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» You have to reckon with everything - even the good«



Worries are part of our everyday lives and occasionally make our lives quite difficult.

We often paint the future in the darkest colours and feel vindicated when our fantasies actually come true. Why do we so rarely reckon with the good?

Why is it so difficult to trust that it can also turn out well?

Who hasn't experienced it: when the coffee filter falls out of your hand in the morning and all the coffee spills out onto the floor, we often see it as a bad prophecy for the whole day.

My question is: how much room do we give to the possibility that things could turn out well?

In other words: How do we find our way out of the narrowness into the expanse?

How do the paths and experiences of everyday life open up a space of possibility that allows us to hope for more than we realise?

A story out of the everyday life of friend.

The title she chose for this story:

»A shopping bag is just a bag, but it can become a symbol of human kindness!«

My friend had an appointment and wanted to leave quickly by car. But as is not uncommon in winter, even if we often don't like it, the car windows were iced over and she first had to scrape them clean to make sure she had a clear view.

Then she drove off, a little annoyed at her own recklessness. After about five hundred metres, a red warning light flashed in the car. Of course, she said to herself, that fits perfectly into my time schedule. She pulled over, took the car's logbook out of the glove compartment and looked for an explanation for the warning light.

The answer: go to the garage immediately, the tyre pressure needs to be checked.

»Just great«, thought my friend.

She actually wanted to do some shopping and then cheerfully be at a certain place at a certain time.

What should she do now? Go to the garage, cancel the meeting or just drive on quickly and ignore the warning light.

Oh boy, this was not how she had imagined this day would go. Why can't things just go according to plan? Then came one of her typical reactions: »This could only happen to me!«

But my friend is a creative woman and thought about it. She quickly came up with an idea:

There was a shopping opportunity and a car repair shop on the way to her planned meeting. She might even be able to make it to her meeting on time!

After briefly weighing up the options, she switched on the engine and drove off. The red warning light continued to make her uneasy and she drove visibly slower and more tensely, but things were moving in the right direction.

First stage completed, she arrived at the supermarket car park, got out, walked around the car, looked at the tyres and found nothing unusual. She calmed down briefly.

In the store, she quickly gathered a few groceries, paid at the till and loaded her shopping into a paper bag.

She walked quickly across the car park towards her car, but then, the paper bag tore and the entire contents spilled out into the car park.

Can you imagine what was going through my friend's mind?

She felt terrible, bent down, could barely hold back the tears, thought she was being rather childish and hissed to herself:

»Gosh, this always happens to me.«

Into these thoughts a friendly female voice spoke:

»Hello, can I help you?«

My friend looked up, looked into the friendly eyes and said: »Oh, thanks, no, I'm fine« and continued to gather her things.

The woman took out her shopping bag and held it out to my friend:

»I'll give you my bag, if you please.«

My friend looked at the stranger in amazement and said: »Really?«

The woman laughed and said: »Yes, really, just take it!«

My friend's heart warmed and she briefly forgot her anger, her appointment, her shopping and the car's warning light.

She hesitantly took the bag from the woman and said: »Thank you very much, I'm really grateful that you're giving me your bag.«

The woman smiled, wished my friend a nice day, turned round and walked towards the supermarket.

My friend was very pleased and surprised by this kindness, put her shopping in the bag she had been given and admired the beauty of the bag. Would she have given such a beautiful bag to a stranger? With these thoughts in mind, she went to the car, started it and the red indicator light no longer upset her too much. Then she took a quick look at her watch to see if the appointment at the garage was still possible and there was still enough time. My friend was happy about that too.

Do you realise what didn't occur to her here?

When she arrived at the garage, a friendly employee took care of her problem and checked the tyre pressure. He topped up the tyre pressure, wished my friend a safe journey and said goodbye.

My friend thanked him and quickly asked: »Don't I have to pay for this?«

The friendly employee shook his head with a smile and said: »It's part of the service.«

My friend's heart warmed again, she thanked him again for his kindness and said goodbye.

She sat down in the car and the thought occurred to her that something like this could happen to me.

Looking at her watch, she relaxed briefly, took several breaths and enjoyed the experience she had just had.

She arrived on time for her scheduled meeting, with a wonderful bag full of goodies and a heart full of wonderful experiences.

When my friend told me the story, she laughed slightly bashfully and said:

»It's no big deal, really, with the bag, but it delighted me so much that I'm only too happy to tell the story. Perhaps the story is rather mundane and insignificantly small to you.«

This statement really shocked me and touched me in a surprisingly deep way that I couldn't yet explain to myself.

I was a little irritated and said: »Why don't you show me this bag?«

My friend happily got up, picked up her bag and showed it to me. I looked at the bag and it occurred to me: »A shopping bag is just a shopping bag, but it can become a symbol of human kindness.«

Then I turned back to my friend and said:

»Yes, your story is commonplace, but it carries great significance and I am very grateful to you for telling it to me.

I am convinced that everything truly »great« begins in the »small« and can be found in the most ordinary things.

I am convinced that only a few people have the mindfulness to recognise, absorb and take in everyday stories.

I am convinced that the world is not so much lacking in human kindness, as in people who take these stories seriously and live by them.

Think about what this world could look like if more people acted like this woman in the car park.

Think about how much poorer this world would be if you didn't tell this, your story. It does make a difference and more can develop from it.

I can spontaneously think of other stories to go with your story:

The parable of Jesus. The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a man sows in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but as soon as it has grown up, it is bigger than the other plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.

Or the wonderful poem by Dostoyevsky:

The vibrant life,
must be something exceedingly simple
the most commonplace and unconcealed,
something so ordinary,
that we simply cannot believe,
it could be this simple thing,
and that is why we
have passed it by for so many millennia,
without noticing and recognising it.«

I paused my speech briefly and looked lovingly at my friend, then I continued:

»Your story gives me hope and strengthens my confidence!

It enriches my heart and inspires me not to lose faith.

Your story opens up worlds and you are in the best of company!

Your story spurs me on to become more mindful, kinder and more energetic.

Because there is nothing good unless you do it!«

Sylvia Ditt

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