



Working with Restorative Justice, the dance between prince and frog

The prince is the part of yourself you show to the world. It is an image of an ideal self taught to you by the people who raised you and people who were important to you as a child, *or still are*. Foremost were your parents and then your teachers, tutors and your peers. Also, advertisers and the media affect how people want to be seen. The person, who develops a shining prince or princess, is appreciated, gets recognition and feels safe. You need a solid prince in order to survive in the 'palace' of society, the school of which you are part. A Prince spends a lot of time in reflection and is aware of his surroundings: it is essential that he knows what is expected of him and understands exactly how he must behave. If successful there is a lot to gain and there is great reward. How satisfied the prince feels in his life is determined by how others react to him. "Why do you do that?" asks a student. "This is the way we do things in this school," answers the princely teacher.

When you often dress up like a prince and want to live in a wonderful palace, you will pay a price for doing so. For example, by feeling the stress this creates in your inner 'frog', which would rather comfortably live in a pond. The 'frog' is whom you are inside, with all your beautiful, original, but also strange impulsive and dark sides. A frog lives from his heart and his gut. A strong 'frog' is master of the emotions that live there. He is curious, lives in the here and now and take what comes as it is. The measure of satisfaction with himself, is he himself and nobody else. "Why do you do that?" asks a student. "Because I think this is the right thing at this time," replies his teacher.

Who hides his 'frog', puts love, intimacy and vulnerability in a dark place. Princely behavior is about adapting to your environment; it creates security and helps you to survive in the palace with all its rigid conventions. The frog is a part of the ecosystem which is the pond. In the pond you learn to live and ultimately become who you truly are. Where the prince represents survival in the palace, the 'frog' represents living in the pond. When you think the best you can do is always stay safe, you live your life without being really real. But that is a life without real intimacy; like a magic wand without the magic.

Restorative justice that truly restores relationships can only happen in the pond. Schools need "palace rules" and deserve wonderful ponds. Good maintenance is required!

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