

Inner Call Podcast #116 – The value of Observation– April 26 2021

There was, once upon a time, a certain lion who was the king of a large forest. His rule was supreme, but time passes even for kings, and finally the lion's legs did not move so quickly, his claws did not seem so sharp, and he began to tire of having to hunt for his food. He told himself that it was not advancing age but his dignity that made him unwilling to hunt. I am their king, it is the duty of the residents of the forest to serve me, he thought. Surely it is beneath my position to run after a gazelle born yesterday, who insolently insists on trying to escape my royal jaws.

Therefore, after a great deal of thinking, and urged on by the hungry rumbling of his stomach, the lion hit upon a plan: he would let the news be spread that he was ill. Naturally, he said to himself, when the creatures of the forest hear that I am unwell, they will come to pay a visit. Then nothing could be easier than to make a meal of my well-wishers.

Accordingly, the lion retired to a cave, and sent word throughout the forest that he was feeling very poorly. As the lion expected, the creatures of the forest soon began to come to wish him a speedy recovery, but those that did so were never seen again, and the lion felt satisfied that his hunting problem was solved.

The lion's abuse of good manners might have continued until the forest was completely empty, if it were not for the visit of a little fox. The fox was no match for the lion in strength – of course not. But he was clever, as is the nature of foxes, and he was suspicious: he wondered if the lion was really ill, or if there was something else afoot. Stopping well outside the cave, therefore, he called, "May a humble subject enquire, is this the abode of the King of the Forest?"

"Who is there?" called the lion. "Fox, is that you?"

"How perceptive your highness is," replied the fox, "in spite of your illness. Your hearing is not affected, then."

"I would always know your voice," the lion answered. "Even if death were ready to carry me away. But fox, why are you standing so far off? Come closer."

"A humble fox," the fox replied, "is not worthy to approach the greatness of a lion." But he took a few steps toward the mouth of the cave, hoping to learn a little more.

"Still closer," said the lion. "Your visit touches my heart. I wish to have you near me."

The fox took a few steps more, but kept his head lowered, as if he were averting his gaze from the king.

"Come, fox," said the lion, "no more modesty between old friends. Lift up your head and come forward. You have no idea how glad I shall be to have you here beside me. It will be such a comfort."

"So you say, your greatness," said the fox, who had in fact been studying the tracks before the cave. Many paw and hoof prints went into the cave, the fox saw, but not

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a single track came out. "I see that many have come, and none have departed. That cave must be very crowded indeed! There is no room for me," he concluded. "And so," said the fox with a flick of his tail, "I shall take my leave!"

And off the fox ran. And he saw to it that from that very day the lion received no more visitors.