

Is your Glass half full or do you need a top up?

It's often said that there are two sorts of people in this world – those who see the same glass with same amount of water in it as either half full or half empty. If you see it as half full, you tend to be optimistic about life, and positive in your expectations. If you see the glass as half empty, you tend to be pessimistic, never happy with what you have, negative about the possibilities of life. There are certain advantages to being a pessimist, for example, you look at life more realistically, and you can never be disappointed. But optimists tend to succeed more because their belief in life's potential gives them faith and motivation to carry on trying, even when failure keep knocking at their doorstep.

We used to think that pessimism and optimism were innate traits. Once you were born with them, you were stuck with them for life. But thanks to research by Dr Martin Seligman and others, we have discovered that optimism can be learned. You can encourage it in yourselves and others. And where better to start than with your children or students?

If you are a parent or a teacher, you will most likely already know that if you praise a child for what they do well, rather than finding the shortcomings, their performance usually goes up. It's a sort of optimism injection. But praising them for their behaviour is only part of it. We need to accept who they are, warts and all. We need to accept who we really are.

You may want to turn to the power of stories and fairy tales to help you. Stories, especially those with wisdom, have an ability to raise the level of our consciousness. There is a wonderful story in Paolo F. Tiberi's *Chronicles of King Argoz, Prince Ultan and Princess Maya* (the first book in the 'Legends from the Altai' Life Lessons for children and adults series) that may help you get the point across to a child that they are perfect just as they are.

In the story, 'King Argoz and the Wisdom of the Blue Violet', the king longs to know why people are born into different circumstances. He learns to look inside himself and hears the deep voice of an oak tree. This means getting in touch with the wisdom inside ourselves, the wisdom that is the birthright of every human being. Trees live a long time – in fact some long-lived species of trees were on the planet two thousand years ago and are still alive now. The 'inner tree' is the repository of human wisdom gathered over many generations. Although the tree doesn't give him the answer, it does give him the ability to be open to learning about the experiences of others.

One day as the King is walking through his magnificent garden, he hears the crying of a rose. Why should such a beautiful flower be crying? It's because she doesn't want to have thorns. She longs to be an orchid. How many of us have hated the thorny side of our own nature and wanted to be soft to the touch? But thorns are necessary, too. They have a purpose, which the rose hasn't realised yet.

Next he meets an orchid, who is deeply distressed because she wants to be a rose. She doesn't think about the thorns, she wants the perfume of the rose, the sweet intoxicating smell. The lesson here is that it is so easy to envy another person from the outside, thinking that they have everything that we don't. We see, for example, another's beauty or wealth or popularity, we don't see the downsides of their life. They may lack confidence, be depressed, or have deep family problems for example.

In the tale the King is shown how to overcome envy by a blue violet bush, which spreads out along the ground and yet sings with joy. The humblest things often have the greatest insight, or to put it another way, when we have a humble attitude, the truth often is apparent to us. The blue violet bush accepts who she is and acknowledges that her form is the perfect one for her life. For her, the glass is brimming over with joy. This is especially important lesson to learn if we are struggling with an actual physical or mental disability. And yet how liberating it can be if we accept our form as perfect. We are here on purpose and for a purpose. No mistakes. Just the way we are.

If you need to top up your glass of joy and share with a child or indeed a group of children, then I can highly recommend this story. Just as the small blue violet bush can teach the meaning of acceptance, so this little tale may help you explore your own purpose and inspire that in others.

Chronicles of King Argoz, Prince Ultan and Princess Maya is the first of a series of riveting books in the Legends of Altai series by renowned self-awareness expert, Paolo F. Tiberi. If you would like to get a FREE chapter showcasing the book narrative style and story telling, please visit: http://www.legendsofaltai.com/pages/free_gifts.php