



The story of the pencil

source: *"Like the Flowing River"* by Paulo Coelho

A boy was watching his grandmother write a letter. At one point he asked:

"Are you writing a story about what we've done? Is it a story about me?"

His grandmother stopped writing her letter and said to her grandson: "I am writing about you, actually, but more important than the words is the pencil I'm using. I hope you will be like this pencil when you grow up."

Intrigued, the boy looked at the pencil. It didn't seem very special.

"But it's just like any other pencil I've ever seen!"

"That depends on how you look at things. It has five qualities which, if you manage to hang on them, will make you a person who is always at peace with the world."

"First quality: you are capable of great things, but you must never forget that there is a hand guiding your steps. We call that hand God, and He always guides us according to His will."

"Second quality: now and then, I have to stop writing and use a sharpener. That makes the pencil suffer a little, but afterwards, he's much sharper. So you, too, must learn to bear certain pains and sorrows, because they will make you a better person."

"Third quality: the pencil always allows us to use an eraser to rub out any mistakes. This means that correcting something we did is not necessarily a bad thing; it helps to keep us on the road to justice."

"Fourth quality: what really matters in a pencil is not its wooden exterior, but the graphite inside. So always pay attention to what is happening inside you."

"Finally, the pencil's fifth quality: it always leaves a mark. In just the same way, you should know that everything you do in life will leave a mark, so try to be conscious of that in your every action."

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