

A Missing Square in the Quilt...

A Missing Piece of the Soul...

Catherine Nelson, Ph.D.

Several women were part of a yoga class. They had taken lessons together for five years. Their yoga teacher, Emily, an older woman, was about to retire after twenty years. They were going to miss her. She was kind and accepting of what you could and could not do with your body. Every student felt valued, and in turn, they valued her and would miss her.

Often the women would meet at the nearby coffee shop after yoga. They decided to have a party for Emily and give her a parting gift. Mary was experienced in sewing and quilting, so she suggested making a quilt. Everyone agreed this was a great idea. Each woman was assigned a square on the quilt. Each was encouraged to choose a color, pattern, or decoration that would reflect her essence. Mary agreed to be in charge of making the quilt.

Mary was a good organizer and after a few more instructions, they agreed on a deadline for getting the squares to Mary so she could assemble and finish the quilt before the party. All the squares for the quilt were sent to Mary by the deadline—except one.

Lily was a shy woman and it took her a long time to make friends. She had grown up with parents who fought a lot and had little time for her. In her marriage



there were problems with her husband, who had a loud and often angry voice, and she had two teenagers who made lots of demands on her. In this group, even though the women had different opinions and values, everyone mattered and was heard. Lily had welcomed with joy the opportunity to design a square for Emily's quilt.

As usual, Mary had taken on more than she should have in her busy life. In addition to being a mother, she was an active volunteer in three organizations. Mary would have to stay up late several nights sewing and assembling the squares on the quilt before the party. The party would be their last time together with Emily and as a group. Mary wanted the quilt to be perfect.

Mary pushed hard to make time for the quilt. The deadline came and she saw that one square was missing. She did not have time to find out whose square it was. Instead she quickly cut out a square for the missing one and finished making the quilt. It was beautiful and she knew the women

would be pleased with it.

At the party, Mary handed the wrapped package to Emily who opened it with awe and appreciation. She thanked everyone and laid the quilt of many colors and patterns on the table so everyone could see it.

Lily looked at the quilt and was shocked to see that her square was not part of the quilt. She was upset and left the party early and never said anything to Mary. Lily went home and cried. Mary never knew that Lily's square had been mailed to her and Lily never learned that her package had been lost in the mail.

About a week after Emily's party, Nina, a trusted friend to Lily, stopped by and Lily told her about the quilt and her missing square. Lily was still very upset and cried. Lily had assumed Mary did not feel Lily's square was good enough to be part of the quilt. Nina asked Lily if she had contacted Mary and talked with her. Lily said "no" because she did not want Mary to get upset with her. Nina said Lily had a right to have her square in the quilt as much as

everyone else in the group did. Nina suggested that Lily could write to Mary if she did not want to call her and Lily said it was too late to do anything.

Several weeks later, Nina and Lily were in the coffee shop when, by chance, Emily walked into the shop. She joined the two women and after a few words, Lily was in tears. She told Emily that somehow her square was not in the quilt.

Emily listened to Lily's upset and then, after a few moments of silence, she made a suggestion to Lily. Emily loved the quilt and she wanted a pillow sham to match the quilt. She was wondering if Lily would like to make the sham with her own choice of colors and patterns. Lily listened to Emily and slowly she realized that she did matter and she could be part of the group gift by making the sham for Emily's quilt.

This is a story about good intentions and how things don't always work out as planned. How do you feel about Lily's choices before Emily appeared at the coffee shop? Would you have given up that easily when the square mattered so much? Can you see how Lily contributed to her own pain? Sometimes our beliefs about ourselves are so strong that we cannot see beyond them to other possibilities. Thank heavens Emily stopped by the coffee shop that day! ■

CATHERINE NELSON, Ph.D., has a counseling practice in Bozeman with over 25 years of experience working with individuals and groups. She has taught at the Barbara Brennan School of Healing and is a certified Pathwork Helper. She offers workshops on personal transformation and energy healing and is available for individual sessions. Call Catherine at (406) 585-8025 or send e-mail to nhobbit@gmail.com.



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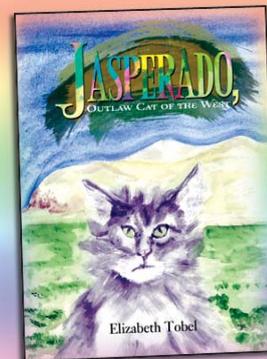
What could possibly turn a mild-mannered grey cat into an outlaw? For Jasper, it began when he was adopted by me and taken to the wilds of Montana. Follow my cat's journey from a shy farm cat to one whose real-life adventures earned him the name...

Jasperado, Outlaw Cat of the West!

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