

Quandary.

The man had noticed his growing impatience, and he would laugh at himself at his now-daily outbursts of anger. Today, he was putting his underpants on when his foot missed the leg hole and, looking down, he saw his big toe stuck where his foot should have gone. He yelled, “Damn it!” Then, shaking his head, he laughed aloud.

The man knew he was better than this, so he knew he needed to take some time to find out what wasn't working for him and causing this frustration. He didn't have many friends because he didn't match with many people, and not many people matched with him. He had said to himself on many occasions, more than he could count, that the only times he seemed frustrated or unhappy was when he was around too many people. The quandary the man encountered was that he wanted to accept what people were willing to give without expecting more, as long as their giving was honest and caring; he also wanted friendships to be lasting. But many people, most people, having been raised in safe, cocoon-like settings, learned and accepted unthought-through opinions, morals and ethics, so it became difficult for the man to relate to them. He sought out free-thinkers and creative people.

He had several people he called friends, and they were good people. They were people with good hearts, and while they forgot his birthday, he accepted what they had to offer as enough. These friends knew him, but knowing him didn't always come easily, as the people he had abandoned would testify, should one be able to ask. The man would patiently explain himself, and, if necessary, he would emphasize his boundaries, until he was accepted. When some acquaintances didn't accept him, he would modify his behavior to see if that made him more acceptable. If that didn't work, he would slowly but surely stop trying until he stopped trying completely.

The man accepted what people were willing to give him without demanding more, as long as it was free of negativity or control, but he also wanted the friendship to be consistent. Inconsistent people, who dealt with him as if how they dealt with him didn't matter, caused him to spend too much time thinking about what was said and how it was said. That seemed to be where the problems started, especially with his female friends. He was friendly, and he didn't mind being close, but he rarely wanted or expected intimacy. Unhindered, happy friendships were more valuable and less time-consuming than intimacy-filled encounters. Those lusty times were before now, and now he wanted his time to be free from the demands of others. His peace was found in the quiet; in the quiet he awoke in, in the quiet of his days, and in the quiet he slept in. The man cherished his ability to be quiet, yet he thoroughly enjoyed being unquiet, even rowdy, with his friends; he always returned to the quiet. In the quiet, his five senses flourished. And as those five senses flourished, so did his other senses begin to, first, manifest and then flourish too. His time spent in the quiet was filled with learning beyond his imagination.

The quiet never berated him or argued with him; it was never mean, impatient, nor did it ever want more than he could give. The quiet was like having a best friend he could listen to or talk to in perfect peace and harmony. The quiet never made him feel lonely either.

The man questioned whether to keep looking for what didn't seem to exist or to stop. Since he was already ninety-percent towards stopping, he just smiled because he knew he didn't need to do anything other than to be consistently honest inside and out.

Written by Peter Skeels © 5-13-2026