



In Search of the Treasure, by Eric Lui

A parable. An old farmer, on his deathbed, tells his sons that there is treasure buried in the fields. After he dies, his sons dig and dig, turning the soil over in search of the treasure. They find nothing. But the next year, the harvest from those fields is the most bountiful ever.

What I like about that parable is its indirection, and the cleverness of the old farmer. But the tale did leave me unsatisfied. What about all of us who don't have a farmer figure? I don't mean just a father. I mean a teacher. And what about all of us who aren't ever prompted by somebody, even indirectly, to go out and make the discoveries that matter?

That's most of us, I think. Most of us go through life dimly aware that our trajectories could fill more of the sky, that our potential could be more fully realized, if someone were leading us through. But how do we find that guide? When I set out to write this book, I thought it would only be a matter of searching. So I searched awfully hard. I trod many winding paths. I logged thousands of miles, spent dozens of nights in airport motels, filled up sixteen notebooks and created hundreds of files with the stories of people who, in one form or another, were shepherds. It wasn't until long after I returned home that I realized I had found the meaning I was searching for. It had come not from any one of the shepherds, as remarkable as they were. It had come from the path. The trudging. The listening. The witnessing and the impulse for empathy.

At last I was able to be an apprentice. I was apprenticed to the experience of searching for a master.

We forget so easily what we already know. We overlook so quickly what we already have inside us. Think about it. You know something already about how to receive before you transmit. How to unblock and unlock. How to zoom in and zoom out. How to use invisible hands. How to switch shoes. And you have it within you to get better at each one.

Revisit the notebooks of your own life, whether they are composed of paper or pixels or the chemical bath of dreams. Out of the stream, out of the record of all the teaching you have done -- as a leader, as a tutor, as a healer, as a give -- an awareness will arise. A consciousness that speaks. And it will be saying to you: "Teacher, teach thyself."

-- Eric Liu in "Guiding Lights"

[share/read comments

[<http://nipun.charityfocus.org/blog/ar/wednesdays/000620.html>]]

Published at www.awakin.org on May 09, 2005