

"PAY NO ATTENTION TO THAT MAN BEHIND THE CURTAIN!"

From time to time I make references to *The Wizard of Oz*. It is one of my favorite shows and, being a Kansas boy myself, the tornado which "takes young Dorothy to Oz" was at times more than just a fantasy. I remember many times as a child being herded, along with my cousins, to my GrandParents' basement as the small town's tornado siren blared the warning to take cover immediately! There were times when it was terrifying.

But--this article isn't about tornadoes. Hopefully, in a not too rambling or round about way, I can make a point using *The Wizard of Oz*. Our Studio Manager, Benjamin Olson, seems to always enjoy articles with references to this particular movie so, Ben, this article is for you my friend!

Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion have all finally arrived at the "magical Emerald City" of Oz after having disposed of the Wicked Witch of the West. They had been promised that if they accomplished this feat the Wizard would grant their wishes. Of course, as most of us know, the Scarecrow wished for a brain, the Tin Man a heart, the Cowardly Lion for courage and Dorothy to go home--back to Kansas. The Wizard was in the process of reneging on his promises when Dorothy's little dog, Toto, ran and pulled the curtain aside and exposed the Wizard for what he was--a big sham!

At that point, all four characters believed their journey and adventures had all been in vain because the "great and powerful Oz" was nothing but an ordinary man who had worked for a carnival company and been blown off course. He had no magical powers and admitted, "I'm not a bad man--just a very bad Wizard". He was able to placate the Scarecrow, the Tin Man and the Cowardly Lion with symbols of what they had wished for but for Dorothy--now that was another story. There was nothing he could do for her.

One of the things the persona of the Wizard symbolizes is our perception that it's others who control our lives and, particularly, our happiness. It wasn't until Dorothy was informed, by Glinda, the Good Witch, that Dorothy had the power all along to return to Kansas. She didn't

need the Wizard's, or anyone else's, help!

Glinda symbolizes our inner Spiritual selves or our Spiritual guidance. Realization, in most all cases, comes from some type of Spiritual awakening. That "AHA" moment when we know what to do or how to handle a situation comes through Spirit. It may come while we are driving, when our minds are just "free floating". It may happen while we are doing something as mindless as our laundry or mowing the yard. The realization of how to handle a situation may flow into our mind during our meditation time--when we are practicing focusing our minds on "nothing". For Spirit to "talk to us", i.e. communicate it's messages to us, we must move our "monkey minds", our brains that seem to continually jump from one thought to another, gently out of the way! Sometimes, as in the case with Dorothy, our Spiritual revelations come to us when we are out of options--we simply surrender our minds knowing we don't have the answer.

The Wizard of Oz, in such a childlike and beautiful manner, shows us that when we release our lives to the Spirit of God within we find the answers to whatever it may be troubling us. You and me--and everyone of us, have within us the Power for our happiness and well being--just as Dorothy had the Power in herself all along to go home!

As I have written many times before, focusing our minds on our blessings, even in times of hardship or stress, opens the door for Spirit to pour IT'S GOOD in, around and through us. Focusing on our blessings takes our minds off whatever the negative situation may be giving it "no power" over us. We are truly free in the Spirit--if we allow ourselves to be! So--"Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!"--YOU have the answers for your happiness if you will only open your Spiritual eyes and ears to IT!!

All my best--

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