



Moving The Rocks, by Jack Kornfield

A writer I know began his practice with a well-known teacher many years ago. The writer didn't know much about meditation, but after some preliminary instruction he decided that enlightenment was for him. He went off to a hut in the mountains of Vermont and brought his few books on meditation and enough food for six months. He figured six months would perhaps give him a taste of enlightenment. As he began his retreat he enjoyed the forest and the solitude, but in just a few days he began to feel crazy because as he sat all day in meditation his mind would not stop. Not only did it think, plan, and remember constantly, but worse, it kept singing songs. This man had chosen a beautiful spot for his "enlightenment." The hut was right on the edge of bubbling stream. The sound of the stream seemed nice on the first day, but after a while it changed. Every time he sat down and closed his eyes, he would hear the noise of the stream and immediately in tune with it, his mind would begin to play marching-band songs like "Stars and Stripes Forever" and "The Star-Spangled Banner." At one point the sounds in the stream got so bad he actually stopped meditating, walked down to stream and started moving the rocks around to see if he could get it to play a different tune. What we do in our own lives is often not different. When difficulties arise, we project our frustration onto them as if it were the rain, the children, the world outside that was the source of our discomforts. We imagine that we can change the world and then be happy. But it is not by moving the rocks that we find happiness and awakening, but by transforming our relationship to them. --Jack Kornfield, *_A Path With Heart_*