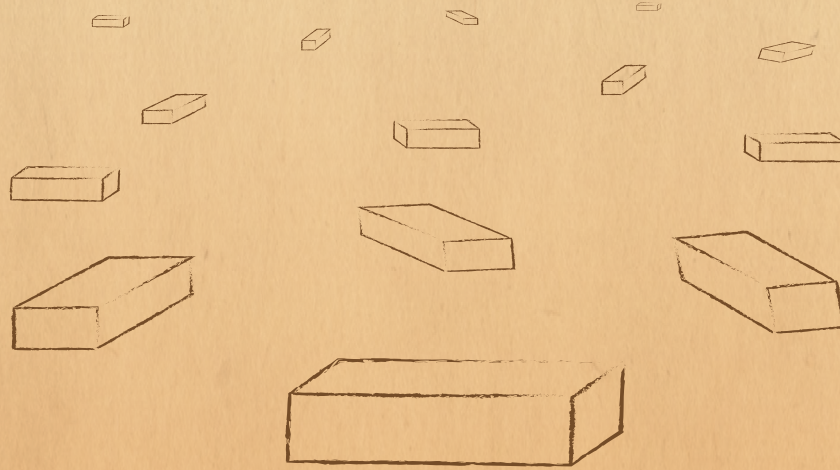


The Master Builder



The Mess

On the fourth day, the three friends came upon a field scattered with bricks. They saw a young person rambling around the field aimlessly, talking to herself and tossing her bricks randomly about the place. “Hello”, they called to her. “Oh, hello”, she replied with a puzzled look, as if they had appeared from nowhere. Utterly distracted by her own thoughts, she hadn’t noticed them approach.

“How are you?” they asked in unison. “How am I?” she pondered as she truly observed herself for the first time, her scattered thoughts coming into focus. As awareness allowed her attention to return to the present moment, she looked around her and realised that without organisation or direction, her life had become quite a mess. “Em, it seems I’m disheartened and disappointed!”

There were small piles of bricks and unfinished structures all around. She had been working, but none of her effort had borne fruit. “I was going to do something over there, and then I changed my mind to do something else, and then I got distracted again.” I have lots of ideas, which I start, but I can’t seem to see them through to the end!” “I realise now that I was afraid to finish any of my projects, for that would open me to criticism.”

“While each was still a work-in-progress, I could simply tell people it wasn’t yet done”. “Once finished, I would have to admit that it was the best I could do.” Though even her incomplete works showed the girl was talented and ambitious, her own inner-voice was critical and she expected others to judge her as harshly.

“We understand, replied the three. We too have feared criticism and denied our gifts to the world, but we have changed”. “We are creating a path with a definite destination and we’d love if you would join us”, said the woman. We are doing this for ourselves and for each other so we will certainly see it through”.

“Where does this path lead?”, asked the girl, in need of some guidance and uncertain of how much she should trust the three. “Somewhere better”, they replied with comforting smiles. “Perhaps if we were to help you organise your scattered bricks, and share our stories, that might help you make your decision?”

The four worked together, talking as they gathered the bricks. As they connected, they realised that, despite their age differences, they were alike and held similar hopes for the future. After a time, the girl understood that working with others would help her to focus her efforts. She would also be glad of the support and encouragement they would offer. “Ok, I’ll join you and we can add my bricks to this path”, she said, glad for the opportunity to use her moments meaningfully and with purpose, leaving her messy life behind.