Ask Dad: Little Zen Stories · 2

The Glass *and the Lake*

by Adam G.





Eli had a grumpy week.

“Dad, why is everything so hard? My shoes are too tight. My brother was too loud. My bed was too bumpy. When will everything stop being hard?”



Dad looked at him for a long moment. Then he said, “Eli, go to the kitchen and bring me a big handful of salt.”



Eli came back with his hands full of white salt.

Dad filled a little glass with water. “Put all the salt in the glass. Now stir it. Now take a big drink.”



“Dad, that’s way too much salt for a little glass.”

“Trust me. Drink.”



Eli took a big gulp and spat it right out. “Bleh! It’s so salty! It’s horrible!”
Dad chuckled. “Good. Now grab another handful of salt, and come with me.”



They walked down the hill to the big blue lake. The water was so still that the sky was inside it.



“Throw the salt into the lake,” said Dad.

Eli threw it. Splash. The salt was gone.

“Now take a drink from the lake.”



Eli cupped his hands and drank. The water was cold and fresh and clean.

“How does it taste?”

“Fresh!”



“Do you taste the salt?”

“No, Dad. Not even a little bit.”

Dad sat down on the grass next to him.



“Eli, hard things in life are like salt. Everybody gets a handful. But how bitter it tastes depends on what you put it in.



If you are a tiny glass, a little salt tastes terrible. But if you make your heart big, as big as this lake, the same salt just disappears.”



He gave Eli’s shoulder a squeeze.

“Don’t be a glass, Eli. Be a lake.”



The salt is the same.
Make your heart bigger.

Three questions to explore together

1. What felt like a handful of salt in your day?
2. Why did the same salt taste different in the glass and in the lake?
3. What helps your heart feel as big as a lake?

The End

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