

Acceptance

The human being, without having tried or wished for it, finds herself on earth. She did not choose her parents. She did not choose her hometown or her looks. These realities that she never wanted or never chose can become anathema (a curse in her mind). In frustration she releases emotional aggression in order to attack and destroy them in her mind.

A person can come to live in a perpetual battle against all that displeases her. Ashamed and saddened she rejects herself and her circumstances: her weight, her nose, her temperament, her commute, her moodiness, her acquaintances, her political enemies, her relatives, mosquitos, and withering heat...She resists everything that she dislikes, but cannot change and labels it her adversary. As a result, she becomes depressed, anxious and suspicious.

If I abhor my reflection in the mirror, it is my enemy. If I reject the shrill voice of a neighbor, it is my enemy. My adversaries, therefore, live within me to the extent that *I give them life* through my resistance.

Yet within me are also friends. The first stage of inner freedom involves befriending myself. If I accept my aging eyes or awkward gait, they become my friends. The problem is not with my slowness in math or inability to deliver a good punchline, but in my rejection of my deficits and failures. No matter how unlikable another may be, if I embrace him, he is my friend. In acceptance, an ill-timed storm becomes a brother storm; this influenza virus becomes sister flu. And if I accept my life's end, I have befriended death.

Thus, no matter who I am or the circumstances of my existence, I can choose to live in the crossfire of a battle zone *of my own making*, or within the boundaries of a peaceful, temperate forest.

The power lies within me to embrace or reject those things I cannot change; thus, the transformative power to turn evil into good rests in the palm of my hand.