

The garden of life

Dedicated to the young.

I felt the need to translate this tale I created some years ago. I hope the sense of it does not get lost by a nonprofessional translation. But I know, things I do with my heart reach those open to ideas.

Translation inspired by Carla and Sofia. Thank you for sharing your thoughts, giving me an insight to young people in the UK, I've learned a lot!

This is the metaphor behind the idea making me create „Der-Raum.org“.

We are in change. Every single day. Unfortunately we do not always realise it, and even worse, we often do not always want the change. We are reacting to our environment. And before we realise what is going on, we are a product of the wishes and needs of other people. And all we may have left, is the question: “How did I get here?”

It would be better to ask ourselves: „What can I do to get away from here?“, because that should point us towards our dilemma we face:

“What do I want?”

I would like to share this little metaphor, which may trigger your imagination a bit. I call it:

The Garden (of life)

When we are born, we are innocent, we are even-handed. We are curious and we are looking for company. This is the beginning of our life. In this metaphor, this is when we buy an empty plot of land amongst others. It has loads of rough edges and that means it adjoins many other plots. Some of the surrounding plots have been sold ages ago and are overgrown, others are still as empty as ours. Some of them remain empty

for quite a while.

We realise that some of the plots are surrounded by walls, or maybe even thorn hedges, but for the moment, we don't care. We keep focused on creating and building our garden. First thing is to create a lawn to have a basis for our comfort. It's not meager anymore. As time goes on, we are creating areas for cuddling with our siblings and parents, which we surround with low hedges. This makes the areas more special. Our Garden is open to everyone.

Bit by bit friends come into our garden, like playfellows from the kindergarden or neighbour's children. Not all of them share the same area in the garden. We plant trees to climb, build shacks to play in and to share secrets with our best friends.

As time goes on, things keep changing. We go to school, we grow up. And since we are busy, we may unlearn how to take care of the garden. Because it feels the world belongs to us, everything seems to be so big. We want to see the other gardens and learn what other people do. Our garden feels so small. But it still changes. Mother nature makes the grass, the hedges, the bushes, grow. The hedges and the trees have so many leaves, one can't see through them anymore. The shacks become overgrown and finally collapse. But instead of cleaning up our own garden, we are only interested in other people's garden. The gardens of our colleagues, friends, neighbours and so on. We enjoy the gardens of others. Yes, we do have our own, but as usual, the grass is always greener on the other side.

Without realising we got to the point where we feel disappointment. We have grown older. The plants in our garden have grown. Yes, we sometimes mowed the lawn, cut hedges, sometimes we even managed to plant fresh flowers. Everything is in good shape, isn't it??

But soon we get the feeling that we just compose ourselves, we made us think, everything is OK. (Hopefully) our garden is not

chaos, but everything looks more beautiful in the other gardens.

Why??

We want to change it from now on. Unfortunately we are occupied and have very little time only. So we engage a gardener. We tell him to fix everything, repair the paths, cut the hedges and bushes, plant new trees and flowers and keep everything in good shape. Well done!

But...

We are not really convinced. Why does the gardener do everything differently? He explains, as a professional he knows

exactly what and how everything needs to be done. We feel better now and relax. It's only the jealous neighbours with their useless hints, that things are not good enough. The path too wide, the hedge still too high, the trees too large, the gate too blue, the... "Oh come on, don't you see a professional is taking care of this?"

This is where we get to a crossroad. Those, who weren't used to be responsible for their life from the early days and find their own way now find themselves in the Nirvana of their garden. Some may give way to the pushing of the neighbours like parents, friends, siblings and others. They are lost, because if they do not react responsibly for their own life, they will remain in the dilemma. Maybe they feel comfortable in their Garden-Nirvana and make themselves at home. A high thorn hedge may protect them. Unless someone with an antithorn plating comes around, they may end their life in that area of their garden. Everybody is doing whatever he wants to in that garden, plants new trees or hedges or whatever. Everybody contributes, but the owner. And he may be very happy right now, as he can remain in his corner and he does not need to take any responsibility.

Others may wake up, because they have friends pointing out how important it is to be responsible for oneself. Sometime these friends have just to tip the owners, sometimes they may have to shout. In many cases a quarrel with good friends is needed to wake up.*

Some others simply reflect their situation and manage to get their rack together. They start to create the garden they want. They have a vision, a GOAL! They know they have to sort and prepare everything before they start. They know they can't do everything in one go, as the garden is in bad shape, chaos is too big to fix it immediately. And they know Rome wasn't build in one day, they know sometimes you have to revisit your plan and adapt it. Not everything is a success from day one. But the successful small steps keep them motivated.

So, they feed the dry bush with fresh soil and water, it will be cut so it can cast out. The shacks are rotten and need dumping. Because they remind us of nice and happy-go-lucky days, they will always have a place in our heart. Maybe we keep a picture of them in our house. The same applies to everything that gave us joy and peace, made us learn and grow. We may remember it in love, it will stay in our heart forever. The hedges are cut down to a good height. We look over it and ask ourselves: "Is it still the same neighbour, the one I haven't spoken to, since...? We repair the fence, especially the gates, so we have access to the neighbour's plots and everybody can come and visit us. We burn the bridges to the plots surrounded by thorns, because we don't want to get hurt anymore. The more we do, the more we detect how good this feels. We establish more and more, and suddenly people come into our garden. Just like we have been in other people's garden for so long.

What happened???

We have learned to listen and to pay attention. Above all we listen to a special voice, the voice of our heart. We now know

what we want, instead of knowing what we do not want. As long as we do not want a certain thing, everything else is an option. For example, we don't want roses in our garden, since we don't like thorns. Friendly neighbour comes along, planting a clematis in our garden. "Doesn't he know how much work they generate? What an ignorant!" But the neighbour says: „You did not want roses, a clematis clearly isn't one. By the way, it is from argentina, growing 100feet per year and the blossoms are sooo nice!" Same thing happens, if we do not have an opinion at all. Everybody kills us with kindness and is planting flowers and trees in our garden. That's what it soon looks like, a catalogue of a DIY-store.

But because we left that unconscious behavior behind, we are in control. The garden is looking the way WE want it to. And it feels great! It's not always easy to rearrange our garden. We may need a shovel, which we may have. Sometimes we may need a bulldozer, which we have to borrow. But we do not give up. There is a new solution to every new challenge we face. Seeds and herbs will be blown into our garden, we decide if we keep them or if we remove them. We understood, everything is unlasting. The luck we experience today may be gone tomorrow. But because we aim for being happy we keep creating things that make us happy.

Every single day.

May your garden of life grow and blossom and be a source of infinite happiness for you!

Just in case you may need some tools for your garden of life, here is a place where you will find these tools. Feel free to ask. No return needed.

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* (Be thankful, if your friends sometimes are direct and harsh to you to wake you up. That makes them real friends!)