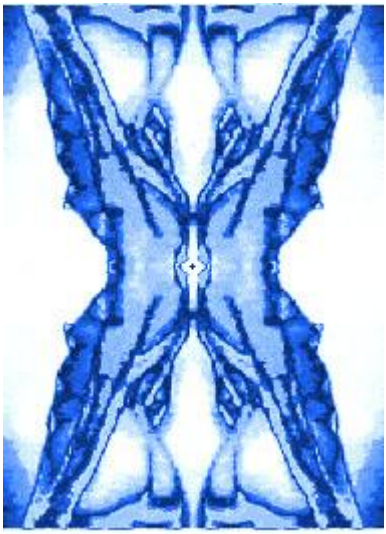


Get To The Point

Sandy knew her Father could talk for hours when the conversation moved toward philosophy. She also knew Robert had to go home early tonight and study for semester exams this week. Robert had come to visit her tonight and if they were not stopped the men might keep talking for hours. "Dad, why don't you let Rob read some of your essays" said Sandy interrupting their discussion. "Let him absorb some of your ideas and next time you two can talk about them over a couple of beers."

The two men had been talking about time and space for nearly thirty minutes. They looked at the young redhead and nodded their agreement. "I'll furnish reading material if you furnish the beer", said Sandy's Father as he rose from the table. He went to his bedroom in the

back of the house to get a copy of his essay on dimensional laws.

"Remember I warned you how much he enjoyed this kind of thing", said Sandy in her Father's absence. "I know you need to go home and study, but first you're going to spend a little time with me."

Robert grinned and said, "Next to talking to your Dad, there's nothing I'd rather do," he said. "How about a quick ride in the paddle boat?" he asked, watching Sandy's reaction to make sure she knew he was kidding.

"I think that would qualify as time with me. As long as you don't invite Dad," she said smiling and took Robert's arm as she stood. Her Father returned with the essays and said goodnight to both of them.

Sandy and Robert slipped out the back door into a dark and quiet night. Stars sprinkled the black sky as Sandy led Robert down the familiar trail to the lake. There were lights both along the path and at the dock, but Sandy hated the intrusion of artificial light in the night sky and did not turn on the lights.

Rob and Sandy began dating three month ago. Both were in their second year of college and shared a computer class this semester. Sandy loved computer graphics, but had opted for a more traditional computer science degree. Robert was still uncertain about what

he wanted. He had signed up for the class just to say he had taken it.

Even though they had graduated together from the local high school Sandy and Robert had remained isolated until the computer class. It was Robert's curiosity that bridged their worlds.

He knew Sandy in high school as the daughter of the bike nut, a well known name for the strange electrical engineer who rode his bike to work each day. Most of the kids knew Sandy's Father because the main highway to school was the same one used by her father in his eight mile commute to work each day. The kids thought it strange to see him riding a bike in his white shirt and tie sporting a ponytail. In the summer he wore shorts and a tank top. And even when the temperature reached the low twenties in the winter he still rode his bike.

Robert had used the unflattering bike nut name as much as anyone else when talking about Sandy's Father. Yet, even though Robert did not actually know the man, he had to respect a person so obvious in telling the world he was different.

Midway through high school Robert began questioning the rules of life. He did not want to get a job, get married, and raise a family just because it was some unwritten rule. Robert rebelled against tradition and thought the bike nut to be a kindred spirit. Robert and Sandy had both been out of high school for two years.

They both attended a local community college and were in their last semester. When Robert realized Sandy was the bike nut's daughter he asked her out hoping to learn more about the strange man.

On their first date Robert sensed tranquility in Sandy. She did not get upset and kept a calm look on her face the entire evening. She had long straight dark red hair and matching dark auburn eyes. She was pretty, but Robert found himself more attracted to her peaceful attitude.

Robert suggested the paddle boat because they had gone out on a Sunday afternoon two weeks earlier and Sandy mentioned how different it was to go out on the lake at night. They unchained the boat from the tree it was leaning against and pushed it into the lake. Sandy threw a couple of life jackets in the back as Robert took her hand and helped her step into the boat. "You know Sandy", Robert said, "I have to confess I first asked you out because I was curious about your Dad." They settled in the front two seats of the boat and began to peddle backwards, easing the boat away from the dock. "He is just so different it made me want to know a little more about him."

“You think he is different", Sandy said light hearted, "My family thinks he's just plain weird." They steered the boat towards a clump of cypress trees in a corner of the 640 acre lake away from other houses. "I freely admit", Sandy continued, "There's not too many people who read books on quantum mechanics for pleasure." The

sound of the paddle wheel beneath the boat blended in with the chorus of frogs as they slowly guided the boat across the surface of the lake.

"Now that I have gotten to know you a little better", said Robert, "I don't think being raised by someone like your Dad has hurt you." Sandy remained silent, appreciating the comment. "Sometimes I really struggle with what I'm supposed to be doing and trying to figure out what I really want to do. Remember when we were seniors and anytime we saw an adult they would always ask what our plans were after high school?" Sandy nodded her head. "Well, even now in my second year of college I try to avoid thinking about it. I guess I just don't want to accept the routine nine to five just because I am supposed to". Robert was silent for a moment and then continued, "But, you don't seem to have that problem. You don't have your life mapped out and yet, you don't let that bother you. What I'm trying to say is, even though I first asked you out because I was curious about your Dad, that's not why I'm here right now." Robert continued slowly, "I'm here now because I really like you and think you are pretty special."

"Rob, the best thing about growing up around my Dad is that I learned it's okay to be different." Sandy placed her hand on Robert's forearm. "Being different means you don't have to follow the rules if you don't want to. Let's stop over there near the egrets", Sandy said pointing her finger towards the far corner of the lake. Over twenty large white egrets roosted in the same three cypress trees every night during the winter. "You're right I don't

really struggle with mapping out my life or living the routine nine to five", said Sandy. "I guess I just accept the roles I play and focus more on enjoying those roles instead of questioning them."

"I wish I could do that. Sometimes I wonder if I even know what would make me happy. I know society's idea of success is not the same as mine, but I'm just not sure what my ideas even are."

"Lincoln said 'Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be',” Sandy said. "I have always believed happiness is a state of mind. It's like your feelings seem to follow whatever you are thinking. If You have angry thoughts you feel angry." Her voice carried no reproach. She was genuine in wanting Robert to understand. "Everyone has thoughts. But very few people pay any attention to them. You cannot find what makes you happy until you become aware of what you are thinking."

The lake was calm. They stopped the boat and Sandy lay her head on Robert's shoulder. Neither of them spoke for a moment as they looked above into the black sky and beheld the glory of the stars unobscured by artificial city lights. There was no wind and the calmness of this place silenced Robert's mind. He had wanted to explain to Sandy how he sometimes was tormented by his constant questioning. Instead he allowed his mind to become quiet and realized why Sandy had wanted to take a boat ride at night.

Sandy interrupted the silence. "Remember when you and Dad were talking about time as really space in the fourth dimension?" she asked Robert.

"Yea," Robert answered. "He can really make you think about things. He has some strange ideas, but I guess they are not that different from modern physics."

Sandy sat up and reached into her pant's pocket. "I've got something I want to give you", she said, handing a small shot glass to Robert. "It's a candle. Actually it's a glass with a votive candle inside. The design on the glass is called the butterfly mandala." Robert took the candle and rotated it around in his hands. On opposite sides of the glass were two colored symmetrical images. One of them had different shades of blue and the other was a mixture of reds, yellows, and oranges. The image had four corners where the tips of what could be called a butterfly's wings ended. "My Dad created this meditation mandala. The different colors are mine. I use the computer to generate different color pallets. These are two of my favorite designs." Sandy paused, waiting for a reaction. Robert held the candle close to his face studying the image.

"My Dad has his roots in the 60's. I think that helped make him different. He has always meditated at least twice a day. When we were kids my brother and I would see Dad sitting cross legged in his bedroom. He was like a rock and did not move. We used to make noise and jump in front of him, but he wouldn't budge." Sandy spoke remembering her early fascination with this

strange practice of her Father's. As a child she felt there was something magical in his ability to turn himself into a rock.

"A few years ago he created this mandala on the computer. He said it gave him something to focus on while he was meditating. By then I had started meditating off and on. I took his original design and started experimenting with different colors. Some of them turned out to be pretty good. We started making posters with different designs. And that led to putting the butterfly mandala on candles and then cups. Dad said it gave him a constant reminder of his meditations. Now we have t-shirts, key chains, kites, and all kinds of things with the butterfly mandala.

"I keep my favorite design with me all the time on this necklace." Sandy reached into the top of her shirt and pulled out her necklace with the same blue image that was on one side of the candle in Robert's hand. "It has a clasp on it so it's easy to unhook it from the necklace and lay it in front of me whenever or wherever I am." She quickly removed the butterfly mandala showing it to Robert. "Dad uses meditation to empty his mind. But for me the butterfly mandala is a constant reminder of an attitude of awareness. All I have to do is see this image and I automatically smile and take a good quiet look around me.

"I want you to have this candle", Sandy said as she took it from his hand and placed it in front of them on the boat. She pulled out some matches from her pocket

and lit one. The sound and the light brought a sudden change into their quiet darkness. As she lowered the flame inside the glass Robert could see the butterfly mandala much better than he had from the star light earlier. He was impressed with both the image and it's colors. He could sense this gift from Sandy meant a great deal to her and remained silent as she continued.

"A couple of years ago, Dad created a website on the internet for the butterfly mandala. He had twelve of our designs on the website as well as an explanation about mandalas and how to use them. Even though the two of us created this image it has now taken on a life of it's own. The butterfly mandala has traveled the world to over twenty-five countries. It has been seen by literally over a thousand people. Dad has gotten some email from people telling him how much they enjoy it. But for the most part we don't know who has seen it or what it means to them. But I want you to know what it means to me.

"Since you know something about physics you know reality is not what it always seems. I want to try a little experiment with you. Would you be willing to open your mind and listen to what I say without interrupting or judging?" she asked.

Robert first approached Sandy out of curiosity about her Father. At this moment Robert felt Sandy was as different as her Father. Robert said, "Sandy you and this candle have fascinated me already. I share a bond with this candle because it was a gift from you." Robert

could see the excitement in Sandy's face. He saw the reflection of the dancing flame of the candle in her brown eyes. "I'd be happy to let you experiment with me, especially if all I have to do is listen to your voice."

Sandy knew this could become a special moment in their lives. She brought the candle with her just in case this opportunity presented itself. "Alright if you're ready I want you to just sit back and relax." Sandy waited as Robert shifted his weight and got comfortable. "Notice in the center of the butterfly mandala is a single dot. I want you to stare at this dot and listen to my words.

"Take a couple of deep relaxing breaths and allow your mind to let go of all your thoughts. If you find yourself struggling to clear your mind, tell yourself not to fight it. It's no struggle. Just gently bring your attention back to your breathing and the dot in the center of the butterfly mandala. That's it, just relax and let go. Feel each breath as it enters and leaves your body. Gaze at the center of the butterfly mandala as the light from the candle flame flickers behind it."

Sandy was speaking slowly and softly. Her Father had used this same method once to help her understand some of his ideas about the fourth dimension. Robert followed her instructions not expecting anything in particular. He had listened to self hypnosis tapes before and recognized the method Sandy was using. He opened his mind and would allow Sandy to take him wherever she wanted him to go.

"Keep your gaze fixed on the point in the center of the butterfly mandala and allow each breath to focus your attention on this point. All of the sounds around us simply reinforce your ability to keep your attention fixed on this point. The four corners of the mandala represent our true four dimensional existence you and Dad were talking about earlier this evening. We are four dimensional because we exist in time. We have a past and a future which always exists in the four dimensional space called time. As you stare into the center of the point, allow yourself to see your whole four dimensional self at once. See your whole life past, present, and future as a single point.

"You are expanding your awareness and now you are seeing this single point as a four dimensional object by looking at it from a new perspective, from a viewpoint from the fifth dimension. Your life from birth to death is represented by this single point. It exists all at once and you know this is your true four dimensional self.

"You know that everything that exists in time also has a four dimensional body. And when you expand your view you see any four dimensional body at once, and you know you are seeing reality from a perspective of a higher dimension. From this new perspective you can see that any single point in space has an extension in time. The point in space now occupied by the center of the butterfly mandala is part of the universe's space and shares a history as old as the universe. Perhaps this very point in space was once occupied by an indian in a canoe on this lake on a bright sunny day. Or maybe this

one single point in space will be occupied by your own children in the future. But know and feel the reality that any single fixed point in space contains within it what we call time and all of the past and all of the future."

Sandy stopped for a few seconds to allow Robert to absorb this wonderful thought. "Now continue looking at the point in the center of the butterfly mandala. Let this point represent one single moment of time, this present moment we call now. Imagine time has been frozen and has stopped like it does when you take a picture of someone. You know this one frozen moment in time contains every single point in space. The whole universe and all of space, all of the stars above us, and all of the atoms within and around us, exist in this frozen moment of time."

Once again Sandy was quiet to allow Robert to understand and feel what she had said. Robert forgot about his exam tomorrow. He knew nothing of his questions about society. He allowed his mind to let Sandy lead him to this strange awareness. He felt the energy and strength of the butterfly mandala. It was a new and pleasant experience. The closest thing in his life to this experience was when he listened to a favorite song or became totally engrossed by a good movie to the point of completely losing and forgetting about himself.

"Robert," Sandy said as she gently placed her hands on either side of his shoulders. "You are experiencing a new reality. This reality is just a larger part of what we

normally see of the world with our narrow focus on a limited view of time and space. You have expanded the boundaries of who you are so that you can see a new horizon of reality.

"You will always know that any single point in space contains every point in time. And any single point in time contains every point in space. As you begin to let go and return your focus to a smaller slice of this reality, you will know this broader, greater reality is always here. You can visit this greater awareness anytime you choose.

“All you have to do is get to the point."

