

TWO MONKS AND A PRETTY LADY

Old Zen story.

Forgetting Hurtful Memories

Once upon a time an old monk and a young monk were traveling together. They came to the bank of a river and found that the bridge over the water was damaged. They had to wade across the river. There was a pretty lady who was stuck at the damaged bridge and couldn't cross the river. The old monk offered to carry her across the river on his back. The lady accepted his kind offer.

The young monk was shocked by the move of the old monk. He thought to himself: "how can my big brother carry a pretty lady on his back across the river when he is supposed to avoid all intimacy with females?" But he kept quiet..

All along the way for several miles, the young monk was very unhappy with the act of the old monk. He was making up all kinds of accusations in his head about his old companion. This got him madder and madder, but he still kept quiet. Finally, at a rest point many hours later, the little monk could not stand it any more; he burst out angrily at the big monk.

'How can you claim yourself a devout monk, when you seize the first opportunity to touch a female, especially when she was very pretty? All your teachings make you a big hypocrite to me

The big monk looked surprised and said, 'I had put down the pretty lady at the river bank many hours ago, I have already forgotten it: how come, you are still carrying her along in your mind?'

THOUGHTS:

This old Zen story reflects the way many of us deal with unpleasant things.

- They irritate us and they make us angry. Sometimes, they cause us a lot of hurt, bitterness and jealousy
- Very often, they cause us to be judgmental, critical, and unkind to others.
- Like the young monk, we keep carrying on the baggage of the 'pretty lady' with us, but we are not willing to let it go..
- We should let go off the pretty lady immediately after crossing the river.
- **There is no need to be further hurt by unpleasant events after they are over.**
- **We haven't to misjudge others for actions done with kindness and simplicity.**