

The Blind Fisherman [Excerpt from Chapter 2]

There once was a troubled person, of rigid negative thinking and uninspired beliefs, about to receive a great gift. His name was Thomas and he lived with his family on the barren outskirts of a small, Northern Province. His list of hardships included a lack of food to feed his ever-increasing brood. Thomas worked hard—but with less than fully inspired wisdom and creativity—to provide sustenance to his beloved ones. One day, while Thomas tended to his sparse vegetable garden, a stranger passed through his village with a catch of fresh fish—quite surprising, since there were no large bodies of water nearby.

The approaching stranger noticed Thomas' tattered children playing in a makeshift tree house and graciously offered them some fish. While painful for a prideful father to watch his *flesh and blood* eagerly accepting handouts, his conflicting emotions were tempered by the knowledge that his children were desperate for nourishment. Thomas decided to welcome the charity by inviting the benevolent stranger to dinner.

After the wonderfully shared feast and spirited conversation, the guest arose to excuse himself. Thomas and his appreciative family members promised to pray for his continued safe journey. They also voiced the wish that they could find some fish for themselves. The sympathetic benefactor responded by telling a somewhat doubtful Thomas about a previously hidden fresh-water lake within a day's journey. "The abundance of fish upon this unspoiled body of pristine water is so plentiful that you can virtually scoop up your bounty without artificial implements," the charismatic drifter reported. "With the very fertile soil for planting seed, you could potentially feed your family for a lifetime," he added. The saintly man suggested moving the homestead to the lush and available Eden, where most—if not all—the family's physical needs could easily be met. With appreciative hugs and final good-byes, the angelic provider bid adieu—never to be seen again.

Thomas concluded this Eden story too good to be true. He diminished its value when recounting what he surmised was a whimsical tale told by an entertaining vagabond. He asked Claire, his ever-hopeful spouse, "How can we possibly trust the word of a complete stranger?" Thomas emphasized how difficult the journey would be—only to be set up for another of life's many disappointments. In spite of Thomas' doubts as to the meal's origin, there was much merriment and heartened celebration. His family continued to eat their fill from the remainder of the cherished delicacy.

At the expressed urging of the children and the enthusiastic Claire, Thomas finally agreed to make the trek

to the hidden valley. Always a farmer, Thomas lacked any specific knowledge of fishing. If the stranger's depiction were true, specialized skills would not be required for success. Undeterred by patriarchal reservations, all family members eagerly agreed to tend the garden, care for the animals, and complete the other seasonal chores while awaiting Thomas' return. Although not shared by her pessimistic husband, Claire believed the stranger a Heaven-sent messenger arriving in response to her heartfelt prayers for a better life for their children.

With provisions for several days, including a special, baked treat scrounged together by his lovingly loyal and now-animated spouse, Thomas began his journey. He believed the hardships of life his due, and did not expect any relief. So far, life had responded with one challenge after another—for which Thomas had unwittingly requested.

Upon his arrival at the forested paradise, Thomas admitted it was, indeed, the most beautiful place he had ever seen. Extremely lush growth indicated the soil as fertile as promised. A tinge of hopeful elation entered the consciousness of this fearful provider, just moments before his heart sank in recriminating acceptance of his expected disappointment.

At the shoreline of the serene alpine lake, Thomas *cast* his gaze—for several long moments—over the lavish vista. But not one fish appeared. Thomas began to curse the oversized pond, the stranger, and mostly himself for having considered the validity of some fanciful tale told by a transiting drifter. Disheartened, Thomas returned home with his dispirited “I told you so” announcement, temporarily masking underlying feelings of humiliation and worthlessness.

After witnessing the light of hope and inspired creativity dimming in the eyes of his beloved family, Thomas could no longer hold back his shameful weeping. Attempting to console her anguished husband, the once-buoyant matriarch asserted that perhaps they had been foolish to dream of a better place and greater opportunity. Her young and impressionable children nodded in quiet acknowledgement. With heads hung low, and shoulders slumped, the young ones resigned themselves to their collective impoverishment. Returning to the meager lettuce garden, the family's vision of a lush and abundant paradise was soon forgotten.

Conclusion. Thomas and his family members made the same distorted choice that many of us duplicate in today's world. We often allow our childhood dreams to be replaced by the debilitating blindfold of tired acceptance and conformed complacency. As we observe from this fictional, but metaphorically significant tale, we do not find truth by simply going to the shore and casting our gaze upon the lake

of life. The expanded reality: ***all the love and abundance we could possibly imagine, both for us and those we care for, is here for the taking.*** It requires courage, faith, and determination to ***prod beneath the surface of our manifesting opportunities.***

Living a life by disavowing our gifts, talents, and abilities, is not much fun, is it? Unless firmly convinced this sad depiction is your assigned lot in life, let doubting Thomas' lesson prompt you to **look beyond the five-sensory world for expanded truth and the all-inclusive treasure that awaits discovery.** As you continue *true* north on your destined rendezvous with the Inner Spirit, use the message from the Blind Fisherman story as your motivational zenith. Or...you can turn everything over to the fate of lottery ticket purchases—your choice.

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