

## A Carrot, an Egg and Coffee

Here is a modern-day parable – about a carrot, an egg and a cup of coffee. A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. In about 20 minutes, she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and put them in a bowl. Then she ladled out the coffee, pouring it into a bowl.

Turning to her daughter, she asked, “Tell me what you see.” The daughter’s reply: “Carrots, eggs and coffee.”

Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did, and noticed that they were soft. The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich flavor. “What does it mean, mother?” she asked.

Her mother explained that each of these objects faced the same adversity, boiling water. Each reacted differently, however. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. But after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after simmering in the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique. After they were in the boiling pot, they changed the water.

“Which are you?” the mother asked the daughter. “When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean?”

The question is posed to each of us. Which are you? Are you the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and difficulty, do you wilt and become soft and lose your strength? Are you the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Do you have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have you become hardened and stiff? Does your shell look the same, but on the inside you are bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and unreachable heart?

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Or are you like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you.

May you have enough happiness to make you sweet, enough trials to make you strong, enough sorrow to keep you humble and enough hope to make you happy.

--Beecher Hunter