place to give him the vitamins that would surely bring him back to life.

I carried everything up to the 10th floor, found the door unlocked like before and the room ... empty.

All empty.

He was gone.

There was no trace. Only a dark shadow on the ground where he had been sitting.