

# BREATHE

A spiritual care resource created by Kaseman's Spiritual Care Department

## The Bird in the Golden Cage

(a story from India)

There was once a ruler of a kingdom, who heard the sweet song of a bird. A bird that was able to fly to different branches of different trees, roam in the clear blue sky or thunderous showers. It could see the whole world. The bird enjoyed its freedom.

However, the ruler was in love with the birdsong and wanted to hear it every morning. So the ruler's assistant caught the bird and placed it in a golden cage filled with diamonds, and other precious stones.

But the bird didn't like the cage. It could no longer fly, and it was deeply upset. The bird would weep, but the ruler thought the bird was singing a beautiful song and was immensely happy.

The ruler believed that the bird appreciated the golden cage with precious gems. After all, who wouldn't love it?





One day, the assistant was assigned to clean the cage, and when the cage door was open, the bird flew out and flew to the nearest branch it could find.

Watching all this was a parrot. The parrot was annoyed at the bird and said to the bird, "What are you thinking? You had such an amazing home. All you had to do was sing the most beautiful songs for the King and you were given a golden cage. You're an idiot for giving up the gold and the precious gems. You didn't even take one out when you left. You have lost everything with your so-called freedom."

The bird listened to the parrot. And after giving it some thought, the bird replied to the parrot, "You may live in the cage if you like it so much. But I prefer the freedom of roaming in the sky, living day by day and being happy because I am alive."

Before the bird was able to finish his point, the parrot flew inside the cage.

## Which part of the story is about you?

Notice moments in your life when you felt free.	Notice moments when you felt trapped and lost your freedom. Also notice when the cage provided some comfort /relief.	Notice moments when you broke out of your trap and regained freedom?	What action or social support in your life enabled (or will enable) you to regain your freedom?
			

# GOLDEN CAGE: What keeps you trapped?



**1.**  
**Unhealthy Problem-Coping Mechanisms**

- Avoidance
- Aggression
- Perfectionism
- Substance use
- Overworking
- Self-harm

**2.**

**TOXIC RELATIONSHIP / DEFENSIVE COMMUNICATION**

**3.**

**SELF-MEDICATE**

**4.**

**5.**

**NEGATIVE SOCIAL INFLUENCE**

**6.**

I don't need help

**SELF-ISOLATE**

**7.**

**PERFECTIONISM**

**8.**

**Intrusive Negative Thoughts**

**9.**

**Masking**

**10.**

**11.**

**Over helping  
No boundaries**

**12.**

**Negative Self-Image**

**13.**

**Blame others  
Avoid self-responsibility**

Notice if any of these cages of spiritual distress pertain to you:

Vulnerability



Helplessness



Despair



Emptiness



Isolation



Resentment



Sorrow



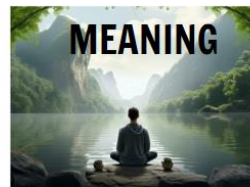
Fear / Anxiety



Lost



What spiritual gift of healing will enable you to spread your wings & rise above?



# CIRCLE A FEW LISTED BELOW THAT YOU FIND HELPFUL IN MOVING TOWARDS YOUR FREEDOM

## COPING TOOLS

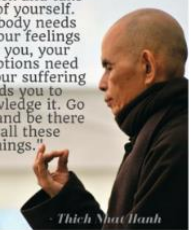


## SEAM *Stitch up the Broken Seam of Grief* (by Phyllis Kosminsky, Ph.D)

**S - Self-regulate:** As intense feelings arise, take slow deep breaths. Do not ignore or distract - be mindful with your body, your feelings & emotions. Be gentle with yourself.

"Slow breathing is like an anchor in the midst of an emotional storm: the anchor won't make the storm go away, but it will hold you steady until it passes."  
- Russ Harris

"Go back and take care of yourself. Your body needs you, your feelings need you, your perceptions need you. Your suffering needs you to acknowledge it. Go home and be there for all these things."  
- Thích Nhất Hạnh



**E - Eat:** Put some nutrition in your body.



**A - Action:** Move your body, do something positive: create art, go outside & feel the sun, play in the gym.



**M - Monitor Self-Talk:** Notice thought patterns, especially unrealistic "should" & "must" statements. I/we/you "should've", "would've", "could've" statements.

Journaling



Counseling



Support Group



Read a book to inspire

