

THE GOLDEN EAGLE

A man found an eagle's egg and put it in the nest of a backyard hen. The eaglet hatched with the brood of chicks and grew up with them.

All his life the eagle did what the backyard chickens did, thinking he was a backyard chicken. He scratched the earth for worms and insects. He clucked and cackled. And he would thrash his wings and fly a few feet into the air.

Years passed and the eagle grew very old. One day he saw a magnificent bird far above him in the cloudless sky. It glided in graceful majesty among the powerful wind currents, with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings.

The old eagle looked up in awe. "Who's that?" he asked.

"That's the eagle, the king of the birds," said his neighbor, "He belongs to the sky. We belong to the earth - we're chickens."

So, the eagle lived and died a chicken, for that's what he thought he was.

∞∞∞∞

THE DUCKLING

The Sufi saint Shams of Tabriz tells the following story about himself:

I have been considered a misfit since my childhood. No one seemed to understand me. My own father once said to me, "You are not mad enough to be put in a madhouse and not withdrawn enough to be put in a monastery. I don't know what to do with you."

I replied, "A duck's egg was once put under a hen. When the egg hatched, the duckling walked about with the mother hen until they came to a pond. The duckling went straight into the water. The hen stayed clucking anxiously on land. Now, dear father, I have walked into the ocean and find in it my home. You can hardly blame me if you choose to stay on the shore."

From "The Song of the Bird" by Anthony de Mello

Is your attention identified with your false identity, or do you know your true identity? Can you bring the two into relationship with one another? Does it mean leaving your chicken nature behind? Or does this relationship result in radical transformation of your whole being that learns to fly? What anxiety have you felt in moving ahead on your journey and it meaning leaving others behind because they have not yet learned to swim? What does it mean about you? What does it mean to leave people behind - does it mean rejection, not being in relationship anymore? Or can it mean something different?

Get Anthony de Mello's C.D.'s *Waking Up to Life* and *The Satellite Retreat*. Highly entertaining, deeply illuminating, essential help on the path.