

Hand Untying Knots, Part 14

Good morning everyone! This is today's Dharma Espresso on Hand Untying Knots, part 14.

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I would like to tell you an old story.

Once upon a time, a man saw a bird nest on a mountain-side tree on the way home. He climbed up and saw a big egg inside the nest. It was an eagle egg, still warm.

He took the egg home. On his farm, he placed the eagle egg among other chicken eggs for the hen to incubate. After a period of time, a baby eagle hatched. This baby eagle and all other chicks lived, ran around, grew up together, and had the same habits.

Later, after the chicks had gotten mature and old, they were taken away and killed. The adopted eagle had also grown older. One day, it looked up into the sky and suddenly saw another eagle flying by. It watched the free-flying bird with awe and wished that it could have been born a free-flying bird!

The story is very simple, yet deeply meaningful. The adopted eagle hadn't learned to fly because it had adopted the habits of the chickens. This obviously imaginary story in the tradition of the Native American Métis tribe has an excellent philosophy. Oftentimes, we are not aware of being an eagle, of our potential, our innate ability to fly, or our ability to have freedom and self-mastery. In the terms of deeper Buddhist philosophy, it is said that we are not aware of our Buddha nature. We think we only reflect the bad habits of life. We are not even aware of our ability to attain inconceivable achievements. We only think of doing small things and never of embracing challenges. Oftentimes, we need challenges and good friends, unlike people similar to the baby eagle's chicken friends in the story. From other people, we need encouragement and the sharing of their life experiences to open our eyes to our hidden abilities and to our life-changing potential.

Therefore, as Confucius said, one should select among friends those who are better than oneself, those who are knowledgeable and willing to help. It is extremely important to find a good friend who can support us to reach our highest potential in life. Each one of us is an eagle and needs someone to remind us that we can fly. Otherwise, we just keep taking baby steps and looking on the ground for food, not knowing that we can fly high and far.

Our lesson is that we should try to find good friends, Dharma, inspirational quotes, and stories of wisdom in our surroundings. We should at least learn one good thing a day. Benjamin Franklin once said we should carry a little notebook to take notes of all the good things. It is such a great idea, since without such a notebook, it would not be possible to remember so many things.

Secondly, we should share the things we have learned with people around us. For example, simply tell our children or grandchildren on the phone: "Honey, today I learned a good thing ..." then, simply share the story with them. It is that simple. Go ahead and talk, share, and smile. If the things that we learned are kept to ourselves, those ideas will be lost for lack of dissemination. To keep those ideas alive, we should disseminate them and share them with others. It is a very simple way for us to practice how to fly like a baby eagle, to start developing our many hidden abilities. Young people in particular should seek advice and

guidance from more experienced people who have accumulated admirable real life achievements. As for seniors whom I call “people with rich life experiences”, they should share their life experiences with others.

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Unlike gossiping, badmouthing, or anger venting, sharing life experiences is a rewarding way of communication. Normally, it can be said that a wise person is someone whose words can make others open their hearts. Ordinary people do not always say good things, but talk about things that vex and anger them. Evidently they do not know how to resolve such anger and resort to talking as a means to dissolve it. But normally, the more such anger is talked about, the more it becomes rationalized by the ego. And in the process, we are prevented from seeing our true nature of a baby eagle, and we just join the other chicks. Such talks would thus prevent us from elevating ourselves and flying high. They just become our blind spots. The lesson here is that each one of us is a baby eagle, and we must find ways to flap our wings and fly high.

Thank you for listening. I hope that everyone will find a pair of wings to fly high. Have a nice and peaceful day, and stay alert.

Dharma Master Heng Chang

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