

Don Samuel

I had a friend whom I admired for his personal qualities: affectionate, disciplined, seeking intelligent skills to grow; apprehensive of using artificial elements to base his life on such as alcohol or drugs; with love for God and a loyal friend. I knew about his family, where almost the opposite existed: no affection, disinterest in growth, apathy and addictions. It didn't fit; my friend's character was diametrically opposed to his family of origin. One day we spent some time together and I asked him,

C.- *"Peter where did you get your character from, where did you learn or acquire your qualities?"*

P.- *"I don't understand what you mean." He answered*

C.- *"Well I can see how you relate to your family and how you always are so open for your own personal growth, I've known people from your work and they said in how high esteem they hold you, I see your love for God and eagerness of knowing more and more about life and how to become a better person, husband and father. You are sensible and strong. On the other hand you often comment about your family of origin, your father's addiction and detachment and your mother's emotional distance, I know your brothers and they fit in with your parents shape. But you! Where did you get these qualities from?"*

P.- *"I don't know. I never thought about it. I don't really know if I understand what you really mean.."*

C.- *"I think you do! But may not be easy to pin point on one person at this moment. Is there anyone person or people in your history that gave you time, or books to read or some direction in life?"*

P.- *"Yes, now that you mention it I remember Don Samuel."*

C.- *"Who was he?"*

P.- *"He was the father of my friend when I was about 5 years old, I used to go to his house. Woe! This is the first time I remember Don Samuel since I was little. My friend he didn't have a happy family either and they were a poor as we were but Don Samuel used to spend a lot of time with us: he taught me how to play soccer, how to save money and he gave me a lot of time and love. Yes, it was Don Samuel the person who planted in me the seed of knowledge. Thank you for bringing his name to my awareness."*

Don Samuel was one of the more important pillars for Peter, even though he didn't remember him.

Life often tricks people by not providing the best parents they need to develop in life. Even though I could not argue that parents may be the best they could be and try the best they can I need to acknowledge that is often not enough, starting with myself as a father. What I found in my practice and we can find in reading about people in history or just "common" people like you and me around us, is that there is often not relation at all between the parents we see and how the children developed. This comment includes children who were able to transcend their parents in life, the motive of this article, and children who due to individual choices became behind in their development in relation to their parents.

The concept that our children are not our children but the children of society is not new. We know that our children belong to a wider social sphere, even though the responsibility of bringing up children is basically, specially on the first years of life, on their parents. It is expected that society would provide with social support, schools, business to satisfied diverse needs as well as protection including police and fire brigades. In the journey of life we meet many people, not all of them may create an impression in our life, some do for growth or destruction. Contemporary psychology and counselling techniques often based their attention and justify or explain people behaviour based on destructive relational experiences

but not much time is given to people who through their meeting with us made us better people. This people are the Don Samuel's in our history.

The possibility of searching for people who make a difference in our life for good, on a small or big scale is what unites and reconciles us with society and history. It is not only what I learn, it is also the origin of it, where and how I learn it, people who knowingly, or not, gave us values, teaching, information that we're able to utilise now. Every time I use a screwdriver, for example, I remember my grandfather who taught me how to use it when I was 4 -5 years old. The first experience where we acquire a knowledge, or skill marks an important moment that has the impact of an imprint.

I remember the first time I directed a big group using the method I was training with, Psychodrama. It was in Puerto Rico in front of more than 1000 people where I was presenting Spirituality and Psychodrama. The presentation was a success, every thing went right, and people liked it, learned from it and gave me a wonderful response. I was standing in front of those people and suddenly I saw sitting in the front row all my teachers, starting with my father, mother, and people that contributed to my growth. It was a sense of richness. Some of the people sitting there were physically dead but they were alive in spirit. The energy, the life they shared with me kept them alive for me. When returned to Buenos Aires, my city of origin, I called them to say thank you.

This reminds me of my father talking with huge respect about his teachers and his ability of focusing on the rich parts they shared with him and leaving aside and separating out those parts that were not very encouraging, progressive or healthy.

In our occidental culture we have lost sense of continuity. It looks like every thing starts and finishes with ourselves. We cannot capitalise on other's learning processes and of course on other's mistakes. There is not a sense of parenting of children. It is no surprise that one of the major difficulties in our society is loneliness. There is no much emotional connection with others.

When I teach on this topic of looking for our teachers and people who made a difference in our life I found that many students or participants in the courses feel confused and they don't know how to relate to it. They have received the opposite teachings and experiences from their parents, such as `do not trust any one, watch up!, be careful!. With this lack of trust in people the teaching of "everything is in YOURSELF; "YOU are the star of the universe", "the power is within YOU", "YOU don't need anyone else", became very popular. Why, if this is true everyone is, even though they don't want to accept it publicly, are looking for affection and to share life with. The reason is that I need the other to grow.

The bad news is that often the people who "should" naturally be the one who give me light such as parents, extended family, own country and teachers where not there.

The good news is that "Don Samuel's" exist and that the creation provides us with alternative ways of life given experiences with which we can become the person and people we were created for. What a blessing for those who were able to have life given parents, teachers as well as Don Samuel's.

Books of wisdom talk about teachers. The film "*Meeting with Remarkable Men*" depicts the search of a man for wisdom. We know of the time of the Greek philosophers, how much people travelled to spend time with the teachers. The Bible also expresses that wisdom is in the number of advisers we have and ... said "if I see far is because I stand on the shoulders of giants".