

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A KITE

Adaptation of "The Adventure of a Kite" of Ruth Senter. by P.Ribes, sj.

Intent of the Story

- ✓ *Norms, rules, consistency and predictability and discipline are necessary to lead a fruitful and meaningful life.*
- ✓ *True education – especially education to responsible freedom – requires few and clear norms to be adhered to.*
- ✓ *Liberty is one thing, libertinage quite another.*

THE STORY

I am a kite. Like all kites I love flying. That's why it I feel so bored when forced to remain idle in a box during the long winter. I want to fly.

At last, spring came, how happy I was! Now I could fly, yes, soar the skies, gliding, and drifting along the clouds. I was happy, I longed to fly higher and higher and to reach the highest heavens.

Yet, there was a problem; the string, yes that blooming string! Surely, I could float 1000 feet, even 2000 feet and more...high in the air, looking on herds, trees and houses far below. But, I could go only as far as the string would allow me to.

My heart kept urging me: Higher! Higher! But, how high can a kite fly with a bloomy It always held me back! string that ties him up to someone holding it at the other end? I felt captive, robbed of my freedom, whilst someone was holding me tied on that string! All I wanted was freedom; yes freedom to do what I liked, to fly higher and higher and go wherever I wished. One day in tears, I cried out: I want to be a free kite, to do my own thing, to hold my own string! Then, and only then, I will be really able to fly! Strings and ropes are not meant for free persons, but only for slaves and animals.

Fortunately for me, one day, the wind was fiercer than ever. The string as usual was still holding me captive. The wild wind was swerving me, now to the right, then to the left. That day I climbed higher and higher. Yes, higher than ever. The spool went on unbinding. I said to myself: 'I must have reached at least 2000 feet.' Today, the skies look larger, more beautiful, more challenging!

Then, all of a sudden, a gust of wind caught my master by surprise. The string snapped! I was freed at last from that bloomy string. Finally, I experienced freedom! I was on my own. Yes; I had a few moments of wild freedom. It was exhilarating. I was mad with joy!

But alas! Very soon I found myself on the ground full of bruises and hurts all over!

Thoughts for Reflection

- ✓ Living in society restricts our freedom.
- ✓ We have to accept some constricting, even unpleasant laws and norms, that make life in common possible
- ✓ Every kite needs a 'manja', a string attached to it to keep flying.
- ✓ As long as there was a string, the kite could fly. No string no flying.
- ✓ Minimal discipline is a must. No discipline is a loss.
- ✓ Rules and regulations are a must – nay a nuisance - I would call them lesser evils.
- ✓ Paradoxically, we have to accept a curtailing of our freedom in order to gain freedom
- ✓ Too many rules and laws stifle life, yet no rules and no laws kill it..
- ✓ In education, for consistency and predictability, norms and traditions are a must.
- ✓ Educators and those being educated, have to know, accept and respect certain parameters of freedom and un-freedom.
- ✓ Freedom with minimal limitations is a necessity for education. Unfettered freedom would lead to libertinage.
- ✓ Authoritarianism kills true education as much as anarchy and lawlessness.
- ✓ The best education we can give is education in “responsible freedom”
- ✓ No one can learn responsible freedom unless he is given freedom. Freedom feeds on freedom.
- ✓ Freedom to children, pupils and trainees have to be given progressively.
- ✓ Educating others into freedom is a messy thing. We have to allow others the freedom to do mistakes.
- ✓ To learn how to act in freedom is something like learning to walk. It's a matter of trial and error.
- ✓ Superiors and educators, however, should lovingly and encouragingly hold the strings for a while, to avoid fatal falls or errors.
- ✓ In a way, freedom has to be won by proving oneself capable of using it responsibly.
- ✓ One has to be willing to have his freedom curtailed to prove himself free,
- ✓ Freedom and responsibility are the two side of the same coin.
- ✓ Freedom without accountability would lead to chaos.
- ✓ If one does not want to be held accountable, he should not ask for freedom.
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