

Why the Butterfly Was Killed

By: Earl Nightingale

This is a story attributed to Henry Miller, the writer, about a little boy in India who meets a guru.

The little boy goes up to the guru who is sitting and looking at something in his hand. The little boy looks at the object but doesn't quite understand what he is looking at and so he asks the guru, "What is that?"



"It's a cocoon," the guru tells him. "Inside the cocoon is a butterfly. Soon the cocoon is going to split, and the butterfly will come out."

"Could I have it?" asks the little boy.

"Yes," says the guru, "but you must promise me that when the cocoon splits and

the butterfly starts to come out and is beating its wings to get out of the cocoon, you won't help it. Do not help the butterfly by breaking the cocoon apart. Let it do it by itself."

The little boy promised, took the cocoon and went home with it. He then sat and watched it. He saw it begin to vibrate and move and quiver, and finally the cocoon split.

Inside was a beautiful, damp butterfly, frantically beating its wings against the cocoon, trying desperately to get out and struggling to do so.

The little boy watched in panic, desperately wanting to help.

Finally, he gave in and disobeyed the guru's orders.

He pushed the two halves of the cocoon apart, and the butterfly sprang out. But, as soon as it got up into the air, it fell quickly to the ground and was killed.

The little boy picked up the dead butterfly and, in tears, went running back to the guru and showed it to him.

"Hmmm," the guru said gently, "you pushed open the cocoon, didn't you?"

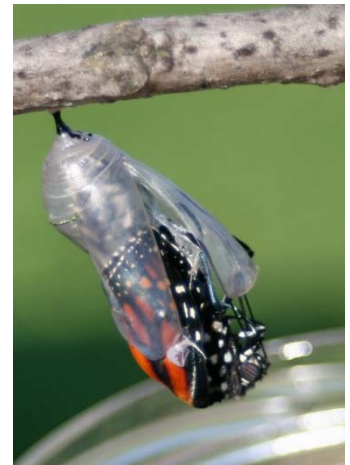
"Yes," said the little boy mournfully, "I did."

"I see," said the guru, "You did not understand."

"I saw it struggling and I wanted to help," said the little boy.

"YOU did not see the harm you were doing," said the guru.

"When the butterfly comes out of the cocoon, the only way it can strengthen its wings is by beating them against the cocoon. It beats against the cocoon so its muscles will grow. When you helped it the way you did, you prevented it from getting strong! That is why the butterfly fell to the ground and was killed."



So often, what seems harsh or cruel in nature is in reality wisdom and kindness for the time ahead. Such is the story of the little boy, the guru, and the butterfly.

**Allow nature to take its course.*

***It is not our responsibility to protect the people we love from life's pain or hurt, for that is how we all learn and grow.*

