



The Cudgel in the Sack

There is a fairytale “The Wishing-Table” or more precisely (from the Brothers Grimm) “The Wishing-Table, the Gold-Ass and the Cudgel in the Sack”.

Who wouldn't wish for something like that, a wishing table with the best foods and drinks or a gold donkey that supplies us with any amount of money without own efforts? With longing therefor we might play lotto or work off our asses for 11 months for a few weeks of luxury holidays or over-eat at an “all-you-can-eat” buffet or attempt business with commercial papers or foreign exchange ...

However, the fairytale reveals a lot more about this topic. It starts with the goat, which is brought to the field first by the three sons of a tailor and eventually by the father himself and at the end of an abundantly “laid” day says: “I have eaten so much, not a leaf more I'll touch, meh! meh!” For the reader this creates the impression that she had indeed had every reason to be full and satisfied. Once she was back home standing in the stable and is asked again (by the father) she says: “Wherewithal should I be satisfied? Among the graves I leapt about, and found no food, so went without, meh! meh!”

Is she mischievous (after all the father as a result outcasts the sons) or stupid (since she even reacts the same way with the father, he figures out her game and abandons now her) or a mix of both? However we answer this question, we can easily dissociate from such a behavior, after all we are neither really mischievous (at least we usually don't mean to) nor really stupid (even when there possibly are moments where we accuse ourselves of stupidity) and on top of all we are no goats!

In order to get more possibility and clarity from this fairytale, I invite you to observe the goat as a mirror for own behavior: Does this inner emptiness, this impression of scarcity, sometimes not appear especially after the most fulfilling experiences? In comparison with other times and culture we in the West virtually live in paradise nowadays (e.g. regarding the amount and “hardship” of work we perform therefor) and more than a few complain nevertheless about financial worries, time scarcity and other forms of “too little” and “not enough”. Imagine you would voice these complaints to an Indian child, who as early as five years old works twelve or more hours daily for six or seven days a week earning often less than twelve cent a day.

The point is not to develop feelings of guilt (they don't change anything), but for the purpose of radical responsibility closely watch how we tell our scarcity stories and in the process don't realize that we could just as well choose abundance: It is our choice, our perspective on things. Instead of mischievous or stupid this behavior simply seems unconscious.

Unconscious behavior patterns serve our unconscious (irresponsible or shadow) intentions. Whilst telling scarcity stories (to ourselves or others) we take on a victim role, while the circumstances or other people are the persecutors and we seek out rescuers in the form of understanding and compassion.



Again: The point is not to judge such behavior, it is not about right and wrong, good or bad. It's all about if or if not you come to your own power and can live your destiny (your vision and all your possibilities) in this way.

Sometimes miracles happen and abundance emerges, becomes sensible: The two older sons are gifted after their apprenticeship as a carpenter and miller with the table that sets itself and which bowls never get empty as well as the gold spitting donkey. Then the fairy-tale tells how they loose these precious gifts again. Shadow principles like greed (represented by the host who changes the parts), justification and swaggering (when they want to demonstrate it to their father as well as relatives and friends) lead to us not being able to stay in abundance.

In the context of Possibility Management we call these shadow parts, that everybody carries inside, Gremlin. Our Gremlin has so much (hidden and malicious) joy (“schadenfreude” as said in German) with our victim and scarcity stories, he is so amused to destroy spaces of abundance – no surprise that we can't maintain such a space for long.

The fairytale offers a stunning solution: What helps to restore abundance is the “cudgel in the sack”, active and conscious anger work, clear boundaries for the own and other Gremlins, taking your Gremlin on the leash and not allowing him to destroy the space of abundance.

The youngest son (in same versions called “the fool”) learns the turner's craft. Is it a coincidence that this is about cutting off what is hiding the desired shape? What comes to my mind is the sword of clarity, which enables through subtle distinctions to creatively create and hold extraordinary spaces and what requires diligent, dosed, conscious anger. As a gift for his service he receives the cudgel and thus the possibility to keep Gremlins at bay. In between the lines it is noticeable that he has his own Gremlin leashed, not using the anger for himself: After outwitting the host with his own greed and winning back the abundance (table and donkey) this way, he returns it to his brothers and together they share it with the entire family.

Abundance is working like joy: Shared abundance is a double abundance. Or maybe sometimes abundance exactly originates from sharing: If someone starts – and may it be only five loaves of bread and two fish as in the biblical story – all are satisfied.

Experiment: If you discover that you are in scarcity (too little love, time, energy, strength, attention, intimacy, friendship, joy, ...) try as a new decision “I am the source of love” (time, energy, strength, attention, intimacy, friendship, joy...) and use conscious anger to not let your Gremlin destroy this decision. Observe what changes in your life consequently and share your experience with others.

Enjoy!

Georg