

Becoming Myself.

The man had been unhappy lately, and he didn't know why or where it had come from. He had cataract surgery first on one eye and then, two weeks later, on the second eye. The day after his second cataract surgery, he became seriously depressed from the fentanyl he was given for the surgery, but that had worn off, as all drugs do. He had felt happy and even optimistic again.

Lately, the man had spent hours thinking, reading, and listening to people speak, the latter being something he had not done before. He had stumbled across a person, or at least he thought it was a person, and he was hoping it was not Ai, who talked about people who had gone through experiences which had broken them and who had repaired themselves, alone, until they were healed. The man had done that. For him, the process had seemed natural; he cried without crying, raged without raging, forgave freely, and the destruction and rebuilding all happened inside him. No one knew him in his new home, but he always tried to project a kind, caring presence.

Ultimately, he didn't care what others thought of him except that he didn't want to make any enemies.

He had sold his business and home and moved to a cabin in the mountains a decade earlier. Prior to that, he had lived alone for almost 12 years, though he had girlfriends, a dog, and his 2 children visited. He left his girlfriends, his children stopped visiting, and eventually his dog died. He didn't replace anyone or anything; instead, he let himself be alone. He soon discovered that being alone didn't mean he was lonely, and, instead, as his responsibilities diminished, he became quite content. As his contentment grew, he began to safeguard it.

The man had always had friends, lots of friends, and perhaps, though unconsciously, he viewed friends as lifejackets, for friends saved him from drowning in the depths of a life that had made him numb.

Again, he left everyone and everything to begin anew, just as he had done so many times before.

The man thought to himself, “Did I become curious about new ideas and people because I maximized my knowledge and was left unsatisfied with the answer? Does dissatisfaction motivate my curiosity to seek new knowledge and new meaning for being?”

During his alone time, now stretching past a decade, he had come to notice the many filters we learn and use in our lives. We learn filters from our earliest sphere of influence, and we take on more filters as we strive to stay in new spheres of people with whom we must agree. But the man had filters from a life so different from anyone he had met that few of his filters had ever matched anyone's, except for his kindness and honesty. When he met people with those traits, there was a stillness of trust and care between them; however, those people were few.

As the man sat and thought, he realised he was having a conversation with himself, and he began to feel better. But his ability to hear the conversation, as if he was overhearing it rather than being in it, implied a dimension within himself he hadn't stumbled upon before. He was having a conversation, yet he was correcting and editing in real-time, while also listening as an interested third party. He laughed aloud.

He had always understood that some filters people used were for belonging to groups, while others were for excluding people from the groups to which they belonged. The man, however, had removed or never gotten the filters to belong anywhere other than to himself. He was a self-made person who had been broken, and through stubborn, inner strength and a commitment to doing what was right, finally made himself whole. He had relied on himself, and he had succeeded in doing what nobody but he would ever know he did.