

LOOK AT YOU, BUT ME

By P.Ribes. s.j.

Self Worth. Self-acceptance.

Intent of this Story

- ✓ *Discovering one's worth*
- ✓ *Growth in Self-esteem*
- ✓ *Growth in Self-acceptance*
- ✓ *Stop comparing ourselves with others.*

The Story

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Narrator: Long, long ago, when trees and plants used to talk like us humans, you could have heard them chit-chatting friendly among themselves. The coconut tree said to the teak tree:

Coconut: Look at my body! So ugly, shapeless, rough, full of scars... My flesh is useless... I admire the quality of your flesh! What strength, what sturdy timber you make... No rain, no sun, no cold will ever make a dent on you... No termites, no beetles, no rodents will ever be able to bite you.... But, me? Bah, what worthless stuff I'm made of!

Narrator: The teak tree turned to a mango tree and remarked:

Teak Tree: I admire your large, beautiful, sweet and smelling and tasty fruits! You have so much to offer to people. .. Everybody is so fond of you! You are everybody's favorite... But me? Frankly speaking, I feel ashamed of myself! Look at me. My body is ugly and bony... I am barren... I have no fruits to offer to any one. When I see myself so dry and barren, I hate myself!

Narrator: The mango tree cast an envious glance at the rosebush and pulling a long face, said:

Mango Tree: O! How I envy you! You are so beautifully decked with a mantle of exquisitely colored, sweet-scented flowers. How pretty you look! How charming, how attractive. The bees flock to you for honey, men love to have you in their homes and gardens! But me? Alas, poor me! I have no color, no flowers, no scent, none of your many splendor and beauty!

Narrator: The rosebush espied a neem tree nearby and said:

Rosebush: You know, I love the texture of your skin! So smooth! How finely honed you are. You look so fresh and sensuous! So pleasant to the touch! But me? I hate my

skin. Look, I'm poky and prickly, spiky and spiny. No one likes to touch me or to pat my body.

Narrator: The Neem tree stared at a big, sturdy, and magnificent banyan tree. He said:

Neem Tree: Gosh you are really strong from root to top! I can hardly figure out where your roots end and your branches begin. Every root, every branch of yours is so tough and yet so supple. It will bend but not break. But me! I am so brittle! My branches easily break causing me so much pain and sorrow! As if the bitter ness in me was not enough!

Narrator: The great and hoary banyan tree looked benignly at a babul tree that grew near by and said:

Banyan Tree: I notice people making much use of your branches and trunk for firewood. You burn so fast and nice and provide so cheap and easy fuel. Poor people like to have you to cook their simple meals and keep their homes warm. But, me! Alas, poor me! My flesh is useless; it is all too knotty and fibrous not even fit to en-kindle a fire!

Narrator: The babul tree turned to the banyan tree and said:

Babul Tree: It's wonderful to see your spreading your branches and rich foliage as an expanse of green exuberance, you look glorious! Wow! How inviting you are! All the birds of heaven come to nest in your bosom. Passers-by rest under your shadow Children joyfully swing from your branches. But me? Only a cluster of thorny branches, and a rugged and skinny trunk! No leaf, no fruit, no shade! Ah me! No one cares to come close enough to me, much less to climb my branches or embrace me!

Narrator: The Peepul tree stared green-eyed at a coconut tree the nearest in the long line of its fellows standing on the sandy fringes of the wood. It looked so tall and stately! It was so loaded with a bunch of tempt-ing fruits... The Peepul tree with a mixture of envy and frustration said

Peepul Tree: When I see you as Coconut standing here so tall and sinewy, braving rain and wind, heat and cold ... swaying your body and obligingly offering your fleshy, refreshing and nourishing fruits to passers-by, I feel so small! I feel so ashamed! But me! What have I to offer but leaves and leaves and still more leaves!... You are generous, so productive. But what about me? The less said the better! I am useless! I am barren! Good for nothing!

Narrator: And so, all the trees in the forest led sad, disgruntled and dejected lives!

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

- We are quicker to discover the strengths of others than ours.

- It looks as if we would take a secret pleasure in running ourselves down.
- By closing our eyes to our good points and qualities, we render ourselves incapable of using the talents we have.
- Instinctively, we tend to compare ourselves with others.
- Comparing is always harmful. It's freezing.
- Each one of us, as each tree in the forest, is unique.
- We all possess a "quasi-absolute" value. We cannot be duplicated. We are irreplaceable.
- There will never be another you or me.
- We have to accept ourselves as we are: we have to love ourselves as God made us and as He loves us!
- If we do not like ourselves, we are in for trouble.
- By comparing themselves to one another, the trees of the forest made themselves sad and unhappy.
- Had they accepted their "uniqueness" all would have been equally happy.
- The qualities and characteristics of the trees in the forest are complementary; thus, one gives flowers, another fruits, another timber, yet another shade, etc... Truly, the beauty of the forest depends on the variety of the trees..
- The beauty of human society lies in the variety of characters, gifts and qualities of all and each of its members. We too, complement each other
- To create the grandeur of the forest, each tree has to be itself. Likewise, each man has to be himself to make our world a wonderful place.
- If all of us were equal to one another, life would be boring, dull and uninteresting.
- Each human person , becomes worthy of being human by “actualizing” his/her own talents and characteristics.