

The Gift of Allowance

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AC PUBLISHING

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ISBN: 978-1-63493-639-2

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Published by Access Consciousness® Publishing

www.acpublishing.com

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CHAPTER 1:

Allowance

A boy and his aunt are driving down West Main Street in their little town, where the businesses are all lined up on one side and the railroad tracks pass along the other side of the street. East Main Street is the same, and the storefronts face one another over the six sets of rails. As they drive along, the little guy sees the Dairy Bar and says quietly, “I wish I could, but I can’t.” His head twists around to watch the Dairy Bar go by as his aunt says warmly, “What is it that you wish you could have, but you can’t?”

He turns back from the window and says: “A malted milk. A strawberry malted milk.”

“You know that you can’t have a malted milk, honey. That’s way too many calories, and we don’t want you to get fat.” His aunt drives on, and the boy sits in silence, wishing, just once, that he could have a malted milk.

The following week, the little boy and his aunt are again driving down the street, this time on East Main Street, the other side of the tracks, on their way to the shoe store. Because his feet are so flat, he has to wear what are called “kangaroo shoes,” a favorite among police officers, mail carriers, and factory workers who must be on their feet all day. They are high topped shoes, laced to just above the ankle, hardly a fashion statement for a boy, even one with flat feet.

The little boy knows what’s coming; he gets new shoes every six months as his feet grow. Because of the special inserts in them, the kangaroo shoes hurt his feet, making him walk on the sides instead of the soles of his feet. He walks, or rather he hobbles, down the hall in school, and the other kids tease him about the way he walks.

As his aunt leads him past the shoe store window, he stops and looks in at a pair of engineer boots. They are the shiny, black boots that all the really cool older boys wear; the tough boys who roll up their shirt sleeves and store a pack of cigarettes in them, and who roll up the cuffs of their tight-fitting Levi’s. Just like his big brother. He wants so much to be independent and tough and cool, just like them; just like him.

Nose and hands pressed against the glass, he says to his aunt, “I wish I could, but I can’t.” To which his aunt replies, “What is it you would like that

you can't have?" He explains that he'd like engineer boots, and she says: "You don't want them! The kind of people that wear them aren't like you. They're hoodlums and gangsters! We'll just go and get your shoes. Your special shoes that were made just for you." After she gives him a light tug, he passively follows his aunt into the store. He then climbs into a straight-backed wooden chair, dangling his legs, because they aren't quite long enough to reach the floor, and remains silent as the clerk fits the shoes on his feet.

As the years pass, the little boy stops saying that he wishes he could, but he can't, and it's all forgotten. Now, he simply yearns for things that he wishes he could have or be or do but knows that it's not possible for him.

Without really intending to, the little boy's family indoctrinated him with a number of points of view and judgments about himself and his world. Hoodlums and calories, fat and trouble, judgments based on points of view. And his reaction to these points of view, "I wish I could, but I can't," became a fixed point of view for him, one he'd use instead of asking directly for something. As a result of all of this, he stopped wishing and he stopped asking, all of which made him burn inside. The points of view became part of his personality and played a significant role in the way he lived his life. Of course, others contributed to the formation of these

and other points of view, such as the kids ridiculing him, making sure that he knew he was different, hence unacceptable, or the junior high school girls who didn't respond well to his asking: "I don't suppose you'd want to go to the movies with me."

"I wish; I can't" became the foundation for most of what happened to this boy later in life. Sometimes he'd rage in despair, because he never seemed to have the things he wanted and was tired of settling for what others permitted him to have.

How many times have you experienced "I wish I could, but I know I can't" in your life? Have you tried to make things different or better a hundred different ways, but nothing seemed to work, or if it did work, it was never what you thought it would be?

While you tried to write it off as the unfairness of the world, the problem always seemed to be that there was something "wrong" with you deep down inside and, no matter how hard you tried, you couldn't make it right. "Rightness" became the strawberry malt and the engineer boots that were right there in front of you, but always out of reach. In the tale of the little boy, when he wanted something for himself, he was presented with a point of view and a judgment. You can't have a strawberry malted milk; it will make you fat, and fat is bad. Nice boys don't get fat. Engineer boots are

only for bad people; nice people don't wear them. A point of view is given and followed with a judgment.

A judgment can be defined as any point of view that a person agrees or aligns with or resists or reacts to. Whose points of view, with the attached judgments, have you been using to create your life? What must you do, or must you never do? Do you know? The little boy had no idea that he was being infused with the points of view of those around him. He just knew that he couldn't have engineer boots and that those boots would become central to his points of view about a group of people he considered to be hoodlums.

It isn't necessary to live one's life like a ping-pong ball, ever at the mercy of other people's points of view and judgments. The problem isn't that other people's judgments or points of view are stronger or "righter" than yours; it is that you are unaware of what is really happening. The little boy was unaware that he had aligned with the "engineer boots are for hoodlums" point of view. He just knew that he couldn't have boots or, seemingly, anything else he wanted in life. To live differently takes both awareness and the willingness to allow yourself to *be*. To BE! To exist as YOU, not as a mixture of other people's thoughts on who and what you must be.

Under the assumption that it is a person's *wrongness* that is the root of their unhappiness, the

majority of people are more interested in being right than in being themselves and being free to choose the life that actually works for them. Instead of going out to buy his boots, as an adult, the little boy judges those who wear them as bad or wrong. The point of view that he learned as a child took root and he made it a part of himself.

Rather than enjoying the possibilities life has to offer, people seek to be perfect, which is to say, always right. They spend great energy and enormous time on being perfect, bending their world to fit the “right way.” Since everyone seems to have their own point of view about right and wrong, it becomes an exercise in futility. Does this create a life that inspires people, or makes them happy?

What if people could stop trying to be perfect, or allowed themselves to be wrong in light of their fixed points of view? The willingness to be wrong and make mistakes, or to break from established points of view, allows you to be aware of choices that other people might not even consider. Post-it® Notes came about after a chemist mistakenly made a glue that didn’t stick right. How would you post your “Out to Lunch” notices without the little yellow sticky note, created by mistake? There are a lot more possibilities to be found in the scrap pile of attempts than on the shelf of successes. But you can only get to them if you are able to allow yourself to make a mistake. From there you can choose what

action you would like to take next based on the awareness of your actions.

It is awareness, not judgment of right and wrong, that is essential for the creation of a thriving, successful life and world. With total awareness, you have the freedom to choose and create beyond the limitations everybody else thinks are real and true. Without total awareness, you can't have total creation of the life you desire.

To have awareness of what each action creates, you must be willing to move beyond the definitions of everything you have judged to be right and wrong. For example, you might have to give up a lifelong attachment to the awfulness of the world in order to live from a place of joy. Surprisingly, many people are much more attracted to, or perhaps addicted to, the woes of the world than they are to the prospect of living joyously.

With your judgments, you cut off your awareness; you don't see that which does not fit your judgment. We are told to think outside the box. The irony here is that we create the boxes we're trying to think outside of! They're called judgments. If you drive a white car, it seems that parking lots are absolutely full of white cars. You don't even really see the red or blue ones, because you've quietly aimed your attention at white. In other words, when you judge something as right or wrong, you are putting on blinders that block out everything that

does not match your point of view. However, when you function without judgment, the blinders come off, and, out of the blue, doors begin to open up around you that create possibilities you may never have considered.

Most of us have been trained from the time we were little to come to judgments and conclusions about everything. This is all part of the addiction to rightness and wrongness that we've been using to limit the choices available to us. The key to moving beyond all of this is *allowance*.

Allowance is about what you're willing to receive. It includes everything and judges nothing. When you are "in allowance," you never have to have a point of view about whether something is right or wrong, good or bad. Every point of view that you are aware of is just an "*interesting point of view*." It is awareness that turns a point of view from a judgment to simply a passing opinion that won't stick to you. If you are not in allowance, you cannot receive all that you are aware of because you can only judge what you must reject and what you will align with. This means you will push whatever does not match your judgments and conclusions out of your reality. Everything that you desire to receive must pass through your personal censors before you can receive it. Allowance removes this board of stern-faced, black-robed, sour judges, and allows you to receive everything.

When you are in total allowance you can receive everything—the good, the bad, and the ugly. Because you do not have to have a point of view or judgment about what you are aware of, every single, solitary particle of information becomes available to you. When you can be aware of anything, you can change anything. When you can change anything, you can have total success with all that you create.

For example, some people have been taught that violence is wrong and should be avoided at all costs. It is interesting to note that when people describe others who are violent, they usually do so from a place of anger, and start imagining the kinds of brutal punishment the violent person should receive. If confronted with their reaction as an expression of violence, the person will deny it, because they can't see it. The judgments people carry about violence can blind them to their own violence.

Defining violence as right or wrong is, simply, a judgment. Violence, no matter what point of view you may take about it, is a part of the world. If you have decided that violence is wrong, you may choose not to see all the forms it takes or push what you have defined as violent out of your world. If you have the point of view that violence is wrong, how likely are you to acknowledge where you or a loved one may be violent? Defining violence as right creates a similar set of blinders. If a person is conditioned to deal with problems through violence,

nonviolent solutions will disappear into the night, leading the person to meet challenges regarding their “authority or power” forcefully; violently.

There are situations in which choosing something that one person may consider to be violent could create greater possibilities. A woman has finally tired of being treated unfairly in her job and, one day, she stands up and screams, “That’s it! I’ve had all I’m going to take!” She pushes the contents of her desk onto the floor and marches out of the office. Her shocked coworkers could say that this was an unnecessarily violent scene. She, on the other hand, might see it as having been freed to look at the possibilities of a larger world. Nice girls don’t make violent scenes. So, in order to be nice, she stagnates in a swamp she hates. Whether she was right or wrong to do what she did all depends on whose point of view, whose judgment you’re listening to.

What would your life be like if you chose to be aware of anything and everything without having to judge the rightness or wrongness of your awareness? Would you make different choices? What would be possible for you to create that you have not yet chosen?

CHAPTER 2:

It All Starts With an Interesting Point of View

Going back to the little boy's aunt telling him that engineer boots are for hoodlums and gangsters, the point of view that he developed about the boots became truth for him. He would fight a bear to defend his acquired point of view that only hoodlums wore engineer boots. What would have happened if he recognized that what his aunt told him was simply her *interesting point of view*? In order to become totally aware, it is necessary to recognize that every point of view, yours or others', is just an interesting point of view. It is neither right nor wrong, good nor bad.