

The Story of The Beautiful Vase

By Dr. Edward Santana-Grace, PhD

A resource to use in coaching TRADING, the 3rd i-Skill,
in the Life Transforming Habits Workbook.
This revision finished March 5, 2015

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The Story of the Beautiful Vase

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Once upon a time there was a Beautiful Vase, the most beautiful in all the world. At least it was the most beautiful in the minds of all those who had ever gazed upon it.

The beautiful vase sat on a foot high, black granite pillar in the middle of a large light hardwood floor the size of a basketball court. There were multiple, large plate glass windows on three sides that let wondrous sunlight flood in from the desert sky outside on the six foot, stunning vase of breathtaking beauty . The dry pink and white rocks reflected in the room their own beautifying colors from the nearby hills, making the beautiful vase even more enchanting.

The vase created calm and hope in all who looked upon it. There was just something peaceful and mysterious about meditating on its beauty sitting atop the black granite.

It inspired poetry.

Often people who were feeling a little down and dark inside or overwhelmed with the worries of life would come and sit before the vase and contemplate its beauty and its mystery. Within a short time of beginning to gaze upon the vase and the darkness seemed to lift, a soft flow of energy would return and a deep calm would descend upon the person beholding the vase.

One day an agitated, gloomy faced, well-dressed middle-aged man came into the museum. His inner worries were so great however that it

blocked him from even allowing the splendor and glory of the vase to work its powers and revive his spirit, inspire hope and create rainbows of future in his mind. In fact, his mind was stewing on past hurts received and the growing anger within him became focused on the vase. He did not really see the vase even though he looked straight at it. Suddenly he pulled out a hammer and before anyone could stop him, he smashed the beautiful vase into bits; tiny fragments were everywhere.

The town was in shock. News spread far and wide. The board of directors of the museum was very upset and blamed the museum director. The newspapers and TV spread the sad news as did the internet. Condolences poured in.

Now there were a very wise old man and an equally wise and equally aged woman known for their talents of restoration. They were brother and sister and both believed in the inner beauty of all things and the force of that inner beauty to create goodness and virtue. They loved that beautiful vase with all their hearts. When they heard of what had happened, they came to the museum, offered their services to restore the beautiful vase, were given permission, gathered all of the pieces and got to work. They had an area closed off to the public where they could apply their skills in a meditative environment. With great wisdom and meditative patience and encouraged by their awareness of the inner power of graceful beauty and the poetry of static motion, they actually restored the vase to its original enchanting beauty.

It seemed a miracle.

News spread far and wide and more people than before came to see the vase and hear the story of the miracle. The vase seemed even more beautiful than before. More and more people spoke of how their lives had been changed by simply sitting quietly before the vase. They spoke of receiving its restored beauty in themselves.

Now the director of the museum was very grateful. However, he was also under great pressure from the Board never to let that happen again. So he suggested that the beautiful vase be put under a protective glass.

The Board rejected this because the beautiful vase had been given to the museum on the condition that it never be protected by any physical barrier, not even by glass. Nothing must hinder direct visual access. Although not allowed to touch the vase, the people were to be able to get close enough to enjoy the details of the beautiful vases stunning design without refraction from glass or hindrance for other physical objects or structures. Of course, they could rope the Beautiful Vase off as at certain distance as one needs to be back at least five feet to gaze upon the entire vase, itself a masterpiece of form.

The donor laid down her conditions because she knew that if approached with meditative simplicity, the vase's graceful and enchanting beauty would take root within the beholder and would inspire the vibrant poetry of life.

Benches were also to be placed on all sides at the appropriate distance. A meditative approach was what was required. Beauty is enhanced—as all contemplatives know—by establishing an appropriate distance between the beheld and the beholder. Consequently, touching the vase was strictly forbidden and the clear lines marked on the floor were not to be crossed by the viewers.

To respect all these conditions, the Director had metal detectors installed at the museum entrance door and breathed a temporary sigh of relief. But within weeks, his fear of something happening drove him to put in a super sensitive, laser detector system. To respect all the conditions of the donor, he installed the sensors in the ceiling and on

the floor. Everyone had a clear view of the vase and he managed to get a five foot parameter approved as the benches had always been between seven and ten feet away anyhow. If someone got within five feet of the priceless vase, a piercing, high-pitched sound would warn the person and alert everyone throughout the museum. If anyone strayed another six inches closer, they would be receive an stinging electric shock to avert them to step back; they were too close to the beautiful vase and must take a step back.

However, after another month, the director began to toss and turn in his bed and awful images of the vase being fragmented again filled his dreams when he did sleep. His fear of the vase being broken again and of him losing his job kept him tossing and turning. One night he awoke with an idea that gave him some peace. He presented it to the Board of Directors. Being somewhat fearful themselves, they bought into his plan.

In the next few days, the director hired three teams, each composed of four specialized guards. He had them further trained to react with lightening speed should anyone ever continue toward the vase and cross the four foot mark. There were plenty of donors willing to cover the costs. Everyone wanted to protect the vase; it was invaluable to the life of the community.

These guards were so trained that they could react and pin a person to the ground in the twinkling of an eye. Their reaction time is reported to have been about $\frac{2}{9}$ of a second. In that timeframe an intruder could not even get within two feet of the vase once the alarm was activated.

Warning signs were posted everywhere. The five and four foot limits were well marked on the floor. People were pleased with the arrangements. Even people from afar accepted the high level of

security as they too understood the value of the beautiful vase and the need to protect it for generations to come.

In the mean time, word continued to spread about the miracle restoration by the skilled wisdom of the contemplative brother and sister. Groves of people began to flock to the museum not only to see the miracle but to participate in its beauty and be restored themselves. Even the cynical news media, stunned by the vase's beauty, proclaimed its miraculous effect and circulated its images throughout the land. The groves became flocks and more and more people were moved to think poetically and live life as never before.

This wonderful, spring time of visitors went on for months until one day, a lady came who was filled with gloom, worry and resentment. She hoped that by gazing upon the vase she too would be restored and the joy of life would return to her. But she wasn't and her previous joy did not return. No poetry came into her heart.

In fact, the beauty of the vase "out there" only created more anger "inside" her. However she decided to give it one more try in a week. The week came and the visit happened but she experienced no poetry in her heart. She became enraged that others spoke so highly of this vase. "Cheap old vase anyhow," she said to herself with a tone of deep rage in her thoughts. A violent urge to destroy the vase gripped her. She started to move near to the topple vase. Suddenly she stopped. **[reader pause for a full five seconds]**. She realized the guards would stop her.

So she plotted. She decided to get a clear plastic hammer to get past the metal detectors. She designed special moves to distract and outwit the guards. She practiced her moves and became quite good. She now felt ready to rush past the laser beams and smash the vase. Smash that hoax that does not inspire poetry. Of course, her

bitterness and unregulated anger never allowed her to really gaze upon the vase, but that didn't matter as she moved closer and closer to the moment of assault.

She was sure that not even the piercing noise nor the electric jolt could stop her. She believed that she could get close enough to get in one powerful whack, enough to topple the vase and the long fall to the marble floor would do the rest. The guards would be too slow to stop. Moreover, she was dressed elegantly but plainly to further deceive them. Moving swiftly, the noise piercing her ears, the electricity burning her shoulders, she launched herself across the four foot mark, plastic hammer ready to strike. The super alert guards grabbed her before she got within two feet; in less than 5/9th of a second she was squirming in pain on the ground with a dislocated shoulder.

As they dragged her out, one guard with swift twists broke three of her fingers to increase her pain. Almost unseen and with great skill two other guards kicked her in the ribs breaking three ribs on the right side and four on the left side of her rib cage. She was squirming in agony but they continued to pull chunks out of her hair as they hurled her out the door onto the concrete outside. They spit upon her as they waited for the police. The End.

Coach's Instructions for Teaching the Beautiful Vase

When you have finished reading the story, have the participants answer the questions on the handout you will give them, Afterwards have them share their reflections.

Whatever they say is fine. After the discussion, tell them:

The author believes that almost all reflections are "good" as long as there is an underlying value driving the person's reflections. He did however have a specific reason for creating the story, which you can read after the fourth question. Make sure you read the age appropriate versions. Please look at the age range at the top of the Author's reason for writing the Story of the Beautiful Vase the way he did.

Moreover, if you have not taught the negotiated timeout and the Stealth Timeout. You will need to do that. If it is with your own child you will absolutely need to teach them these two skills and also give them permission to call a self-timeout when you are in the process of correcting them.

TRADING was taught to the parents of 5th graders in 2005 who had learned TREADING, The Stealth Timeout, REST and needed only to develop a strategy with their parents regarding the Negotiated Timeout. It proved to be very beneficial to the families.

Here is a more typical example of what happened when both the parent and the 10 year olds were both trained and had developed a Negotiated Timeout.

Parent A would start to correct child B and the child feeling overwhelmed would give a signal that the child needed a time out so as to center her/him-self. Most of the children had opted to go to their rooms and lay on their bed or be alone for about 20 minutes. After that period the child would come back and ask the parent to correct them. The children had been taught that it is good to get the insight from parents as they are concerned with their future.

The Story of the Beautiful Vase

1. What did you think about the ending to the story?

2. How would you have ended the story?

3. What would you have done to protect the beautiful vase from being shattered?

4. Why do you think the story ended the way it did? What point do you think the author wanted to make?

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The Story of the Beautiful Vase is a narrative about them. For the author, each person is a beautiful vase. It is however also an analogy about the beast in anger. When you regulate your anger, it is your friend and value-centered. However, when we do not regulate our anger, it turns beastly and ugly; we act just like those guards toward that woman. We overreact and with incredible violence.

Every day we either act or we risk acting as the guards did to the lady. Every day we can become destroyers of a beautiful vase in the twinkling of an eye. My experience is that far too often I am a hammer wielding vase basher.

REMEMBER: We learned that regulated anger is not only value driven but remains value-filled, filled with the incredible dignity and worth of each person—yourself and the other.

However, in less than a second, we can go from experiencing the power and force of anger for good and for awareness of our values to become a value destroyer and beastly toward others. Beastly anger, inhuman anger, can overwhelm us quickly if we are not trained to regulated our anger and keep it our friend. Ugly, brut anger overwhelms your appropriate anger and pushes you to chip, break, or shatter a beautiful vase; that is, to degrade another person in word, deed or "un-repented thoughts."

The wise and patient man and woman who restored the shattered vase to its original beauty are those who believe in their own Hidden Treasure, the Beautiful Vase within them, and within the other. That is why they could restore the beautiful vase.

Often we do not fully realize that no one can really shatter our beautiful value, our inner value and worth. If we firmly believe in the Hidden Treasure in us, the Beautiful Vase within us, no one can harm us. However, if we do not fully believe in being unbreakable and that no one can take our dignity and worth away, we live in fear being of being shattered into pieces. I call this fragmentation fear.

Motivated by fear of fragmentation, we develop highly sensitive sensors so as not to allow anyone to hurt us, to shatter us, to create that terrible pain of experiencing ourselves flying apart or being crushed into tiny pieces.

So whenever anyone gets too close with nasty words or anything that seems like it is going to chip, break or shatter our beautiful vase, we react with extreme vigor like the guards in the beautiful vase.

However, when you believe who you truly are, you can restore your vase when others try to chip, break, or shatter it.

In fact, you can so believe in this truth about yourself that while you will feel the attack and the threats of others; your vase will remain forever beautiful and will inspire poetry in others.

And even if you do mess up and strike back, you can learn from that mistake, apologize, heal and grow and become an even more awesome person who does not strike back. Instead of striking back, you can have compassion on the person attacking you and thereby help restore—re-center—that attacker.

Not only will your Beautiful Vase remain intact but you shall be in a position to do all in your power to help that person re-center and believe again—or for a first time—in their own undeniable dignity, absolute worth and inner beauty. This can happen because they will experience someone whose actions and words convey exactly that message to that person.

Become Aware!

A Leader Needs To Be Aware of The Sequences Of Rightful Anger / Reactive-Beastly Anger / Thwarted-Depressed Anger revealed in The Story of the Beautiful Vase

The Story of the Beautiful Vase

Draw and Color the Story you have just experienced.

1. The Beautiful Vase: *I am a beautiful vase. I have undeniable dignity, absolute worth, and inner beauty. Without wavering, I believe every word as truth about me.*

2. The Fear of Fragmentation of the Beautiful Vase: *For whatever reason, and perhaps for many reasons, deep in my heart I fear that someone will attempt to break my beautiful vase.*

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The Story of the Beautiful Vase

Draw and Color the Story you have just experienced.

3. Good/Rightful/ (Beautiful) Anger: *I have undeniable dignity, absolute worth, and inner beauty and no one may ever demean me. You have hurt me. Stop! Even if you do not, I will not become ugly and hurt back. I have inner power.*

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The Story of the Beautiful Vase

Draw and Color the Story you have just experienced.

4. Ugly, Aggressive Anger = Hurt Other: *You demeaned me so I will demean you. I will get revenge. I will stop you hurting me by hurting you. My hurting back shows I no longer really believe in my Undeniable Dignity, Absolute Worth and Inner Beauty and have lost touch with my true self.*

5. Ugly, Weak Anger = Hurt Self: *Those words hurt me. But you might be right about me. I should be demeaned. I definitely don't have Undeniable Dignity, Absolute Worth and Inner Beauty. I will never be worth anything. I have lost hope for a better future; it's dark inside me. I have no energy; I despair.*

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The Story of the Beautiful Vase

Draw and Color the Story you have just experienced.

6. Reflecting on You, the Beautiful Vase, and Remembering Your Inner Beauty: *I begin anew. I mediate upon the truth that I have undeniable dignity, absolute worth, and inner beauty. I am a beautiful vase created to do good and inspire the poetry of life. I am renewed.*

7. Remembering the Pain from the Fear of the Fragmentation of me, the Beautiful Vase: *I recall the pain of being demeaned and of not believing in my awesome undeniable dignity, absolute worth, and inner beauty. I feel an ugly force and a gloomy darkness trying to destroy my beautiful vase.*

Become Aware!

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The Story of the Beautiful Vase

Draw and Color the Story you have just experienced.

8. See and Feel the Other's Inner Fear, Pain, and Blindness: *But then I remember that my inner pain and turmoil reflects their real inner life. My heart goes out to them for I know that no one can demean another unless they are blind to their own awesome undeniable dignity, absolute worth, and inner beauty and, in some way, are suffering inside.*

9. Act in harmony with your own Undeniable Dignity, Absolute Worth and Inner Beauty toward the other: *Recalling my own awesomeness and their pain, blindness and depression, I act according to what my heart, my awesome undeniable dignity, absolute worth, and inner beauty tells me to do to restore the other's fragmented vase.*

Rejoice!

A Leader Needs to Experience Rejoicing in Having Transformed Reactive Anger/Depression into Insight into self, Nerve-to-live fully and Generosity toward others. It is one of the greatest leadership and human achievements possible in life.

The Story of the Beautiful Vase

Draw and Color the Experience you have just had.

10. Rejoice Rejoicing: *I have transformed anger into gentleness toward the offender: I have manifest my rootedness in my undeniable dignity, absolute worth, and inner beauty, which is among the highest achievements in life. I am a beautiful vase even who inspired poetry when under attach. I have great hope for the future.*