

REALITY REJECTION

TOM AND SAM.

Flight and fight reactions

Intent of the Fable

- ✓ *To encourage people to accept things as they are: **Self – others and life itself***
- ✓ *To realize the harm we do to ourselves when we reject self-others and life*
- ✓ *To study the so called “**Flight and Fight Reactions**”.*

A Short Introduction to Understand the Thrust of the Fable :

Many of us find it difficult to accept things as they are, ourselves and others included. Consequently, we reject ourselves and others as well the circumstance of our lives. Once we dislike and reject ourselves others and life itself, there is two possible stances or attitudes left to us, namely: either we flee from reality, or we fight reality. Experts named those two stances as "**Flight and Fight Reaction**"

By Flight Reaction we mean the stand of those who try to flee and to run away from themselves, from others and from the realities of life, Their basic attitude is “avoidance” This running away from themselves and from the realities of life brings in its trail a lot of evils, such as, withdrawal, shyness, loneliness, discouragement, boredom, freezing, depression, neurosis and their likes.

Life turns to be a continuous and useless flight from reality. In our story, this "Flight reaction" is exemplified by Tom.

By Fight Reaction we mean the stand of those who instead of running away from self from others and from life fight back. They fight reality. They hate themselves, others and life itself. Unawares, may be, they even try to destroy self, others and reality itself. This continuous fight brings many evils in its trail, such as criticisms, blaming self and others, back-biting, revenge, anger, resentments, violence, and unhappiness. This stand of “Fight reaction” is exemplified in our story by Sam.

The only healthy and rational way out of this destructive dilemma of “Flight or Fight” is to accept reality, namely, to accept and love ourselves as God made us, to accept others as they are, and gracefully accept life and its events as they come.

To enjoy inner peace and happiness, we need unconditionally, to love ourselves and others and life itself as God made it or as He permitted it to be.

THE FABLE

Once upon a time, there were two huge lovely dogs, Tom and Sam. On a sunny day they were strolling around in a nearby forest. It was very hot. They were thirsty. As luck would have it, they discovered a pond of clean and crystal water. It shone like a sparkling beautiful mirror. They ran to the pond.

As they approached the water, they saw two fierce ugly dogs staring at them. They were startled. When Tom saw his image in the surface of the pond he got disgusted, he disliked that dog immensely; he could not stand it.

In aversion and anger he ran away as fast as he could. He did not want to see that dog, much less to look at it. He tried to forget it. But in vain!

That image of that dog was haunting him. Every pond, every mirror, every glass, and every polished surface he bumped into, kept reminding him of that disgusting dog.. Poor Tom! Trying to keep away from that spiteful animal, the whole of his life was wasted in a futile endeavor!

But, what happened to Sam? Let us hear it.

When Sam saw his image on the pond, he also disliked that dog. He could not stand it, he hated it. His instant reaction was to destroy it, to fight it!. He snarled at the intruder. But the intruder dog barked back at him. Then mad with hatred, Sam jumped into the water to tear that dog to pieces. But, all in vain! No sooner he jumped into the pond, that dog disappeared! There wasn't any other dog besides himself.

When Sam got out of the water and sat next to the pond, lo and behold! Again that hated dog appeared! In a fit of madness, Sam plunged a second time into the pond, now more determined than before to cut his enemy to pieces! But again, it was gone! From that time on, Sam kept plunging into any pond he came across when he saw that hated dog reflected in the water

Poor Sam, the whole of his life became a useless and painful struggle to destroy that elusive dog that kept for ever appearing and disappearing!

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION.

1. What do the reflections of Tom and Sam in the pond stand for in real life?

TOM'S CASE

2. Why did Tom keep running away from that dog reflected on the water or on any other smooth surface?
3. Did he succeed in running away from that animal though he tried hard to, all his life long?
4. Does the fable show us something of what many people, unconsciously, try to do in real life? What's that?
5. What harm, though unawares, do those people do themselves?
6. Why do they keep withdrawing from self, from others and from the events of life?
7. In reality, from whom and what are they running away? Explain.
8. Why do many people feel lonely and unwanted, withdrawn, shy, discouraged, bored, and depressed in life?

9. Could Tom have lived a normal and contented life? Please, tell him how.

SAM'S CASE

10. Why did Sam, on the other hand, try to destroy the dog he saw in the pond? Did he manage to do it? Why?
11. Why was he so angry with that dog, and even trying to destroy it? Actually, whom was he attacking and trying to destroy?
12. Could he be at peace with himself and others? Why?
13. Why so many people in life indulge in criticisms, blaming self and others, back-biting, revenge, anger, resentments, violence, and unhappiness?. In what way are they like Sam?
14. What advice would you give to Tom and Sam – **and to the likes** – in order to lead happy and contented lives? Tell us.

“FLIGHT AND FIGHT REACTIONS”

15. Have you ever heard of the ‘**Flight and Fight reactions**’?
16. Keeping the Fable of Tom and Sam in mind, what do we mean by them?
17. Are the “Flight and Fight reactions” helpful for a happy and peaceful life? Why?
18. When we do not like self, others or any other thing on life, can you not think of a third healthier alternative reaction to “The Flight and Fight ones”? What would that be? How would you call it?

THOUGHTS FOR AN INPUT

By way of an input comment and discuss of some of the following sentences.

Several of sentences below are taken or inspired from the book of John Powell, s.j. Happiness is an inside job

1. Absolute perfection would kill variety.
2. After fashioning each one of us, God broke the mold
3. Beggars are not choosers
4. Disillusionment is the child of unrealistic expectations
5. Do not allow others or the external events of life rob you from your inner joy.
6. Don't place your happiness on things or on someone outside you..
7. Enjoy life now; death will arrive all the same
8. Ever trying to be more traps us in perpetual unhappiness.
9. Happiness is an insight job.
10. Have a loaf is better than none.
11. Ideal perfection cannot be contained in human bottles.
12. If you cannot have what you like, like what you have.
13. If you want the dog accept the flees
14. Imperfections make us unique
15. Love yourself, that's all you have.
16. None but you can make yourself happy or unhappy.
17. Perfectionism chocks all joy.

18. Self-accepting people are in touch with reality.
19. Self-accepting people accept themselves as they are.
20. Self-accepting people are assertive.
21. Self-accepting people are aware of their needs and attend to them.
22. Self-accepting people are happy people.
23. Self-accepting people are open to being loved and complimented
24. Self-accepting people are real and themselves.
25. Self-accepting people are self-determined people.
26. Self-accepting people go out to others easily
27. Self-accepting people have a sense of humor and can laugh at themselves.
28. Self-rejection and jealousy are twins
29. The happy man is not the one who has more, but the one who needs less
30. The image others have of us is just a reflection of the way we see ourselves
31. The path to happiness is a bridge to be crossed, not a corner to be turned.
32. The world treasures originals. You are one!
33. There is a lot of good in every dustbin
34. There is nothing absolutely perfect in life.
35. What cannot be cured should be lovingly and freely endured.
36. You are the only person who can make you happy
37. You cannot run from yourself.