

## Dawning New

I was sitting on the edge of Black Balsam Mountain not far from the Blue Ridge Parkway and looking down on Looking Glass Rock in the distance. My heart was full to near bursting with what I had just witnessed of the glory of a new day dawning. Clouds parted and the warmth of the sun fell upon my little world and within seconds a score of birds



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was chirping and whirling about me as if thrilled with the prospects of a new day. It occurred to me then that perhaps the eyes and ears can only take in so much and then it becomes the work of the heart to translate the vast reminder of what is here to behold. To say that I felt gratitude in that moment is a bit of an underestimation of my experience because the fact is that it had not been too terribly long ago that my heart was closed, leaving me with little awareness of this *'essence of so much more available'* that I am struggling here to describe. I wasn't conscious then of how I had made my life about seeking after solutions in a particular manner that kept my focus ever upon what was

wrong with me. This approach to life seemed to arise out of a belief that once I cut away everything that was wrong with me, then what remained would be only that which was right. This seek and destroy mentality wasn't working for me; I was guided by my resentment and all I seemed to find was more in me to judge. I wasn't cutting away false identity like a master sculptor chiseling away at a block of stone to reveal the hidden masterpiece; I was simply adding to my sense of brokenness. Somewhere in the depths of subtlety there was this certainty that I could find that which I was truly seeking with a new approach, with a new orientation.

An archetypal model can be used to help understand the shift in attitude that occurs as part of a reorganization of the patterns of belief that motivate behavior; indeed with such fundamental change comes an elevation in consciousness such that greater potential can be realized in day to day experience. The following story is like a road map assisting toward integration of understanding of how this transition of consciousness can occur; with each of the three archetypes depicted as stonemasons, we are able to examine the prevalent mindset and attitudes that give rise to that life condition being manifested. Through the power inherent in embracing gratitude, we see demonstrated a transition from survival mentality and victim consciousness (the first stonemason) into the sovereignty of living in and through authenticity (the third stonemason).

To the best of my knowledge, the original story 'Three Stonemasons' can be traced back to **Rachel Naomi Remen** in her book "**Kitchen Table Wisdom.**" As I sat in the sunlight bathing the slopes of Black Balsam Mountain (western North Carolina, USA) not too long ago, my own personal version of this wonderful story began to percolate. The following is that recounting as it came to me that day.

### **Three Stonemasons** (As told by Miles A Moody)

While archiving the contents of a library dating back to the seventeenth century, I came upon a rather well preserved memoir written by a famous builder of that time. Thumbing thru the aged parchment, I was captivated by his account of a pivotal time in his life. It seems that the wealthy nobleman, to whom he was contracted, summoned his chief architectural engineer and set before the builder a task of great importance. "Go forth and discover the means by which the greatest buildings are accomplished," instructed the prince. "Once you are confident of this wisdom, return to me and we shall construct the finest testament to God's love that has ever been and that will ever be."

The architect's account continued, explaining that he did not understand his employer's attitude, for he had already many accomplished works to his credit, indeed so consummate the builder was he as to be widely accepted by his peers as one of the foremost of that day. He felt insulted, he confessed, and though he wrestled thru many sleepless nights, it appears that he ultimately accepted the assignment. He elected to begin with a thorough study of techniques and practices of the stonemasons, and sought out the three best the field had to offer.

He approached the first and asked him, “Sir, tell me if you will about the essence of your work.”

The stonemason threw down his hammer in frustration and glared at the architect. “The essence of my work, you ask. Well, normally I wouldn’t be bothered by the likes of you, but this damn rock is sucking the very life out of me! I need a break just to gather my strength so as to assault again this stubborn bugger with all I’m worth. It’s just a rock measuring a meter by a half meter by a half meter, and yet, you’d think it was Gibraltar’s Rock itself the way it chips and hacks away at me with every blow I take at it; refusing to give way to me like it was born to ruin my reputation and make general misery of my life! I’m on a schedule here, with bills to pay and mouths at home to feed, but I’m at the grinding stone edging a dull chisel more than I am at my work here! My wife nags for this and that, but all I seem to get for myself is a dozen more lines on my face and a hundred score more gray hairs on my head. It’s wearing me out, this work, and I don’t care who knows it. Sometimes I think I’d be better off begging in the streets. Now be off with you, whoever you are, so I can beat my head once more against this wall of a rock I’m cursed to work with.”

After some travel and searching it seems the builder located the second of the most reputable of the stonemasons’ guild and inquired of him in like manner. “What is the nature of your work as a stonemason, sir? Please, tell me about your work.”

“Yes, my friend,” said the second mason with a smile. “It’s very simple really. I’ve got a stone here presently, measuring a meter by a half by a half that I’m required to shape to specifications. And though it may seem like simple, even boring work to some, it blesses me with a means to live and to support my family. You see, though it is much the same,



day in and day out, I'm able to provide a home for my dear wife and an education for my children. My father worked and saved just as I do and it was out of his sacrifice that I was able to have more in life than he. I'm confident that my children will rise to enjoy lives even better than the one I'm living. However ordinary, this work gives to me in this way, and so it is that I'm content to give it all I have to give in return."

The following is a direct translation of the architects' actual account as detailed in the memoir:

"After a lengthy period of searching, I happened upon a third stonemason. I asked him about the nature of his business. He paused to set his chisel aside and looked up at me thru eyes filled with a quality hard for me to describe; was it wonder looking back at me? At any rate, the mason replied saying, 'As you can see, I'm seated here before my block of stone which measures a meter by half a meter by half a meter. Come,' he said to me. 'Put your left hand upon the chiseled surface of the stone, and feel the fine dust still clinging here. Take notice of its subtle grating between your fingertips? Sniff gently of the dust. Just like that you have taken a bit of the stone in with your breath. The stone is a part of you now. Allow the shutters of your eyes to close a moment and sense if you will the origins of this stone. As the dust slides beneath your fingers on the smooth surface of the stone, so do layers of rocky surface of the earth move against themselves. There is collision and upward thrusting as the rock strata reaches ever higher, flinging up as the steep sides of a birthing mountain. Eons of time pass. Rains fall. The sun shines. Great evergreen trees thrust their roots deep into the fissure that has formed between our stone and the face of the mountainside. Snows gather about the feet of the trees and ice fills in the crevasse. The fissure expands as ice thaws only to freeze once again. Time marches onward until that moment when the mother-side of the mountain gives birth to our stone. It tumbles free; it slides away as the heart of the planet itself calls it forth to meet with its greater purpose. The quarrymen find it there on the hillside overlooking the valley and load it into a sturdy wagon pulled by a team of draft horses who plod a great distance over the surface of the earth. Stone lies beneath the passing wheels. Stone witnesses the journey. Our stone arrives here to meet with its destiny, to be shaped, to be caressed by my steel, until such time as it is ready.'

"He paused but a moment," wrote the architect, "to sweep his hand about him to indicate the team of men working at his side. 'You see, my friend,' the stonemason said, 'We prepare the stones that will form the front entryway to the cathedral. This very stone here before me shall be the keystone that locks the arch in place.'

"I closed my eyes and he took my hand," continued the builder, "as he said to me, 'Now place your right hand here. Can you feel the life of the mountain coursing thru this stone between your hands? The feel is very subtle. You must be patient and allow its voice to emerge. Can you see the stone as it once lay there high up on the mountainside, basking in the sunlight, resting in the shade of the great evergreens? They sway this way and that in the wind as day falls away into night. Dawn erupts; the sun peers over the horizon in radiant splendor. Smatterings of clouds ride the sunrise in hues of orange and pink and purple. The brilliance of the sun coalesces into a pinpoint as you gaze about you at a

vista highlighted in gold. Shadows lift as warm light sweeps down the mountainside and into the valley as the sun nestles for a moment in the crook of a distant range, deepening the color. On your right hand in the distance, a waterfall plummets hundreds of feet, its waters never reaching the valley below, but caught up as midst in the wind and swept away into the waxing light of the sun. It is the magic hour when the sun's light so caresses the earth that new sight becomes possible to those who will permit it. Green never looked quite as green - red never quite so red as it does in this first light of day; the blue of the sky seems alive in the dance of color there as well. Look into the eye of the sun in the first of its glimmering and sense if you will the destiny that this stone has come to fulfill.'

"The blank screen of my mind opens," the architect recounts. "I see a grand cathedral with its doors wide to my approach. The beat of my heart quickens as I draw near. The polished grain and glistening bronze fixtures of massive doors beckon with their beauty. It is the stone overhead that holds my eye. I sense something grandly intangible increasing within me as I stride beneath the archway. I'm thru the entryway and a vista opens up in the center of my chest; I settle into it and feel the mountainside bathed in



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sunlight. I feel the peace of the trees moaning in the wind. The mist of the waterfall refreshes my face. There is the fullness of beauty now within me. I feel the nature of the source of all things. I feel the beauty instilled within all creation. I know in that moment

that what I feel is a part of me and I'm a part of it. I want more. I want it to deepen. I'll do anything to have it...

“My eyes open and I gaze in awe upon the aged and grizzled face of the master stonemason. My voice is barely a whisper as I feel the question coming up in me. Everything depends upon an answer, so much so that I'm afraid to ask. But ask it, I shall, and I do....”

“Please, I beg you, sir, teach me to build as you build.”

The memoir's final words are these: “His smile is the radiance of a sunrise in answer to my call, and I settle down by his side to learn.”

It was a priceless treasure that I stumbled upon that day in the dusty back room of a library. Many would value the manuscript for its age or because of the man who wrote it, but it was the spirit of his words that changed my life. I began that day to learn how resentment must give way to acceptance if one is to find joy in being more of the truth of who they are.

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Please feel free to email me with any insights or questions that this story brings up for you. Discussion is welcomed as always. I can be reached at: [milesmoody@earthlink.net](mailto:milesmoody@earthlink.net)

I'd like to acknowledge in writing this story the invaluable influence I've received as a student of the Insight Foundation and the Cosmosis Academy under the tutelage of co-founders Michael [michael@theinsightfoundation.org.au](mailto:michael@theinsightfoundation.org.au) and Linda King [Linda@theinsightfoundation.org.au](mailto:Linda@theinsightfoundation.org.au).

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