

The Becoming Years

## **Chapter 2**

### **WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT EVERYONE YOU HAVE NEVER MET**

Your childhood is gone. You have a world full of people before you. People you have yet to meet.

So ask yourself this curious question: What can I know about people I have never met?

Picture yourself about to walk up to a person. You are about to be introduced. As you approach, should your mind be blank, ready to deal with whatever is said and offered to you?

No. You are going to approach this new person, poised, and keenly aware of some very personal things about this human being you know quite well.

So what can you personally know about a person you have never met, or even heard about?

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You think the quick honest answer is nothing?  
Really ?

Wrong. You do know - a lot - some important very personal stuff - of which you both are acutely aware.

Look at yourself. Not too long ago, you were born. You first saw light. You were then introduced to a nice person, who said she was your mother. Then there should have been someone right after that, who said he was your father.

You had nothing to do with choosing these people. It was done for you.

You had nothing to do with choosing the place on this planet where all this happened; but you are stuck with the locale of where it did.

You did not choose it.

The time, the year, the month, the day when you began, was imposed on you.

So here you are, living with people you didn't choose, and you have been put in a place on this planet that you also did not choose. No consultation about the timing.

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Worse. You were given a body off the rack. No chance to choose skin color, curly hair or not, tall or short? No choice. Sex? What you see is what you got. No consultation. None.

How fair is this! Everyone is equally treated this abruptly, and then bulldozed over the edge of nothingness into life.

What can you say? Well say truthfully what you do know: that we all wake up to the reality of living in the same boat - called "Zero Choice".

Anyone of us could have had, what befell to some other person. Think about it. The entire body platform and social platform on which your person begins to exist, is something upon which you were plopped - just dropped. So for what you got, you cannot be blamed. Nor can you be praised for what you were born with, as your own achievement.

This is the first fact of life to be learned about ourselves, and to be understood about other people as we meet them for the first time. They have had the exact same unruly experience of being thrust into a body and into unchosen conditions of living, as you have experienced.

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We know this about each other when meeting for the first time, and mutually glancing at our faces and bodies.

So we do not blame ourselves for our condition. For the same reason, we cannot blame other people for theirs.

This means we approach each other, especially the people we don't know, with this pre-knowledge and awareness: that we have in common this same confrontation of dealing with the brute force experience of coming to life with conditions imposed.

This is what we very personally know about every person we have not met.

We should approach each other with this awareness, because it is truth. In this awareness, we owe each other an immediate empathy of understanding when we see physical characteristics that are usually quick to be derided, like being really short in height, or having a large nose, or weird looking eyes and ears, anything not ordinary. We cannot demean each other for this.

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On meeting for the first time, we have to control our reaction with empathy - a sympathetic understanding of each other's imposed reality, a very mutual reality.

Think about this. We have no choice as to how we are going to look and appear to other people. Nor they to us. So when we meet an odd appearing person, not pleasant to look at, we get real. We back off any demeaning dismissal. We understand that the "chance of life" has awarded this individual a difficulty.

And when you see a person's family condition or social status, you will know this did not arise or begin out of personal choice. It is forced on everyone as to who they begin living with, and where on the planet in the beginning of life, they will be growing up.

So let's give reality a break - and understand this. Every one you will ever meet has had this same no-choice tumble-into-life experience.

No discussion, no questions, and Boom, you are suddenly someone being somewhere.

Then once the fire of life is lit and burning, we all have to deal with the same choices. Though surrounded by people, we are left to ponder: who else is going to

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know us? Whom are we going to know? Here we have at least some choice as to when and how (in what manner).

Reflect slowly on all this - because what has happened so rudely to you - no choices allowed - has also happened in the same personal, intimate, abrupt way to every single individual you will ever meet.

Being so arbitrarily brought to life is something people just don't talk to each other about.

Nor do they talk about their mutual awareness that each of us lives in this same hollowed empty cavern looking and waiting for answers: how come this happened to me, and what's next? and Why?

This haunting wait for answers, and seeking the 'why' of life, is also a mutual consciousness you have with each human individual you will ever encounter.

If you carry this level of awareness as an empathetic mindset when you meet new people, your approach will be one of a willing acceptance of differences, no matter how dramatic they may be. Your initial uncritical stance before them will be sensed, and seen as your direct and personal interest in them,

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replacing and warding off any hostility or anxiety of acceptance.

This certainty of something to be mutually understood, is a “joining” approach to meeting new people. People easily sense when a person meeting them has a stance of sharing a mutual empathy, and they react naturally with relaxed interest - being less wary.

Because you make yourself conscious of everyone's beginning personal truth, you can bring to the moment of meeting a calmness and directness that invites an honest mutual awareness. As a consequence, some observers will think your ability to relate to people is charismatic. Something hard to define. Your awareness would be the reason. So let it happen.

Try to separate the person from the body you see. And speak to the person, not to their physical appearance.

Hard to do? Yes. But you do it because you possess this discernment of basic truth. And you show it in your demeanor. And it is called 'class'.

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One day you will pass by a dock. You will see some wretched looking worker bent over loading cargo. He looks like he is from a dark and distant country. How could you, glancing at him, have the slightest knowledge of what goes on in his unspoken consciousness. But you do. He was assaulted with the same sudden circumstances of an unchosen birth, as you were. He has the same nuclear fire in his belly that uniquely says "I am", as you do. Physically, you could not appear to be more different. Yet on a personal level, you have much in common.

Each of you were just shoved into the same river of conscious existence, plunging over the same waterfalls of time.

If communication could occur on this level, there would be a very mutual understanding. No conscious human being is beyond the draw of an offer of this understanding personal approach from another human person, such as yourself.

Meeting strangers, however briefly, and wordlessly contemplating them with this primal understanding, has intuitive consequences. It creates an initial perception of empathy; induces a natural engagement; and invites in a blink, a natural willingness to like each other.

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Sooner or later, everyone picks up a standard way of pleasantly meeting new people. There is a passing show of pretended interest. No serious thinking.

But you can be different. You can meet a new person with a deliberate pause (however slight) upon just meeting. A moment to engage your awareness that you are now meeting a human being just as puzzled as you are to be alive. This is the pause that connects - without a word. it gives space for a mutual understanding to engage.

The pause is a poise that can speak volumes.

All we really have on this planet are each other.

Pleasantly meeting new people, with a good natured "hello and goodbye" is usually taken to mean nothing. But you are young, and you are allowed to be different. And you can pause to be personally genuine in an instant meeting, where this is not normally done by older people, numbed by the routine of living.

Worth a try - because It is hard not to comment and observe that:

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It is astonishing what can happen in an instant of mutual understanding - between two people freshly meeting.

It was a mere song in an old musical play (*Hello Dolly*) that evoked in a simple lyric the ultimate in our seeking: "It only takes a moment to be loved a whole life long."