

## THE TABLE AND THE POLISHER

### Intent of the Exercise.

- ✓ *We need someone to trim us*
- ✓ *Being trimmed is painful, yet necessary*
- ✓ *We need a guide, a helper and a r counselor to be our best*
- ✓ *We have to help others to be their very best.*
- ✓ *God is the greatest trimmer*
- ✓ *We improve through pain.*

## THE STORY

Once upon a time there was a table. An old and beaten-up table. His paint was all chipped and peeling, his color drab, disgusting to look at. The worst part of the story was that the table could not understand himself. With the passage of time his condition had become worse and worse. There were so more dents, scratches and dirty spots that disfigured him beyond recognition. He could not remember that he had ever looked nice. One coat of paint after another that was all his life had been. He was black over red, over blue, over green over white, over yellow. Layer after layer, he had completely forgotten what he was like underneath.

Then one day he found himself in the Polisher's shop. It was all so puzzling! A lot of bustle and hustle, a journey in a truck and here he was!

Now the Polisher took Table and washed him gently. There was something about his touch that puzzled the table. He said to himself: "What's the use of struggling? Well, Just another coat of paint and go home again!"

But to his surprise, the new coat of paint did not come. Instead, the Polisher started scraping the old coats of paint away. The table cried: "Ouch! Ouch! It pains! It really hurts." But, the Polisher patiently went on scraping through layer after layer and as he worked he sang to the table: "The Polisher knows you, Table! I know the beauty that is hidden in you! I know that you are not beyond repair with some loving tender care!" This song soothed Table a bit. Yet with his raw quivering surfaces he did not know what to think, what was really happening.

He shouted: "Stop it! I can't stand it any more! Don't! Don't! Leave me all alone." But day after day the Polisher carried on his work. Painstakingly, he scraped away through black and red, and blue and green and white.

After some days, Table sensed some change in the Polisher's touch. He noticed him being more careful and gentle, more than ever before, as if afraid of hurting something. When the last coat of yellow paint began to fall away, Table caught the first wonderful glimpse of what was underneath: no paint at all, but wood, beautiful wood!

Now Table began to understand what the Polisher was doing and why he was so careful with his touch. Having reached the last layer, he didn't want to scratch the beautiful wood he was made of. Table eagerly waited seeing more and more of himself. Little by little it appeared and finally he was down to wood all over. Oh, what a glorious sensation!

One day, on closer observation, he noticed that whatever the Polisher touched and took in his hands began to reflect the beauty of the Polisher himself. Funny, it took him so long to see that! From that day onwards he spent his time watching the Polisher doing his work.

One day Polisher rubbed on him a strange substance that brought all the warmth and beauty of the wood and gave him a fine smooth finish. Never had Table dreamt he could be so beautiful!

Finally, one day, Table left the Polisher's shop. Now he was whole, sturdy, beautiful and attractive. He could now go out on his own, he thought. Yet, some days later he looked at himself and saw a few scratches here and there and a few dents elsewhere.

Suddenly Table got a creeping feeling all over. Would someone come now and cover him with paint all over again? Then, he remembered his friend the 'Polisher. "I know what I'll do," said Table. "Whenever in need, I'll go to my friend and guide the Polisher. He loves me, he cares for me. He will fix me up again. I know I can count on him. I need him to be able to be my true and beautiful self.

*"An adaptation of: "The Table and the Furniture Doctor" unknown author.(Appologies)*

## **1. POINTS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

### **About the Table**

1. At the start of the story, how did Table feel about himself and why?
2. What did happen to him in the past? How had he been treated?
3. How did Table come to know his true worth?
4. What did the Polisher see in that old and scuffy table?
5. Though the Polisher was gentle and loving why did he cause pain to the table?
6. How did Table begin to trust the Polisher?
7. When Table discovered his true beauty, how did he feel?
8. Why the beauty of the Polisher was reflected on the things he held and touched?
9. Could Table maintain his beauty and splendor on his own for ever? Why?
10. Would he need the Polisher in future? Why?

### **About ourselves**

1. Many of us - nearly all of us - have poor self-images. We do not know our true worth and beauty. Why is it so?
2. How did our poor self-image develop? How was it formed?
3. Have you ever got a "Polisher" in your life? What did he do to you?

4. Have you discovered already the beauty that is in you?
5. Kindly, share with us some of your good qualities?
6. What are the coatings of paints you need scraped to find your true self?"
7. Is the process of discovering our true selves painful? Why?
8. In future, is there any good polisher at hand to whom you may go whenever in need?  
Can you share this with us?
9. Have you ever been a "Polisher" to others? How? How often?

## **2. TWO EXERCISES ON SELF - DISCOVERY**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Fantasy:**

Imagine you are the table. Relive the story of the table. Make yourself the Table. Do you know yourself? What layers of paint have you to shed to be yourself? What is your worth? Who is your polisher? Etc

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Autobiography**

Write an autobiography (the story of your life) in a manner similar to the story of the. "Table and the Polisher".

## **3. A RELIGIOUS READING OF THE STORY:**

1. Can we say that God is a loving and caring Polisher to us all? Why?
2. How does God polish us, improve us, and perfect us?
3. Do you willingly bear the pains and suffering of being polished by God?
4. What are the coatings of paint God has to remove from you to make you more like Him?
5. Once the table was polished reflected the beauty of the Polisher. Are you already reflecting the beauty of God to others? What is still missing in you?
6. Do you need God-the Great Polisher- to be able to be our best in life? Why?
7. Can we be – so to say - Polish Apprentices with God to help others to find their human and divine worth? How?
8. What sort of polishing job has God to do still in you that you may to be more like Him?

### **MAXIMS AND SENTENCES FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION**

- ✓ Be grateful to those who bring the best of you even when they cause you pain.
- ✓ He who loves you will make you suffer
- ✓ Kiss the hand of the “polisher” who makes you cry.
- ✓ Be kind, yet firm, with those you, love.
- ✓ Over – kindness is not love, but softness.
- ✓ Hardships and sufferings make perfection.
- ✓ Through hardships we reach the skies.
- ✓ Allow God to scrape away from you the masks hiding your true self
- ✓ “Paternalistic” and “protectionist” attitudes are selfishness masquerading as love.
- ✓ To help people grow, help them bear their sufferings, don’t ‘rescue’ them from pain
- ✓ God, through the painful events of life, is our great polisher

- ✓ Don't ask God to take away your sufferings, but help you grow through them. .
- ✓ There is not a short cut to growth.\
- ✓ Jesus said: "Without me you can do nothing"

9. Explain.