

THE PARABLE OF THE PENCIL

Once upon a time there lived an expert craftsman. All who observed his achievements would stand in awe and admiration of his abilities. His attention to detail was especially striking. He was skilled...very skilled indeed. And no one could recall a time when the craftsman was not in his magnificent workshop creating. "Absolute perfection" hardly seems adequate to describe his technique.

And so we find him at his work, as always, building a most unique commodity-pencils! Yes, pencils! Day after day, pencil after pencil, the craftsman expertly and meticulously creates his prized possessions. An endless parade of variations of colors, shapes, and sizes, each is produced with purpose, with reason, and with intent. Nothing but the finest materials are to be found on the storage shelves. Hand selected clear cedar wood for the pencil itself, the purest, costliest graphite for the "lead" center core, and sheets of a composite, rubber like substance, from which erasers will be painstakingly cut. Containers of paint, every color and hue imaginable, line one wall. Each handmade pencil is one-of-a-kind. No two are ever alike. Each is unique by specific design, composed for a specific task, a tool for the craftsman to use as he pleases.

What a wondrous collection of pencils he has. His pencil box contains every color of the rainbow. Some pencils look almost brand new. Others have quite apparently seen much use, and are somewhat worn down. Every pencil he has ever created is here. You see, his pencils were never created for anyone but himself. They are his to use as he wishes and enjoy forever. These pencils have but one purpose. The sole reason for their existence rests completely in the craftsman. He designs, creates, and uses them as he sees fit. He knows each intricately and completely, and uses his possessions carefully. None ever fall to the side and become lost. Gingerly, at the end of each day, the pencils are collected and placed in the pencil box for safe keeping, awaiting another day of service to their master.

Before placing each new pencil in the pencil box, the craftsman would thoughtfully and warmly speak to his pencil.

I call you P-E-N-C-I-L. Pencil. I do so, that you will remember who you are, and your purpose here.

"P" stands for provision. Pencils have very few real needs. But you are my creation, and I love you. I will provide for your needs. I will provide for all your needs. And out of my goodness and generosity, I will give you even more. Enjoy being a pencil, don't worry about what you need from day to day. I will provide.

"E" reminds you to expect something. You will experience a painful sharpening from time to time. So don't be surprised when it happens. It is necessary. Without it, you will become of very little use to me. It is my desire that

you learn through these difficult times. I will only allow it for a short time. And you will be amazed at the how much better you will be for the experience.

“N” should bring to your mind that you have no great value in yourself. The cost of the materials that make up your physical self is negligible. Your real value is in how well you respond to the hand that holds you. I made you for my purposes. Go where I take you. Move where I desire. I am the true artist. And from my vantage point, I can see the whole picture much better than you.

“C” is for correction. You have the potential to correct many of your mistakes. It may turn your world upside down to do so, but the end result is worth the effort. So correct what is in your ability to correct.

“I” represents what is really important. Remember that it is not size , or shape, or color that tells the world what you are. What is most important about any pencil is what is on the inside. That core deep down inside you.

“L” tells you to leave your mark. Others may come along behind you, and they will be looking to see where you have been. Wherever you go, leave your mark, clear, clean and precise. It is what I created you to do. So do it well.

And the craftsman and his pencils lived happily ever after.

THE END