

CHAPTER 10

At the end of that evening he felt like something had changed in him. He had held the book carefully for a long time, enjoyed the tea slowly, and the warm soft light had been absorbed into him for a few hours, leaving him mildly beaming with a calm sensation of glow and a fluid landscape of thoughts. After a while with the book he had learned to follow the rhythm of shifts from beautiful visual scenes to long and intricate reflections about people, life and of thinking in itself. And he had learned to slow down, read every word more carefully, sometimes starting over at the beginning, and giving himself time to fully grasp the full sentence and all the details, and letting them sink in and through a slow transition become his own.

Sometimes the words also became attached to his own thoughts and emotions, his own past and memories and experiences, and he let them carefully influence his own way of thinking, adding some dimensions to his old and natural way of viewing the world, and through a slower pace in the book also learned to imitate a new way of

reasoning and adjusting the mind to perceive and interpret his sensations of the surroundings in a slightly different way, or a slightly broader way, like gaining a higher degree of sensitivity and also making little everyday moments much richer and fuller of beauty and stimulation. And gradually the whole sensation of the substance of being slightly started to change and grow, and become warmer, calmer and more varied, and also gave him a different and higher sensation of happiness and affection for people and the world around him.

This gradual and slow change had perhaps started from the very first pages and sentences in the book, but not felt or sensed that clearly before a few months later, while living his days in the normal way with the usual habits as before, but suddenly feeling some parts of them as new, as different, as not seen before, and having the feeling of a different interest and attention to the surroundings around him. It was like the volume had been turned up a little, and that the senses had grown a little more open and more sensitive. It could be a voice that sounded like it had more sides and tones to it than before, or it could be a face that suddenly seemed to be expressing many different emotions and subtle indications instead of being more bland and quiet, or it could be a look or an ambiguous or double-layered sentence that broke through several different floors of meanings and memories, with tens of swirling little units of episodes or echoes of old voices, scraping over large fields of little assumptions about people and how people talk, and what they really mean behind the words.

The very first little changes had perhaps felt just like being another new day, with a slight shift in the weather, maybe a bit colder outside with a damp and misty morning, or a slight change of color in the sunshine that was falling through the leaves and painting little strips of

golden brightness in the streets. Or he could have been influenced by waking up at a different hour or by listening to some new people talking, or by going through a period of reflections over some daily occurrences in normal life or some longer trends and intangible changes over the longer time scales in life, intangible in themselves but visible or to be felt only once a certain amount of time had passed, after which it could all be seen with more clarity in retrospect.

The first little changes might have felt like a consequence of some of this, which it most likely in part also was, but after a while it became more apparent that there was also something changing about the way he felt the changes, and the way he felt about life and thinking itself, and of how the experience of the nature of the moments were changing as well. And once this little handful of changes could be perhaps connected to some more conscious perspectives and the new things he was reading, it became all the more addictive and enticing to continue, and to make it more of a project to read a little bit more, or perhaps some parts of it over again, and then let the sentences influence the perception of the day and the various companionships for a few days after that.

It became a joyful and exciting little project, to detect and follow how certain thoughts and perspectives could sometimes change him in an instant, or sometimes just open a new kind of awareness in some specific areas, or sometimes take weeks or even as he much later would discover in quiet and mild acknowledgement, years or decades before the real meaning and founding elements of a thought became graspable to him, in addition to the many implications and relations to other thoughts and experiences in life that came with it. He loved this little project once it became something that he could work with, and it then became a little habit to return to certain

parts of this project and viewing perhaps a week or month that had passed in retrospect, how it had affected him and his way of seeing and thinking about the things around him, and himself.

He put the book down and looked out of the window onto the dimly lit street again. The softness of language in the book was something that would soften his thinking too, and even when he were to read the same passage for the second or third time many years later, he would come to have the same experience of being slightly swept aside, his feet only slightly dizzy, the mind adapting or slightly shifting gears, and then suddenly seeing the world a bit differently again, through a more soft and beautiful perspective, and from a much larger frame of mind for the natural perception of the things around him.

It was a bit like the background of the mind was enlarging in itself, becoming more transparent, colorful, detailed, refreshing, and mostly much more interesting. And carefully looking at the dark street with wet leaves on the ground outside, with the tiny soft beams of dimmed light into circles fading to black on the asphalt, it was all just a small but very beautiful impression, while the mind was quietly rumbling on a wider string of other topics, that had just been read and that had stirred up some new thoughts and reflections, and many new discoveries of sensitive moods and fuller perspectives, that left him joyful and solemn.

He went to bed, and as he turned off the lights his mind kept working on the change that he had felt today, four or five different groups of thoughts that kept growing and moving in different parts of his head, making sleep a bit difficult that night. As the dreams started to glide in between the groups and disrupting the faintly crackling knots of bustling activity, like little dams of oily purple

water, filled with dispersed images of memories from the day that just passed and mixed with random scenes from forgotten parts of his young life and adolescence, then the next second just silence, then again the purple water spreading on a surface, he slowly lost track of what the topics were all about, or even why he wanted to think about them or why they had been there in the first place. Soon it was all gone and just a floating mesh of incoherent emotions and memories took over. By the time he got back to his senses and had regained some consciousness of what this was all about, a little strip of sunshine had again started to seep downwards on the wall, while another one was sliding over the duvet and onto the pillow, and a third one touched his arm and spread a warm intense feeling throughout his body, opening his eyes very carefully in wonder, before closing them quickly again and sliding the sun-touched arm softly back underneath the duvet.

He slept for a little bit longer, and when he finally opened his eyes again he still felt a bit different, the body a bit more delineated, like he had a bit stronger connection with the skeleton, and a clearer sense of the boundaries of himself. It was also like the nerves felt quicker and more responsive, and somehow closer, like bending the toes or moving a finger were suddenly more clearly strung to the back of his spine and impulses from the brain were moving more lightly without any friction.

He kept playing with controlling the different parts of the body, tightening muscles and releasing, carefully, then fast and suddenly, and it was almost like he was learning things for the first time and getting to know how to control things, calibrating the impulses and loving this new feeling of being more strongly and freely composed and in more direct connection to the arms, the legs, the tiny muscles in the face, and almost directly with the

thoughts themselves it felt like in brief moments. Or maybe it was just a good sleep and a nice sunny morning, or the release of some slumbering hidden worry that had faded away with time. It was either way a nice start of the day and a good feeling to have in the morning.

But as he slowly moved his feet down to the floor, putting them carefully on the thick carpet, he suddenly felt how the substance and the soft texture of the rug tickled him with a bit more clear sensation than before, and a more fresh and instant feeling than before. He heard the rest of the house and the street a little bit better, without being disturbed by this, and when he finally got fully out of bed and stood up, there seemed to be a slightly new depth to his vision, and a general lighter sense of being, and a vaguely different composure and a new posture that felt more natural than what had felt natural just the day before. He tried to walk a few steps and could confirm that things still felt a little bit different, but luckily consistently different in much of the same way. It was all more clear, instant, relaxed, and somehow more transparent and easily balanced and natural. It was still very early, so the rest of the day seemed like a distant landscape to be approached at a bit later time, and there was still not that much of a reflection or wonder about how this would or could affect the coming hours or days, mostly just quietly assuming that it would suddenly disappear and be quickly forgotten, and maybe it was just a part of being half asleep and partly dreaming in a slushed haze that somehow could be felt like something like clarity as the mind was even slower than the senses for a little while, and it was all just a happy delusion and a joyful imagination.

But as he later stepped into the shower and turned on the water, it still kept surprising him, the feeling of

touching and adjusting the shower tap for the hot water with his fingertips, and a minute later the feeling of hundreds of little water drops falling down and touching the skin, as opposed to the usual more monotone and numb feeling of just a warm flat surface enveloping the body. And this clear and detailed sense of the world around him lasted for hours that day.

After this unusual night, sleep and morning, he took a little break from reading the book again. He wanted to just experience the daily little activities with more clarity, with more color, and with a different sense of interpreting and absorbing the things around him. Just walking through a park and sensing the trees and the grass, and the slightly different hue and impression of the colors on the flowers. The basic sense of walking and breathing had become a bit more clear too, and the lightness of thought was delightful and spacious, and brighter.

This feeling of something changed wore off after a day or two, and left him pondering for a few moments in the following week, about the nature of this particular experience. It had something in common with the relief one might feel after a specific worry or some long time pressure is alleviated, some dreaded activity is done and overcome, or maybe in some smaller parts felt similar to the feeling of a small or half small achievement that had been accomplished after some time and efforts, but it was still not quite the same. It was maybe more the feeling of some tiny blockages being removed, and the channels of thoughts and of senses becoming a tiny bit more open, and the memories and enthusiasm for life a little bit more forceful and joyful, and in some clear sense just more natural, more uncomplicated, and more effortless. And it filled him with a cautious but hopeful sentiment, that this feeling would come back again, as he

kept reading and reflecting and having been through it for a first time. Things had faded off but not entirely, and there was still a little sense that he felt the water drops in the shower, saw the colors of the flowers, heard the liveliness in the streets, and got a fuller impression from the faces and details of expressions from other people a little bit clearer and with more substance and breadth than before. Or maybe it was just the weather, and a bit more of sunshine lately than normally, that was influencing the mood and muddled the reason and strengthened the perceptions of people and the world.

It didn't feel like just a passing brightened mood from a lighter and brighter sky, but he would need some more time to get a better sense of it. He would never feel entirely sure about these things, as his reflections and thoughts about the mood and condition of his being were always strongly influenced and colored by their own condition and the general mood, so he would need some more time for some more clarity and a bit of distance. But he was still very hopeful and happy about this.

The first evening with the feeling of change stayed with him as something beautiful and important though, as a sudden little shift and a reminder of how things can change but also of how the way you feel and see the world in itself can change, as it usually constantly does and did especially through the younger parts of life, but also through the later parts of life if the conditions were there, and sometimes with a bit of effort it could also be encouraged and helped and supported along the way.

He would also soon come to realize that the first evening was just the first of many little steps of a transition into a lighter, clearer and more beautiful state of being, and that the little book and the words and the sentences were

merely helping him in opening up to the world and to finding a more relaxed and happy and mildly warm and balanced everyday life. It would come to him much later, but the little disruption had already started, and in some ways the process would find its own way, by nature, just by loving life and reflecting on the slight changes that silently and slowly moved him from week to week, with reminders of the hundreds of little simultaneous drops in the shower, the first strange dizziness in his legs, and the dense and broad feeling of the little rug under his feet as he got out of bed in the morning.

Perhaps it was the whole undramatic frame of these changes that made them feel so much more clear and more authentic, as he was just going about with his normal days, and the broadening experience and feeling of presence were made so much more easy to detect as the rest of the world was for the most part standing completely still, with the same habits and repetitions as before, but still with so much more nuance and surprising new discoveries in how he saw, and felt things. He wanted to enjoy this period of life, and walked often through the parks, seeing the trees and resting his mind, and feeling excited.

Many years later he would also ponder whether it was the blending of reading, and having a slower life, after a faster life, that led to this reshaping of things in such a green, organic, peaceful and joyful manner. It felt so shifting at the time, and so natural in retrospect. And perhaps also bound to happen, at some time or the other. And it was a pure and clean little change, that started a new and great period of his life.

He also kept enjoying falling asleep at night during these weeks, with the many reappearances of long forgotten memories and a more familiar feeling of the thoughts

spinning and crackling, with the softening ground underneath them slowly thickening and rising, sometimes with the purple liquid spreading on the surface, sometimes with a deep blue velvet gliding in from the sides, and sometimes with a gradual and peaceful fading into black, in something that could feel like a long time but might have been just a few minutes. And then the stories and memories kept growing and playing in his dreams for a long time.

After a couple of more days he put the book back in the bookshelf at a favorite and visible place so he could still see it every day, as a reminder and a comfort of having learned something new about his own life, and then decided to have a longer break to just spend his time and days with his friends and live life as normal and before.

And he still enjoyed every one of these days more than before. Even the little evening walk and the beloved cup of tea, in the dark and dimly lit room late at night, with the yellow lemon fragrance dancing up from the cup, and the soft light creating the magic in the chair in front of the book shelf.

Those days would remain golden gems.