

The Kindness Of Water

by Kevin Neece

After you drink, does the value of the water change?

This thought occurred to me the other day for one reason or another as I thought about what it is like to be very hungry or very thirsty. You feel as though you'll eat three meals, and you usually end up eating maybe a bit more than usual, but not much. No matter how hungry you are, approximately the same amount of food is all it takes to fill your stomach. The same is true when a person is very thirsty. You can think of nothing but water, and your mouth feels as though it will never regain moisture. You thirst as though it is unquenchable, but if you drink too much too fast, you'll make yourself sick on water before you quench your thirst. But there's another level inside that process: the change in the water's value.

When you're dying of thirst, all you can think about is water. When you finally get it, your eyes sparkle; you eagerly unscrew the lid or pull the glass toward your face. When the water first hits your tongue, the experience consumes your body and mind. There is nothing else you can think about except that wonderful sensation. At that point, you begin to relax. The alarms stop going off inside your head and your heart rate slows down. Your whole body cools off, and an enormous sense of peace fills you.

Slowly, as you drink, you return to normal. You begin to see beyond the water, to hear others speaking to you, and even to respond. Gradually, it becomes less and less necessary to drink. Your gulps become sips, and those sips become less and less frequent. You may or may not drink the entire contents of the bottle or glass. You regain your energy and your peace of mind solely because of the water, and even as you do, your liquid hero takes a less and less prominent place in your mind.

Eventually, the need for water, though still present as always, is no longer so immediately felt. And though you have only water to thank for this transition, water eventually becomes the furthest thing from your mind. You may walk on and even throw away the bottle or mindlessly set the glass somewhere and have no idea nor care to think where you put it. What was once so prized, so treasured, is now for the better part put away from the mind or even made disposable because it has done its job. Has the water lost its value? Or have you too quickly forgotten that it constantly supplies your need and sustains your life?

If I were water, I might dry myself up at such treatment. We should be glad, then, that water is selfless, patient and kind.

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