

School and Life

Famous author Tom Bodett states the difference between school and life with the words: **"At school, you take your classes first, then your exams. Whereas life first tests you and then you learn your lesson."**

More often than not, life's tests are painful. What's important is to learn your lesson without taking the test and wallowing in regret. It's to cultivate awareness. There are many ways of doing this. However, nurturing the spirit and gaining knowledge is one of the main methods.

Knowledge is the light of the mind, love is that of the spirit. The combination of the two begets effort and constructive productivity, whereas their separation elicits fanaticism and destructive productivity. When these illuminators of spirit and mind are combined, love holds sway. Thinking is enhanced, minds are opened. The completing spirit intercedes. Empathetic and sympathetic attitudes, flexible stances are developed. In such a case, the veil with which prejudice and negative conditioning conceals the truth is automatically removed.

However, if a person is not wary of what comes out of the mind in form of intent/speech/action, they will not notice that the worst deception pulled by the flesh is in the mind. The mind which has become a

plaything for the flesh is wholly different from the mind which prizes love above all. The mind which is a toy of the flesh turns into cunning and selfishness. The mind which prizes love encounters prudence, sincerity, and integrity. This is because the worst deception by the flesh happens in the mind.

In this world to which we came to serve and complete one another with love and respect, when we act with mindful appreciation, active altruism and mercy rather than with undercurrent emotions, there will be an increase in creativity and productivity, and we will have reached a necessary plenitude. For this to be possible, we must distance our intentions, thoughts, and attitudes from lust for power/domination and from competitive ambition; we must adopt an attitude of mindful collaboration and a mentality of spiritual partnership.

What truly matters is to allow that energy which reflects on people from divine truths to flow over to life without being tainted. But alas, when this energy passes through the unclean filters of the flesh/ego, it turns negative. Therefore, two things are released by a person: One negative, the other positive. Negative energy is released through the unclean dispositions of the flesh. Positive energy is released in its natural state

from the divine dimension. This life-sustaining energy is essential. Hence, it is difficult for a person to contribute positively to the cycle of life without awareness of inner duality (dark/light, good/evil, spirit/ego). Even if they try, the end result is loss and disappointment. Because when a person begins to lose his spirit, his identity atrophies as well. The ability to form sincere relationships is impaired. If the spirit takes constant charge of our success in our life's purpose, all will be easy, even in difficulty. Don't forget that **"the spirit"** is a divine energy that allows us to value not only ourselves but everything besides.

Most people realize this truth once they've passed through certain tests. But unfortunately, sometimes it's just too late. An apt example of these things is the quote a wise man had placed on his grave marker before he passed away:

"When I was young and free, when my dreams were boundless, I wanted to change the world. As I grew older and wiser, I understood that the world would not change.

So I scaled back my dreams somewhat and decided to change my homeland. This seemed a lost cause too.

When I got well along in years, with a final effort, I tried to change only my family, those closest to me. But alas, I couldn't put this across.

And now as I lay in my deathbed, I realized that if only I had changed myself first, I could've changed my family by setting an example.

Taking courage and inspiration from them, I could've made progress in my homeland. Who knows, I might've even been able to change the world.

In the flow of life, change begins first of all in ourselves. If you can't make a difference in your own life, neither can you make a difference in the lives of others."

Yusuf Beğtaş