

The Persistent Path

A Mystical Tale of Finding One's Truth



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The Persistent Path

Once upon a time... many, many years ago in a small village in the land up North, a tiny precious baby girl was born under the most unusual circumstances. Her birth was shrouded in mystery for her mother did not know she was carrying her until nearly time for delivery. She only knew she carried the male child.

The community buzzed with whispered voices for something was very different about this child. Half the birth weight of the male child, she appeared to have been born before her time. She was whisked to a special chamber guarded by the Healers till she grew strong enough to be placed in the care of her guardians.

She stayed with her guardians and grew side by side with the male child. They lived in the south bend near the Temple of The Great Mother. As they grew, a dark shadow entered their home and attached itself to the male child. He began to behave in mischievous ways and was beaten for his bad deeds, earning the name Dark Shadow. The precious girl child grew more virtuous, glowed with goodness, and rarely did anything wrong. She never needed the belt against her backside like the boy did, earning the name Pure Goodness.

One day when the twins were nine, the guardians sent them on an adventure to the enchanted City of the Wind where they were to learn the story of the magical boy who never grows old. Pure Goodness wore her beautiful white fur cloak and gloves, and radiated her goodness as she stepped into the carriage with her brother. He wore his dark suit and hat and his face radiated his mischievous intentions.

The day held thrilling adventures. The twins saw the magical boy fly through the air, slay the evil one, and rescue the children held captive. Before returning home, Dark Shadow and Pure Goodness selected presents to bring to their younger sisters. When the young girls received their gifts, they were overjoyed with the treasures from Dark Shadow but they hardly noticed the offerings from Pure Goodness.

Shocked and hurt, Pure Goodness retreated to a dark chamber hidden in the center of their home. "Why did they not see the value of my gifts," she wondered. "Why would they favor the gifts from Dark Shadow? He was the Disobedient One!" The male guardian came looking for Pure Goodness and found her hiding and crying. "Why are you so sad?" he asked.

"My sisters have chosen the gifts from Dark Shadow over mine. That is not fair. Why did they not like the gifts that I brought for their joy? I am the good one! You said being good matters the most, and I expected my gifts to be treasured above all else. But that is not true and I feel betrayed!"

Being good has meant I could not get dirty, could not fight, could not shout, could not say mean things. I could not speak the truth. Dark Shadow, the Mischievous One, has shouted in anger, has gone where he wasn't allowed, has done things he wasn't suppose to, and has taken his punishment. As a result, he knows himself better than I know myself. His gifts are more valuable than mine for he has fought to be true to himself."

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Betrayed by her elders, Pure Goodness sought to find what was true on her own. Everywhere she went, she saw the treasures of Dark Shadow valued more than the gifts of Pure Goodness. The traditions, the celebrations, the schools, the institutions, the temple leaders all spoke of the virtues of Pure Goodness as honorable, but they rejoiced in the antics of Dark Shadow. When twenty years had passed, she could take it no more.

"Oh Great Mystery, no matter where I turn I meet The Wall of Great Resistance. This stone wall keeps me trapped in the land where Dark Shadow reigns. I call upon you, Great Mystery, I call with wounded heart. Hear my sadness. Hear my despair. Oh Great Mystery, I plead for your help. How do I pass through The Wall of Great Resistance to enter The Land Beyond, the land that is my True Home?"

Pure Goodness walked high upon a hill and stood at the very pinnacle overlooking all the land. She saw The Wall of Great Resistance extending along the perimeter as far as the eye could see. Again she spoke from the pain in her soul. "Hear me Oh Great Mystery, I cannot see beyond The Wall. In each direction there is only the Kingdom of Dark Shadow. I call upon Thee with pure heart. How do I penetrate The Wall and enter the land of my home, my true country? I am an alien in this land.

As Pure Goodness sat upon the stony hill, she beckoned a Force from deep within. There appeared before her a leprechaun whom she had known before but had forgotten. His instructions were simple. "Follow along The Stone Wall with your hand. Eventually you will come upon a soft spot where moss has begun to grow. Take a spoon and scoop out the moss carefully. Behind the clump you will see the dirt is soft. Scoop out a little dirt and then replace the clump of moss.

Every day you must return to that spot with your spoon and remove the clump of moss, scoop out more of the dirt, and replace the moss. Before long you will glimpse a land of rainbows, radiant light, and sparkling water. You will know your destiny. That is all I have to say." And the leprechaun vanished.

"If that is what I am to do, then that is what I will do," she said. Pure Goodness found the soft spot in The Wall of Great Resistance where life was growing. Every day she went to The Wall with her spoon, removed the moss, removed some dirt, returned the moss, and carried on. The moss expanded to fill the space. The soft spot grew and supported the expanded life. Years past as Pure Goodness rose each morning knowing she was moving closer to her destiny.

Twenty years had passed when one day Pure Goodness went to The Wall, pulled out the huge clump of moss, took her spoon, dug into the dirt, and an opening appeared! She was through to the other side. Brilliant light beamed through the small opening filling her heart and touching her soul.

It was beautiful, more beautiful than Pure Goodness had imagined. It was Shimmering Radiance and she heard a melodic voice say, "Welcome, we have been waiting for you. We celebrate your arrival. Come, we will open the hole so you may enter."

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Pure Goodness hesitated. Over the last twenty years she had learned to live in peace in this land of Dark Shadow. She had a family, she had friends, she had a comfortable life. As long as she was seeking her destiny, she was at peace with her current existence.

The time had come to make a choice. She did not know what to do. If she closed the hole and stayed, a part of her would die, for she would no longer have hope. If she left and went through to the other side, she must leave the people she loves.

She sat down next to The Wall and cried. "This is hopeless," she said. "I am hurt by either choice." Pure Goodness cried and cried. Neither choice felt right. Her heart swelled with pain. She loved her family and she loved The Radiance.

"Oh Great Mystery," she cried, "again I beseech Thee. Come to my aid for I know not what to do.

Her tears flowed freely and formed a pool of water by her feet. She looked deep into the water and her reflection changed before her eyes. A wizened old face with thinning gray hair and black penetrating eyes stared back at her and pierced through her whining hopeless façade.

"How will you answer my piercing gaze?" asked the wizened Old Woman.

Pure Goodness was taken aback but she was not frightened. She stared straight into the gaze of the Old Woman and felt the rumble of a roar move within. Giving voice to her rage she let out an ear-piercing roar and with that, she transformed into a mountain lion. She paced around the pool, staring at the ugly Old Woman. She circled round and round, never releasing her fierce glare. She was not a whining child and she resented the implication in the Old woman's gaze.

"How will you answer my piercing gaze?" the wizened Old Woman shouted to the feline. "How will you answer my gaze of truth?"

The cat growled. "[Baba Yaga](#), I see what you have done. You have stirred a power within me that I have not honored." And with that Pure Goodness leaped through the opening and landed on the other side with the fierce strength of a lioness. And the hole in The Wall closed.

Suddenly Pure Goodness realized she had left her True Love on the other side of The Wall. "Ha Ha Ha Ha Ha!" came the cackle from the other side. "You are not so smart! Leaping is what you always do! Leaping to conclusions."

Pure Goodness looked around. This was not the home she yearned for. This was not the place she was seeking. What had she done? Her loved ones were on the other side. How could she get back?

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Pure Goodness suddenly felt so tired. Her body felt the exhaustion of centuries. "I cannot continue," she said. She saw a grassy knoll and laid down to rest. She dreamed of her True Love who cherished her. She yearned to be in his arms again.

Pure Goodness felt a hand upon her head, lovingly stroking her hair. "Daughter," she said softly, "have I told you that I love you?" She stroked her hair and caressed her shoulders. "Daughter, have I told you how very special you are? Have I told you how precious you are to me? Have I told you how I treasure you?"

Pure Goodness sat up and opened her eyes. The most Radiant Beautiful Mother was smiling with love at her. "Come and let me hold you once again," She said. "I have been with you always and you have brought me great joy. Every challenge you faced you tried your best. Strange lands, strange people, and always you believed in their goodness and called forth the goodness in those around you. You are of Me and I flow through you. Each day, all you have done flows to Me and each night, all that I Am flows to you. We are one."

Pure Goodness closed her eyes and leaned into The Great Mother's embrace, savoring the truth of their oneness. When she opened her eyes, she was back in her comfortable home. Her husband was cooking supper. Her son was coming by with his girlfriend and all seemed the same as before. But nothing was the same. Nothing was ever the same again. Love flourished. Everything thrived. And she lived happily ever after.

The End



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The Process

The elements in this tale emerged from actual events. In 1996, the year I turned 50, I registered to begin training in spiritual direction in Narragansett, Rhode Island. A prerequisite to being accepted was to attend a private one-week retreat with the Director of the program.

During that stay, each day I was assigned activities designed for self-reflection and deepening my connection with the divine. They engaged my body, mind, and spirit in the most creative ways. I discovered so many venues for connecting with the divine beyond traditional prayer. In fact, I discovered the art of listening to the divine with ears that hear and gazing toward the divine with eyes that see.

After finger painting with eyes closed to let the divine speak, engaging with feminine images of the divine to hear Her story, and standing at the ocean's edge to listen to the wisdom from the waves splashing against my ankles, I was asked to write a fairy tale. The instructions were to begin with my birth and tell my story using the basic elements that define a fairy tale.

Although using actual events, I was to change the names of places and characters to enchanted images. The story was to have a heroine, me, a villain or evil one, a challenge that seems insurmountable, and some magical characters who either antagonize and come to my aid. And I was to begin the fairy tale with the traditional, "Once upon a time..." and start with magic around the new born child.

This mystical tale was the outcome of that assignment. I happened across it while looking through some old papers I had stored from my training. As I read through it, I reconnected with the power of the message at that time in my life. It made me wonder if other women would relate to a mid-life story of finding one's truth.

The creative process in writing a fairy tale is as valuable as the wisdom that surfaces. It invites the imagination to take the person creating the tale to hidden regions of understanding and deeper spiritual depths. As I describe below, it took an awkward, conscious effort to transform the characters and setting of my story from actual events. But once I did, the free flow of my imagination developed the direction of the story. It became the safe and sacred place where I could listen to the divine with ears that hear.

The Mysterious Birth

I struggled to get started, not really knowing what I was going to write about or how to create imaginary characters and settings. With a determined effort, I began with the unusual circumstances of my birth. I am a twin, born five minutes after my brother. He weighed eight pounds and I weighed four. My mother didn't know she was carrying twins until her eighth month. And I appeared to be a premature birth, indicating my mother got pregnant with me while already pregnant with my brother, a very rare event. So, I grew up being told there was something strange about my birth, that I was written up in the medical journals. I didn't find out the details until after I was grown and had my own children.

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The Setting

My unique birth made creating a magical start to the tale much easier than I expected, but designing a make-believe setting took a lot of thought. In my early years we lived in South Bend, Indiana, home of the University of Notre Dame. With its golden dome and Alma Mater, *Notre Dame, Our Mother*, the location came together, but I needed a childhood event.

When my brother and I were nine, we went with a group of kids on a bus to Chicago to see the play, *Peter Pan*, played by Mary Martin. Our parents had taken a picture of us on the front steps of our home, so the clothes I described are accurate. My sisters were way more excited about my brother's gifts than mine, and my father did find me in the hall closet crying about it. I have no idea why that event chose to present itself for the fairy tale assignment, but it did and I went with it.

The Shift

Because I needed a plot with a villain and a heroine, I had to start "making up" a story using my imagination. This duality of good and bad emerged with my brother wearing the shadow of the Mischievous One. In truth, he was the one who got in trouble and my father did use a belt for discipline, a 1950's "spare the rod and spoil the child" approach. However, by using the magical names it was no longer about us. A deeper story began to unfold, one beneath my conscious awareness that spoke to my true journey as a woman.

From this point on the mystical tale wrote itself as I let go of controlling the story and wrote whatever emerged from my imagination without censure. Deeply buried feelings shape-shifted into imaginary characters with a voice. I was no longer in Rhode Island writing this, I was someplace else – Like Dorothy traveling through Oz.

The Challenge

The challenge that took shape in this tale was to find a way to get to the other side of The Wall of Great Resistance. The solution was not a quick fix. Instead it was a discipline of a daily practice that chipped away at the barrier, bit by bit.

What surprised me when this showed up in the story is that it related to a daily practice actually in place in my life for 20 years. I started rising early in the morning to start my day with meditation in 1977. I created what I called my "Woman Space" where I would light a candle, have a cup of coffee, and start my day with 30 minutes to myself.

The Lesson

When Pure Goodness broke through The Wall of Great Resistance and was free to go through to the other side, the real fear beneath her resistance emerged.

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Does finding her True Home, where she can be her true self and feel loved for who she is, require abandoning the current life she had created?

This was one of the jewels that glistened in the writing of this tale. I wasn't aware I had this underlying fear about my journey until this popped into the story. As I was embarking on this next chapter of my life, to become a spiritual director, there was this part of me that was seeking this path with the same fervor as Pure Goodness. Little did I know that there was also this deep fear continuing to create a wall of resistance with every step.

The lesson of truth came when Pure Goodness surrendered her struggle. She is embraced by The Beautiful Great Mother and feels the deep love that flows between them. Here is her True Home. She is the living expression of The Great Mother's love and joy.

Spiritual Healing

Through writing this mid-life tale, I was made aware of my inner struggle, I experienced a "happily ever after" resolution, and I felt deep communion with the divine feminine. I learned that my journey to my true self, to live my truth, to be where I belonged, had been unfolding for years through my spiritual practice of starting each day in my woman space and listening for divine guidance and clarity.

This mystical tale was written in one sitting using a free form, uncensored, unedited, "let it flow" style. This offered a process to let go of control and invite the divine to show me what was in my heart. For me, that included experiencing the divine feminine as our Loving Creator.

Write Your Own Tale

Create your own tale and see where it takes you. Start with your birth as the birth of a precious child. Create an imaginary setting using an actual location but embellish the description with enchanted names for the places and the people in them. Then let your imagination run free! Try to avoid censoring, editing, and second guessing what emerges.

Open to your emotions, animate them as characters and let them speak freely. Surrender to the free flow process. Then let it go. Later, return to read what you wrote and see what emerged as truth for you.

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Surrender

Surrender is not relinquishing responsibility

it is not a state of dependency

it is not giving away one's personal power

it is not a loss of self

It is the result of doing all that is in your power

using all the courage and strength within you

and realizing it is not enough

that you cannot control your life

It is an action that acknowledges the Great Mystery at work

that willingly releases control so that miracles can occur

that demonstrates belief in a more profound Presence, a more profound Purpose

and the connected relationship of self to that Presence and Purpose

It is a willingness to be vulnerable

to be like an embryo that evolves in the Mother's womb

without control of action or outcome

sustained as part of a larger purpose and plan

It is a belief that Love designed the plan

with you in it

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The Persistent Path is a mystical tale of one woman's struggle to discover where she belongs, to find her purpose and place in a world where she feels alien.

Why Write a Fairy Tale?

Once upon a time.....young girls learned the secrets of how to live their best life as a woman through enchanted stories whispered by the elder women for their ears only.

Then the printing press was invented and men controlled what was written and published, so the fairy/folk tales were edited to conform to men's view of the world. The secrets only women knew, the deeper truths hidden in the folk tales, were lost.

Future generations need magical stories written by women that convey the real truth as they know it about life as a woman. These authentic tales will offer them true wisdom on how to live their best life.

If your life were told as a fairy tale, what would your "happily ever after" ending look like?