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WELLBEING QUICKSTART

The Most Beautiful Thing In The World

Alone. Stranded on a deserted island. The sole survivor of an horrific plane crash. Injured, dehydrated and starving. The hero in our story finally gives in to temptation – opening the washed up parcels of mail addressed to other people around the world.

The first parcel, a box with a volleyball inside (who would become 'Wilson' a famous imaginary friend), and a birthday card. And on the card the message said:

'The most beautiful thing in the world is the world itself'.

That iconic scene from the blockbuster movie 'Castaway' (2000) with Tom Hanks remains one of my all-time favourites. The message in the card being read aloud in this disastrous situation was like the telling of a modern day zen koan – an existential riddle which would become the quest for our hero to solve. Indeed, an existential riddle for us all to solve!

How could *the most beautiful thing in the world be the world itself* when the world is full of so much conflict and adversity? How could we trust that the world would provide for us when we are suffering so much? How could we believe that there was some larger inspired purpose to our lives when unexpected chaos takes over? The *Castaway* movie can be viewed as one giant metaphor for our own lives. In the movie we learn that the world itself is indeed beautiful – the lush tropical landscapes showcasing the natural beauty of nature itself. When was the last time you sat and watched the miracle of the sun rising or setting? When did you last listen to the sound of the wind in the trees?

In *Castaway* we learn that the world does not seek out to harm us personally per se but rather we can end up in harm's way as we make our own choices in life and/or try to bend the will of nature itself. In the movie the injuries and disasters appear to stem from man-made efforts to fight or resist the elements of nature rather than accept and align with them. How much of your struggles right now are driven by fighting with your circumstances rather than accepting them?

In *Castaway* we learn that the universe does provide for us when we change our perspective and can see things differently. By letting go of preconceived ideas of how things should be and intensely studying how things actually are in the present moment (and how they are continually changing), our hero learned how to open coconuts, how to make fire, how to fish and how to find a warm dry cave to shelter from the storms. If you could let go of your preconceived ideas for how things should be and deeply study the present moment (and notice how things are continually changing) what is the universe still providing for you in the midst of your struggles? Food, shelter, warmth, rest... are you able to remain grateful for these things?

Perhaps most importantly of all, in *Castaway* we learn that there is a divine purpose for our lives and becoming reconnected to that purpose inspires our greatest endeavours. After living successfully in nature for a number of years our hero feels the need for deeper connection with others – a need that cannot be fulfilled by his imaginary friend 'Wilson'. And in his contemplation of either continuing his journey alone and somewhat content in what he has, or risking it all to reconnect with those he loved, he chooses love and leaves his tropical paradise (with much grief at what he is giving up) surrendering to the tides and currents trusting in the universe for what happens next... And in the end things work out (although not perhaps the way he thought) and his adventure continues. A chapter is closed with the old story of being driven to succeed in a time pressured and cruel world replaced by the beginning of a new chapter and new story of being curious to learn in an unhurried and loving world. Is it time for you to close an old chapter in your life with an unhelpful story and start a new chapter with a more helpful story?

