

Alone.

The man, who at times was surrounded by people, usually felt most alone at those times and rarely felt like he belonged with them.

When people would ask him why he had lived in so many places, he would smile, shrug his shoulders, and pretend he didn't know the answer.

His mind often wandered to happier, more exciting places, and some of those happier, more exciting times were the first places he had wandered to after feeling bored.

Boredom became his driving force, or instead, striving not to feel bored, became his driving force.

But no matter what he tried, and he did try and try and try, he would always end up in the same place- bored.

When he applied himself to learning, he was an A student, but then school got too easy, and he became bored with going.

He went to college, but it took so little of his focus to understand and pass the subjects that he soon became bored.

He loved the young women, and he loved many of them. The conquest was always exciting, yet as he got to know each one afterward, he soon became bored with them.

Some played games with their sexuality and would not relinquish it, so those people typically bored him, too.

He joined a Muslim sect that a guru from Indonesia led. He was not driven by the conquest of women in this sect, as striving for sex outside marriage was known as Nafsu. The Nafsu, according to this sect, can overwhelm a person to sin, so belonging to this group made him focus on his work inside and outside of himself. The sect gave him a more profound meaning, and he thrived. He thrived for about a year; then, he began to get bored with his lifestyle again.

He went to live in the mountains, away from the crowds of the cities and the smell of exhaust and pollution. Again, he thrived. He learned new trades, grew organic vegetables, had a fantastic new girlfriend, and made many new and exciting friends. Some of these people were travelers who had all arrived in these mountains by also hearing of the people who lived there already. Some people were locals whose families had lived there for several generations. Many locals were coal miners or farmers; he found them and their stories fascinating. Then, as life settled into its daily routine, he again became bored.

This time, instead of leaving, he decided to strive to become a part of the community. He worked hard at his craft, and several years later, he was honored because of the quality of his work. He was honored by getting the contract to rebuild the ancient stone walls on an island where monks had lived and kept bees to make their famous mead. Television crews filmed him rebuilding the ancient garden walls, and he was doing well. Next, the locals where he lived gave him the contract to reconstruct an old, locally famous dry-stone wall a drunk driver had destroyed. He was congratulated and honored after rebuilding the wall, which he did alone so only his talent would be showcased. He was finally at his destination of being accepted by and a part of a community. After the accolades and tributes, and as he contemplated doing the same work over and over, that thought bored him. He was bored with himself and the community that

had finally accepted him. Within a week, he quit doing the work he had spent years learning and perfecting. He left everyone, quit everything, and moved on.

He tried teaching dry-stone walling, and occasionally, he would meet a student or students whom he felt genuinely wanted to learn the craft. He was a much sought-after teacher and was paid handsomely for his time, but the gnawing from his inner boredom once again overcame his desire to keep teaching. Finally, there was no longer any option but to quit, which he did.

His life became a search for something he wouldn't find boring- a woman, a friend, an occupation, something that could keep his attention and excitement from waning.

He married and had children, and the marriage ended in divorce, but he kept legal custody of his children. All went well, and the family thrived together for over a decade. Then, the children became teenagers and rebelled against him. He had read and heard that rebellion was natural for children, but he didn't like it, and their rebellion soon bored him. The rebellion wasn't constant initially, and much of their teenage years together were happy. But as the children got older, especially his daughter, the rebellion became constant, eventually sapping his enthusiasm and leaving him bored. After not too many years, they were gone.

This time, however, he found himself completely lost because it was not him who had left. He was lost in his large house, the all-time-consuming but very lucrative business he had created, and in life's sensual pleasures. He had come to know and seek these pleasures to continue in the life that had so bored him and offered him such little meaning. He was lost and stuck, and try as he did, he could not escape the confines of the little empire he had built for his children and himself. He had made this little empire so he could be independent and raise his family, but now, without his family to live for, his kingdom began to control him and his life.

By now, everything he was doing bored him. His fine wines bored him, but he drank them anyhow. His female friends bored him, but he loved them anyhow. His clients, who made his business the financial success it was, bored him. His life of pleasure had become a mechanical and habitual repetition of something he had begun doing out of boredom, and now he felt trapped and could not find his way out.

He was also getting old now. He was also not well and had been feeling unwell for two years. He believed in God, and, finally, as he sat alone and exhausted from trying so hard to please everyone around him for so long, he asked God for help. He used his mantra of ask, believe, receive, which, when described in more detail, meant he asked God for what he wanted, then he believed God would give him what he asked for, and finally, he needed to receive what he had asked God for.

Within one day, everything he had been striving to get done for so many years began getting done as if by magic. He sold his business in mere weeks after having tried for more than two years without success. He quickly sold his home.

He moved to the mountains to a cabin he had purchased decades earlier. He was alone, but because of the excitement of the move and living full-time in a new and beautiful place, he felt happy. His health began improving, too.

He had found a new and creative way of living that seemed to satisfy him so profoundly that the pleasures he had sought with such passion and energy became mundane compared to his newfound creativity. He was happy and creative and had once again found the God of his life. He also decided to let a few women into his life, and he was more content because of their love. The interlude spent with them was welcome, but he was not in the mindset of changing his

lifestyle. It was as if he could only allot a certain amount of time to each woman, and he had no more time to give. His creativity became his goal, so his friendships and relationships became less and less critical. Friendships and relationships had only been at the top of his list while he sought pleasure to make up for the lack of deep meaning in his life, but now they were relegated further down the list and became inferior to his quest for creativity.

He did very well with his creativity, but what surprised him most was that he never became bored with his imagination. He had trouble and problems with a few neighbors that would negate his ability to be creative, but he would resolve those issues, and once again, his creativity would flourish. He tired many times, but once he rested, the spark was again there.

His ability to be happy and creative while alone was one of the primary sources for his creativity to flourish. His ability to be alone and create a happy and optimistic personal life allowed him to function without needing others. Another reason being solitary suited him was that people often bored him, or they seemed to take up valuable time that he considered lost time. His methodology was to leave people, places, or things that bored him, but now he didn't have to or want to leave here. Now, he was in a position where he wanted to be left alone, but he had only found that out after making new friends and starting a few new friendships. He found he could navigate these friendships and relationships quite easily by communicating honestly, and for those people, things went well.

He met three people, and after meeting them, he realized they were the meanest people he had ever met. They were so mean he didn't even know people could be this mean. He had met mean people before but walked away from them before becoming friends, so he was not bothered anymore. But two of these three people were his next-door neighbors, and the other lived part-time about half a mile away. So mean and nasty were these three people that once they turned

their meanness and nastiness towards him, he had anxiety attacks. One anxiety attack caused him to lose his balance, and he fell backward onto rocks. But he fought back, not with fists, but by slowly and methodically understanding how best to deal with them. At first, he yelled back at them. At first, he behaved mean and nasty back at them, but he quickly learned they were far meaner and more vicious than he could ever be. As he thought about them more, it seemed to him that these three people were instinctively mean and nasty. His instinct, by contrast, was for, as he referred to it, calm waters. He strove for calm waters between him and the people he met. Calm waters so his intellect and his creativity could flourish. He loved the concept of calm waters and a life surrounded by calm waters.

His life, his ability to keep living where he was, came down to resolving the issues with these three people. It took longer than he thought, but he resolved the problems individually. He demanded they leave him alone, and while he soon learned that would only happen when death parted them, he learned to walk away even when they antagonized, insulted, or intentionally bothered him.

His ability to be happy and creative soon returned. While there were the occasional lapses, he would counsel himself, sometimes very harshly, over an entire day and night until he once again realized that by acknowledging them in any way, he was giving them oxygen so they could come at him again and again. He had a good heart and a forgiving nature, but he needed to solve this situation because he couldn't and didn't want to leave this place he called home. He also needed to resolve the fact that he was the one who had invited these people into his life, despite seeing immediately upon meeting them that they were mean and nasty people. Because of a long-held belief, he thought people wouldn't be mean and nasty to him once they got to know him. He thought he would be unique to them, and they would treat him with kindness and care.

Finally, he cut off all communication with them, stopped nearly all visual contact with them all, and stopped being their friend in any way. He became their enemy but never initiated acrimony because he knew they knew far more about being enemies than he ever would. No, he sought that place he called calm waters, where the only time there were ripples was when he threw pebbles or rocks into the calm waters of his mind. He decided he wanted to be in control as much as he could be. He knew he couldn't always control everything, but he tried to control the things he could. His new saying became having coffee in the morning for strength to control what I can and wine in the evening for comfort from the things I couldn't control.

He was not someone of extraordinary spiritual power and could not always control his temper. So, it was sometimes extraordinarily difficult, and sometimes simply impossible, for him to control himself when faced with ugly name-calling and potential violence. That is until he learned to walk away sooner before he reached the point where he found it difficult or impossible to walk away. He reminded himself that these three people had come into his life because he had invited them in. Despite having abused him terribly on several occasions, he had forgiven them, which for these three people was the same as telling them they could do it again.

Finally, he sat with himself once again. He was now once again happy and optimistic. His relationship with God was once again intact, and his life's decisions empowered his relationship with his creativity. He had made three wrong decisions on whom to invite into his life, and extricating himself from those three decisions had taken a long time. He dreaded the idea that there may be further incidents from these three people in his future. Still, he vowed two things: first was never to allow mean or hate-filled persons into his life again, and two, never to react in a lowly and uneducated way again. He inadvertently filled their gas tanks with meanness and

hatred by shouting expletives back at these three people. Learning to walk away while not moving away was new to him. He was learning, and his plan was working.

He sat alone once again. Being alone worked for him. He was not entirely alone as a neighbor's dog, Timber the Golden Retriever, stayed with him whenever the family traveled, which was quite often. Yes, the man liked some people, and he liked some people a lot. He didn't feel like an imposter or an interloper any longer. He hadn't felt that way for several decades now. The imposter he had thought he was when he was not doing what brought him deep meaning in his life. He now felt authentic and genuine, and the road he had traveled to get to where he now was had been difficult. But here he was, alone, happy, and optimistic, and he also knew that it was up to him to control the things he could control, for without control, anyone could walk into his life. He had learned a very tough lesson, but he had learned it well.

The End.

Written by Peter Skeels © August 8th, 2022