

Bundles of Troubles, Bundles of Blessings¹

There once was a woman who had so many problems, so many worries, so many troubles... that at times she felt she had more troubles than anyone else in the world!

Well... there was one friend she knew who had quite a large share of troubles herself. But this friend seemed to be able to move through her troubles and come out the other side with her head still held high. The more the woman thought about her friend, the more she began to think "I could ask her to tell me how she deals with her problems and then I would know how to deal with mine."

The woman became convinced that this was the answer - so one day she knocked on her friend's door. The friend invited her in, they sat down and chatted together while they shared tea. By and by the visitor told the friend why she had come to visit.

"Oh, but I can't tell you how to deal with your own problems" the friend told her, "only you know what are the right choices for yourself." The visitor's face looked so crestfallen that the friend added "But I could tell you some advice that someone once gave me that helped..."

"Oh would you? Could you?" the visitor encouraged her.

"Alright" the friend answered. "Why don't you let that part of yourself (gesture to self) that is connected to all that is (gesture to above and beyond) take over caring for your troubles."

"Well... alright."

It wasn't the kind of advice that she had expected. The visitor stayed a bit longer, chatting and catching up, then she said goodbye to her friend and began walking home. On the way home she thought "I really have tried everything else I can think of - what do I have to lose?"

¹ A German folktale adapted by Allison Cox from the story - "Bundles of Troubles, Bundles of Blessings" in the book - A Piece Of The Wind, by Ruthilde Kronberg and Patricia McKissack, Harper, San Francisco, 1990. Retrieved March 31, 2011 from www.healingstory.org/treasure/bundles/bundles_of_troubles.html.

So that night, when everyone else was asleep, she shut her door, got into bed, sat there and said "That part of me (gesture to self) that is connected to all that is (gesture to above and beyond)... please - help me with my troubles. I don't know what else to do..."

Then she figured she must be done, so she turned out her light, pulled up the covers and fell asleep... and that night she dreamed a dream...

She found herself in a vast candlelit cavern, surrounded by gray bundles of all shapes and sizes, as far as she could see. Walking toward her was a woman with flowing long white hair and dressed in a long dark cape.

"Who are you?" asked the dreamer "and what is this place?"

"This is the cave of the bundles of troubles and I am the Keeper of the cave."

"Bundles of troubles?"

"Yes," the Keeper explained, "each person who walks the earth carries a bundle of trouble on their left shoulder." The dreamer turned to look and there was a gray bundle on her left shoulder - it had been there all this time and she never noticed! "If you wish," the keeper continued, "you can take your bundle down and exchange it for another."

"Really? I can?" The woman lowered the bundle from her left shoulder. Oh it felt so good to put it down. Then she began picking up different bundles, feeling their weight, trying them on for size... She did this for hours until finally she said "Can I take this one? This one feels just right."

"Certainly you may" the Keeper told her, "but first, why don't you open it up and look inside."

So the woman put the bag down and pulled on the gray drawstrings and looked inside... "But these are the same troubles I brought in here!"

The Keeper of the cave smiled softly and nodded. "That's usually what happens, but do not despair, for there is another bundle on your right shoulder that should help lighten your load."

The woman turned and saw another bundle on her right shoulder. It had been there all this time and she never noticed! Only this bundle was woven of silver and gold threads and it sparkled like a diamond in the sunlight.

The Keeper spoke - "Why don't you take down that bundle, and look inside."

So the woman did. The bundle was light as down. She pulled the silver and gold strings and looked inside. And there were... all of her experiences and all that she had learned. There were her talents, her gifts, her hopes and opportunities yet to come. The woman felt her heart fill with joy and she looked up to thank the Keeper of the cave. But the Keeper of the cave was gone. All the gray bundles were gone. The cave was gone. And she found herself sitting up in her own bed with the morning sun streaming through the window, shining in her face.