

Amazing Life Wellness

The Village Fisherman

By Rich Aydelott

Once there was a man who was traveling through the country and he happened to wander through a small village. And he saw these wonderful people who were living in very difficult conditions and having barely enough to eat. He thought to himself ‘I wish there was something I could do to help,’ but having nothing of value with him he walked on.

As he continued walking through the countryside, he came upon a river, and deciding this was a good place to rest, he sat down by the side of the river under the shade of a beautiful tree, and began taking in the beauty of the land and all that was around him.

And as he sat there quietly, a fish jumped from the water, and having a love of fishing, he took out his fishing pole and began catching fish. After awhile, he thought to himself, ‘I have much more than I need for myself, I’ll give some of the fish to the village.’

When he entered the village, he went to the chief and presented him with the fish he caught, and the chief was so excited, that he threw a feast for the village in honor of the man who blessed the village. The whole village turned out and everyone gave thanks to the man for his gift and he felt good about what he had done.

Being invited to stay for a while, he began to enjoy the hospitality of the village and began getting to know each of the villagers. Each day he would go the river and bring back fish, and each day he felt good about his contribution to the village, and everyday the villagers appreciated his gift, and all was good. The days, turned into weeks, then months, then years, and the village grew and every day the man would go the river and gather more fish for the village.

Now, while he had loved all of the attention in the beginning, he found it was getting more difficult to catch enough fish each day. But how could he stop? The villagers were all depending on him; they were now his friends and neighbors. He cared very much about all of them and if he didn’t fish, they would starve. He couldn’t let them down; he had to keep trying.

So he continued, each day, working longer and longer hours providing the fish for the village, and he began thinking to himself, as fast as the village is growing, soon I won’t be able to catch enough fish to feed the village, and he began to feel great despair. “How can I let the villagers down”, he thought, “they’re all depending on me; I can’t go on, but I have to find a way...

One of the children, who helped him carry the fish to the village each day, asked him if he could fish too? The Fisherman said, “I’m sorry, I would love to teach you; but I only have one pole and by the time I could teach you, we wouldn’t have enough to feed the village.” The child was saddened, but seemed to understand, and carried the fish back to the village.

When the child, who was normally happy and smiling, arrived at the village, his father asked him what was wrong? The child replied, “I want to learn how to fish, but the man is too busy to teach me because he only has one fishing pole.” And the child, dejected, went on into the village with the fish.

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Now the father thought to himself, ‘the Fisherman has given so much to our village, and our village has prospered, surely we can repay him in some way.’ The father went to the Village Chief and told him the story. The Chief said, “We will honor the Fisherman and we will make him the finest fishing pole that can be made” and went off with the father to tell the village Craftsman the story.

Now the Craftsman had seen the Fisherman’s fishing pole and watched him as he fished. He set to work making the most beautiful fishing pole that the village could present to the Fisherman to thank him and honor him for all he’s done for the village.

Soon, the Chief threw a great party and the whole village turned out to see the Chief give the Great Gift to the Fisherman. The crowd cheered as the Chief gave the Fisherman this beautifully wrapped gift to the man, and the Fisherman was so happy that the village would honor him for all of his hard work on behalf of the village.

As he carefully unwrapped the beautiful gift, he opened it to find the beautifully hand-crafted fishing pole and upon seeing it, began to cry. The beautiful gift was the very thing that had gotten him into this mess in the first place. The villagers all thought this was strange of the Fisherman, and the Chief asked him, why was he crying? The Fisherman replied, with great sadness in his voice, that he didn’t know how he could continue being the village Fisherman, because he wouldn’t be able to catch enough fish to feed everyone for much longer.

The Chief said, ‘then teach us to fish so that we can feed ourselves.’ The Fisherman realized the wisdom of the Chiefs words and thought to himself, ‘why hadn’t he seen it sooner?’ And then from somewhere inside himself he remembered how good he had felt providing for the village and how he had begun to feel that they needed ‘him,’ and that without him, they would all starve. He had blinded himself to the greater good of the village by thinking only of his own feelings.

The next day, the Craftsman and his apprentices began making fishing poles and within a couple days, 10 of the villagers went with the Fisherman so he could teach them how to catch fish for the village. Now even though the Fisherman was busy teaching and not fishing, the village had more than enough for the feast they held that night in honor of the new village Teacher.

It’s said that they still see the ‘Teacher-man’ from time to time and that the whole village always turns out to have a great feast when he passes through. It is still believed the ‘Teacher-man’ travels from village to village using his beautiful gift to help others.

*“Please give me a fish” said the hungry man, “So that I may not starve.”
“Come with me” said the Fisherman, “I will teach you how to fish.” “But I don’t want to learn to fish,” said the hungry man. The Fisherman replied,
“Then you are not ‘hungry enough’ ... come back when you are ready to learn, and I will teach you.”*