The Tree That Forgot to Drink

The Subtle Art of Receiving

There is something we rarely notice about a tree.

- We admire its fruit.
- We enjoy its shade.
- We rest beneath its branches.
- We watch birds build nests among its leaves.

The tree gives generously, asking for nothing in return.

Yet before it can offer any of these gifts, it spends its entire life quietly receiving.

- Rain from the sky.
- Light from the sun.
- Nourishment through its roots.
- The changing seasons.
- The invisible work of the earth beneath it.

The tree does not apologise for receiving.

It simply lives within the rhythm of nourishment and growth.

And perhaps it reminds us of something we sometimes forget.

Only what is nourished can continue to nourish.

Learning to Receive

For many years, I believed that living well meant giving.

- Giving time.

- Giving kindness.
- Giving attention.
- Giving love.

And these remain beautiful expressions of our humanity.

Yet gradually, I began to recognise something I had overlooked.

While I had learned how to give, I had not always learned how to receive.

Not to take.

There is a difference.

Taking grasps.

Receiving welcomes.

I began noticing how often life had been offering me small gifts that I barely allowed myself to experience.

- A kind smile.
- A warm greeting.

Someone sincerely asking, "How are you?"

- A gentle word spoken without expectation.
- A quiet moment of beauty in an otherwise ordinary day.

These gifts had not suddenly appeared.

Many had been there all along.

What was changing was my willingness to receive them.

- To allow them to reach me.
- To recognise that I, too, could be nourished.

The Wisdom of the Roots

But receiving does not mean welcoming everything.

A tree draws nourishment through its roots, yet not everything in the soil contributes to its flourishing.

And perhaps we, too, need discernment.

- Not every opinion deserves a home within us.
- Not every criticism needs to become our identity.
- Not every fear needs to be watered.

Not every expectation needs to become an obligation.

- Sometimes we receive something that nourishes us.
- Sometimes we encounter something that unsettles us.
- And sometimes what arrives is simply not ours to carry.

Awareness allows us to notice the difference.

We need not reject everything uncomfortable.

Nor must we absorb everything that comes our way.

We can remain curious.

We can consider what has arrived.

And we can allow what does not belong to us to pass.

Receiving is not the absence of discernment. It is the freedom to welcome without being compelled to hold on.

When the Fruit Ripens

Perhaps flourishing begins here.

Not in striving endlessly to become a better tree.

Not in measuring how much fruit we have produced.

Not in comparing our branches with those of another.

But in recognising what allows life to remain nourished.

- When we receive kindness without immediately feeling indebted...
- When we enjoy beauty without rushing past it...
- When we welcome affection without believing we must first earn it...
- When we allow ourselves moments of rest without treating them as wasted time...

Something within us may begin to settle.

And from that nourishment, something else may gradually ripen.

Generosity may become less of an obligation.

Compassion may arise with less effort.

Love may be offered more freely, rather than from a sense of duty.

We do not need to force the fruit.

We can tend to the conditions in which it may grow.

The Tree Within

I sometimes wonder how many of us have spent years trying to become fruitful while forgetting to nourish our roots.

- We give.
- We care.
- We carry responsibilities.
- We offer what we can.

And sometimes we become so accustomed to being the one who gives that receiving begins to feel unfamiliar.

Yet the tree reminds us that receiving and giving are not opposing movements.

They belong to the same living cycle.

- The rain nourishes the roots.
- The roots sustain the tree.
- The tree offers its fruit.

And within that fruit are seeds that may nourish another beginning.

Receive → Ripen → Give → Receive…

Perhaps the healthiest tree is not the one that gives the most.

It is the one that remains connected to what sustains its life.

And because it is nourished, it has something to offer.

Perhaps we are not so different.

We, too, are allowed to receive the nourishment from which our giving grows.

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The Living Wisdom of Arriving