

## The Carrot, the Egg and the Coffee Bean - A Parable

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November 23, 2022



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**Coach Myrna--November 23, 2022**

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### **The Carrot, the Egg & the Coffee Bean**

A preteen girl went to her mother and complained about how hard life was for her. Between the challenges at school, with her siblings and her friends, she was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed that, as soon as she figured out one problem, a new one arose. The mother said, "Come with me to the kitchen."

She asked the daughter to fill three pots with water and place them on the stove, turning the settings to high. Soon the pots came to a boil.

- In the first, the mother placed carrots.
- In the second, she placed eggs.
- In the last, she placed ground coffee beans.

Then she said, "Let's check these in fifteen minutes. While we wait, let's make some brownies." After fifteen minutes, she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots and the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee into a mug. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell

me, what do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the young girl replied. The mother asked her to examine the carrots. She did and noticed they were soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to add some milk and sugar to the coffee and take a sip. The daughter smiled as she smelled its rich aroma and tasted its rich flavor. The daughter then asked, "What does it mean, Mom?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity—boiling water—but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting through the boiling water, it became hardened inside.

The ground coffee beans were unique, however. While they were boiling away in the pot, they changed the water.

"Then the mother asked, "Which one do you want to be? When challenges arise, how will you respond--as a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean? I'd like to hear what you think about this as we enjoy some of the brownies together."

**Food for thought for each of us?:**

Which one am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong but, with pain and adversity, do I falter, become soft, and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit but, after a hardship or some harsh criticism, does my shell look the same, yet on the inside am I bitter, with a stiff spirit and a hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the bean's fragrance and flavor. If I am like the bean, when things are at their worst, do I get better and change the situation around me? When the hours are darkest and trials are their hottest, am I able to elevate and transform the situation?

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