

Little fish – little pond

"This isn't Omaha, Nebraska. This the big pond where the big fish play for big bucks. There's sharks in these waters and you can get cut in half real quick. So before you dive in, give it a lot of thought".
- Charlie's Angels

Many of us spend enormous amounts of time and energy trying to convince ourselves and others we are big fish in small ponds or even bigger fish in larger ponds. The reality is most of us are little fish in little ponds.

Most us navigate our lives swimming around in little ponds - our immediate circumstances and our immediate identity. Many of us have little idea what it's like to see beyond our rational mind, our immediate thoughts, or our long-held beliefs. We are unable to even consider the possibility of there being another "reality" or "pond" out there.

The reason we never venture out to see if there is a larger pond is because (1) We feel content, secure and in control in our little pond (i.e., at least we think we are), (2) We are afraid to look beyond the edges of our little pond; we swim around preoccupied and obsessed trying to make our "pond" work for us - being intimidated by the unknown "ponds" out there or (3) we have no interest in exploring other ponds.

Most folks fall into reason number two, living in fear of the unknown and related feelings of aloneness, abandonment and separation from what gives them a (false) sense of security. This false security is accompanied by a lack of trust and faith in even considering swimming in another pond.

So, in our small pond we effort to create a life of security, order, control and perfection. We swim to exhaustion while experiencing greater and greater stress, anxiety, and insecurity, trying to maintain greater and greater control.

A different pond

What would it be like to venture into a different pond - into a reality where we would give up the need to control, give up the safe boundaries of our familiar pond, surrender, trust, and experience a new pond in a new way - i.e., accept new ways of do-ing and being, maybe even new ways of swimming without any preconceived notions of "pond-ness" - just jumping in and swimming?

What would happen if we were to leave behind our life preservers - our ego, beliefs, preconceptions, ideas, and judgments and swim with faith, trust and surrender? What would it take to enter into a "new pond experience" - at work, at home, at play or in relationship? What would it be like to move into a new pond with an open mind and heart, without needing to control? What would it be like to swim in this new pond trusting that we won't drown or lose our way?

We can't think our way into this new pond. We have to take a deep breath, let go and dive in without a life jacket, without resistance - i.e. without our familiar and habitual ways of thinking, acting, judging, doubting, or medicating ourselves in order to feel safe and secure.

Being conscious in your new pond

In our familiar pond, we generally spend our swimming time in a normal thinking-judging-reacting mode or day-dreaming while in the throes of daily routines and habitual activities. In our new pond, we will need to be alert, aware and neutral.

Swimming with this new awareness, we are present in the immediate moment, not judging, not thinking and not reacting - just present and aware. Awareness fosters inner peace, well being, alertness and clarity. We are swimming without thinking, without our customary beliefs and thoughts. In our new pond, we swim into familiar and new experiences with a sense of openness, kindness, service, compassion and curiosity. In this new pond, we are transformed; we seem to swim free of anxiety, depression, unhappiness, dissatisfaction, loneliness or sadness and longing.

In our new pond, we swim with strength, courage, power, contentment, joy and possibility. We must choose to remain present, authentic, and access our heart and soul - providing the "spiritual oxygen" that keeps us optimally alive, conscious, and alert.

Are you ready to dive in?

"Be not the slave of your own past. Plunge into the sublime seas, dive deep and swim far, so you shall come back with self-respect, with new power, with an advanced experience that shall explain and overlook the old." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Would you be willing to experience this new pond in order to experience well being, possibility, and a sense of groundedness?

If so, the first step is to explore your little fish in your little pond, taking stock of your habits, beliefs, addictions (chemical and non-chemical), and self-limiting and sabotaging thoughts that keep your little fish depressed, suppressed and repressed. What is your little fish attached to, obsessive about, and driven by? What drives your little fish to want power, control, recognition and security?

Once you uncover what drives your little fish, and choose to let go of your needs to control and possess, your little fish begins to transform and morph into a trusting, surrendering allowing fish that is ready to swim in another pond.

Swimming, now powered by our heart and soul, we begin to build trust and faith that in every moment, we are guided to move in the right direction. We are more able to swim with other fish from a place, not of competition, envy or resentment, but a place of service, with an attitude of kindness and respect. We experience greater moments of synchronicity and connection with others. In this new pond, our sense of identity comes from a deeper place.

Swimming with your eyes open

In this new pond, we must swim with consciousness, always being alert and awake. Swimming instruction gives us tools and techniques to support our new way of swimming, such as:

We need to continually be aware of our breath.

We need to allow our vulnerability.

We need to stay away from self-destructive beliefs, illusions and fantasies.

We need to pay attention to what we sense, feel and experience in our bodies.

We need to trust, surrender and let go of our dogmatic thoughts and beliefs.

We need to express gratitude consistently.

We need to trust our heart and soul to direct us to right knowing, right understanding and right action.

We need to be open to change, synchronicity and intuition.

We need to look for balance in our sense of our self, our finances, relationships, and daily activities.

We need to reconsider (re) prioritizing our goals so they truly support our inner sense of balance, harmony and well-being (not our ego).

The new pond with clear water

"Hiccup Hole isn't just a pond. It's a symbol... of freedom... and justice... and home, and country, and, and, and... apple pie!" - 101 Dalmatians

Moving to a new pond and keeping our water clean, clear and life-sustaining, means allowing our "neutral mind" and knowing when our neutral mind is being muddied by our "rational and logical" mind. Our neutral mind is awake, alert, clear, and conscious. Our "rational and logical" mind is tangled up with worry, goals, judgments, invidious comparisons, and constant chatter and "busy-ness."

The new pond of clear water is still, quiet, peaceful and relaxed - in mind, in body and in breath. We are open to new experiences, higher awareness, and the support of our heart and soul. We are mentally and emotionally at peace.

In this new place, there is no bigger pond, no better pond - just one pond. In this new place, we swim in the stillness of the moment, with our breath – free from the hustle and bustle of activities and the nagging of our rational mind. In this new place we transcend time and space while being present in time and space.

So, some questions for self-reflection are:

- Do you consider yourself a big fish in a small pond? How is it to constantly maintain that image?
- Do you always compete with the other fish in your pond? Why?
- Are you peaceful and content in your pond or are you always searching for a bigger pond?
- Is the water in your pond clear, healthy, and sustainable? If not, why not?
- Do you need “chemicals” to keep your pond healthy?
- How would you describe life in your pond? Balanced, peaceful and harmonious or stressful, rough and stormy?
- Are your eyes clear as you swim?
- What kind of fish are you? Why?
- Are you constantly searching for bait or being baited? What’s that like?
- Is your pond inundated with pond scum? Who or what accounts for this? How can you clean your pond to make it sustainable and life affirming?

The roots of a lotus are in the mud; the stem grows up through the water, and the flower lies above the water, basking in the sunlight. This pattern of growth signifies the progress of the soul from the primeval mud of materialism, through the waters of experience, and into the bright sunshine of enlightenment.

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