

When Jonah was giving the Intensive in Greece last month, he gave a story for ones to ponder. Jonah has given this story in different variations over the years depending on the group of people he was working with. The following story is a combination of these stories.

THE ROSE

A camel herder, from ancient times, was herding his camels across the desert in the Middle East. His appearance was of a man who had been in the desert for many years. His hair was matted; his clothes gave the appearance of many years protecting his body from the blowing sand. His old body took one small step at a time leading his camels to their new destination.

Off in the distance this old man saw a younger man approaching him. After about ten minutes of observing the younger man approaching he called out to him, “Where are you going? Come and sit with me,” the old man said. “I am ready for a rest.”

The young man replied, “I do not know. I am lost. Can you tell me where I am old man?”

The old man looked around, shrugged his shoulders and said, “It looks like you are in the desert. How did you become lost?”

The young man replied, “I hired a guide to take me across the desert. Last night when I took sleep, I awakened to find the guide and his camels gone.

The old man laughed and said, “You did not ask a guide to help you across the desert. You asked an opportunist to help you.”

“A what?” the young man replied.

“An opportunist: one who saw you in fear of not finding your way, so he offered to lead you in the way you were choosing? Do not be angry with this one,” the old man replied. “He was just showing you the way of your mind, the way of your anger.”

“I am not angry!” the young man shouted back.

After about twenty minutes of visiting, the young man became agitated again. The old man smiled watching the young man holding his hand over his face. “How can you stand this smell!” the young man shouted. “All I can smell is camel dung. You are with these camels every day, have you lost your sense of smell?”

“Smell, no I can smell very well,” the old man replied. “I do not smell the camel dung.”

“What do you smell?” the young man shouted again.

“Look my friend, look over to the east and see the small group of trees.”

“Yes,” replied the young man.

“Under those trees there is a small rose. I choose to smell that rose.”

“How can you smell a rose you can’t even see?” the young man asked.

The old man replied, “We all make choices as to what we choose to experience. Just as you chose an opportunist to take you across the desert, you became lost. I make a choice to smell the fragrance of a rose; you choose to smell the odor of camel dung. Is it no different in all of life? What we choose is what we smell, feel, touch, and see. When you become uncomfortable in life look at your choice and make a different choice, always choose to smell the rose.”

The old man stood up and said, “I must be going, you are welcome to walk with me for I shall reach the next oasis in a few days.”

The young man replied, “Listen old man, you may smell a rose but all I smell is camel dung, it is making me ill just to sit here and listen to you.”

The old man smiled and said, “When you are old and you have lived your life and experienced your pains, ask yourself what life would have been like if you had chosen to smell the rose?”

Jonah...

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**THE NEXT INTENSIVE
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