

Leaving the Stream

Day in and day out, Emma and Tammy listened to people by the little stream. Year in and year out, they worked together and shared a large part of their emotional lives with each other as well.

One snowy morning, a wolf named Cassandra arrived at the little stream and told them that she'd like to learn this way of healing. Both Emma and Tammy were pleased with their new friend's willingness to learn.

After a few days, Cassandra became very unhappy with the method. She said that in her old forest, people gave more "positive directions" in healing than what Tammy and Emma were doing here.

One evening, all three were having dinner, Cassandra said, "We never get people to change here. We just listen to them forever. For example, that old wolf who had lost his best friend over a year ago should not be sad anymore. He really should have gotten on with his life long time ago. And here we are, listening to him and telling him that we understand his pain. All for what?! He needs to move on!" Emma and Tammy each thought her own thoughts, silently.

Another few days went by. During these days, Emma and Cassandra were seen to have frequent talks in the forest around the stream. Tammy, busy and preoccupied with the healing center as usual, had noticed a visible change in Emma. She seemed harsher, more than a little judgmental in interpreting people's feelings in group meetings and more than once, she had taken a direction of telling people what they should do or have done.

Emma's new way of leading the group disturbed Tammy a great deal. But as one with great patience, Tammy decided to wait a few weeks. During that time, Cassandra constantly made obvious snide remarks of how inactive and backward Tammy's healing method was and how the center needed a "revolutionary change." One day, at a hurried breakfast, she even told Tammy that the only reason she felt that Tammy held on to the "inactive doing nothing" method was because she herself did not want to change and grow. Tammy was terribly hurt but she felt that perhaps it was because Cassandra knew little of her so she kept it in mind that when the time came, she'd have a talk with Cassandra.

The day came sooner than Tammy ever expected. When the summer just started to set its heat in the forest one day at noon, Emma came to Tammy, followed by Cassandra. "Tammy, we decided that you have to leave," Emma said, "The center needs a new approach and with you still being here, people are going to want to remain in the old way because it's easy on them." Tammy wanted to say something to Emma but she knew she had waited too long and missed the moment. She kept quiet for a long while to gather herself together and then said, "Okay, I guess I'll just leave then. And good luck to you both."

Later that evening, when a little breeze set in, Tammy took her leave. She hugged Emma with all the emotional strength she had left and then walked away from the little stream, where she called home for more than ten years.

She decided that perhaps it was time for her to make the trip to Emmett, the one Angelo, the deer, encouraged her to do years ago. "But first," she said to herself, "I've got to say goodbye to Sally."

A day and a half later, she finally arrived at Sally's place, which she had called home before she left more than ten years ago to find Angelo.

Dawn had just broken. Uncertain of whether or not Sally was awake, Tammy tapped on the little piece of wood by the house to announce her arrival. The old fox, obviously awake, jumped out of the house in a second. "Oh, dear," the excitement made Sally exclaim so hard that Tammy felt it almost broke her ear drum, "What brought you here?! Please, just come in my dear. You know no matter how long you're gone, this is still your home. What's with the knocking thing?" With tight and long hugs, both the rabbit and the fox broke into laughter.

Over a luxurious long breakfast of carrots, greens and roasted chicken and water, Tammy and Sally talked about their days. After a long while, Tammy felt that it was about time to tell Sally about why she came here. She told Sally about Cassandra and Emma and that they wanted the center to become a different place, "But that's just wrong," Sally said with a frown, "Emma has always been quick to grasp new things. But sometimes she is also quick to abandon all that was in the past, including the things she knew that was and would be helpful to people. Can't you talk to her?"

Tammy said that she had considered talking to both Emma and Cassandra about it but she felt that at this point in time, they were both unable to hear about what would be considered an "old fashioned, slow and inactive" method, especially from her. So she

decided that she would have to wait and take the risk of them never realizing that what they were doing would not be helpful for many. "You see, Sally, if I truly believe in letting people figure out what they want in life and giving them the freedom of choice, then I have to practice what I believe. Even though this time I am convinced that what Emma and Cassandra choose as a healing method is unhelpful in more ways than not, I will have to let them do what they decide to do."

Sadly but not hopelessly, Tammy said goodbye to Sally and went on her way to Emmett.