

## **GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS**

**Week #2 of a New 4-Week Series, "Metaphysical Fairy Tale Fun"**

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I was asked if I'd take on this task of giving the metaphysics of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." I said, *"I'll give it a shot."* So the interesting thing that I discovered is: Which "Goldilocks" version am I going to give a shot at?

So, I started online reading different versions of "Goldilocks," and they all were kind of different. And so I chose one that I happen to like for some strange reason that I will discover when we discover it together here this evening.

So, this one has some interesting quirks. It's about talking bears who live in a house and they eat porridge. And already that starts to fire my imagination, because porridge reminds me of oatmeal that I hated as a child. I wanted cereal with sugar in it! So, that was an interesting learning experience for me: that I should learn to eat things that were good for my health, I was told.

So, I grudgingly ate my mother's oatmeal when it was enough juice in it where I didn't have to have large chunks of it to swallow. And so that created a little bit of concern, because when I complained, my mother quickly reminded me that I should be grateful. that I had anything at all to eat, and that I should learn to keep my mouth shut. [Congregants laugh]

So, as I'm working on this story that I chose, it starts to get a little complicated. Because this little girl named Goldilocks, in this particular version, gets lost in the woods. And she finds the bear's house. She knocks on the door, and no one answers, so she lets herself in. And since we've already sort of been informed about the three bears -- which in my mind represents a trinity, which I'll talk about a little later.

So, tension starts to build as I'm reading this little simple story. So, as I look at it, I thought to myself, *"Well, what if the bears return and they find her there?"* Because bears can be dangerous. On the other hand, though, Goldilocks has entered into their home, which to them is the sacred space: a sacred place. And she's done this without permission.

So, I kind of grew up with these rules and things that I frequently ignored. I mean, it was no big deal for me to go to my friend's house and just walk in the door without knocking. Same way with them coming to my house. So, the mores in the community that I grew up in were a little different than the so-called mores of the masses.

So, in this particular version, Goldilocks finds their porridge and she tastes each one. The first one she decides is too hot. The second one she decides is too cold. And the third one she decides is just right.

And so, as I'm reading this, I'm starting to allow my imagination to flow a little bit. And I'm thinking to myself, *"Well, who wants to eat something that a stranger has been munching on?"* And it makes sense that bears are territorial animals, and she's eating their food.

So, I'm reading on, and then Goldilocks decides to sit in their chairs. And she decided that the Papa Bear's chair was too hard. And then she tries the Mama Bear's chair, and it was too soft. And she goes to the Baby Bear's chair. And it's just right. But as she sits in Baby Bear's chair, in this particular version, she breaks it.

And so, the tension in my mind is rising a little bit because the stakes have risen. You enter someone's home without permission, which actually legally in our world today could be deemed as breaking into a person's home and stealing their food, damaging their property. Adding insult to injury by taking a nap in

their beds. Deciding that the beds weren't right until one of them suits her fancy. So, all of a sudden, you know, I'm starting to feel this story, trying to put myself into the place of this process.

And then I read on and the bears return home. So, the tension increases again. because I'm a country boy and I understand wildlife. Tension's building. The bears come in, they find that their food had been eaten, that their baby's chair was broken. And finally find Goldilocks sleeping in their baby's bed.

So, this is, for me, the climax in the story where only one side can come out ahead. Goldilocks awakes, finds herself surrounded by bears, and you can kind of sense the tenseness of the situation.

And then the resolution of all this tension kind of changes, depending on which version of the "Goldilocks" you read. In the more cuddly versions -- my mind's racing back and forth to different versions -- Goldilocks runs away and she never returns.

So, then my curiosity arises and I look up the original version from 1831. It was written by Eleanor Murray. The three bears throw Goldilocks in a fire in this version, and then they douse her with water. And then, finally, they impale her on their church steeple ... Which is a bit much, in my mind, for a child's fairy tale.

So, this thing in here that I never quite understood is thinking, "Okay, I need to research this." So, I start to research, and I found out that years later, a guy by the name of Robert Saldi kind of softened the tale and had Goldilocks escape through a window. And then I found out that, since then, there have been many versions that kind of fall between the two iconic versions.

But it seems that, no matter which version the storyteller chooses, it always ends with the bears alone in their house with tainted porridge or broken chair and rumpled beds and so forth and so on.

The reason the story works is because it covers a multitude of sins, to use a Biblical cliché. The "Goldilocks" story is all based on the literary rule of three. This is a concept that has spread across many different disciplines. It's spread across developmental psychology. It's spread across biology. It's spread across economics. It's prominent in Buddhism. It's prominent even in engineering. It's prominent in astrology. It's prominent, of course, in Christian religion, just to name a few.

So again, this first version by Eleanor Murray is a handwritten transcript. It wasn't about a sweet little girl, whatever that means. What it was about was a selfish little girl. And then in one of the versions, the Southey's version, the intruder was an impotent old woman. So, then my mind starts to think, "Okay; is this a sexist story?"

So, then I ruminated on that for quite a while. And then I caught myself and reminded myself that my mind is capable of going in too many different directions. And so, I brought myself back and decided that I'd give the story a different text. So, I got online and I began to read a blog about Goldilocks. Who knew that, in this time and space, that grown people would be on a computer blog talking about Goldilocks? So, I said, "I'm going to check this out."

I started reading it, and some of the things that were said made a lot of sense. It said it was a story written for children about moral values, using the absurd notion that a bear family of three led simple, orderly lives based on our beliefs of what simple, ordinary lives should look like. They were considered as normal: a normal family system.

And then I came upon this one blogger who said, and I quote, that "Goldilocks was simply an entitled little girl who entered the Bears' private space and burglarized their home."

And I thought, "Wow!" First of all, this "entitled" thing I hear a lot. And I thought, "How do we get from a simple fairy tale to start making these kinds of assumptions about another human being?"

No question about the moral values of walking into somebody's house without asking or knocking. Okay, that's a good thing. But to start to assess criminal behavior or entitlement statements to a child -- and this really was just a child's story -- I thought was taking it a little bit further than it needed to be taken.

So, when we talk about metaphysics, what are we talking about?

Generally, we tend to think of metaphysics in terms of our religion and it bringing out the best in us. We think about it in terms of being a foundation for our spiritual values: a foundation for giving us information about how to create a better world. But to think of it in terms of being "entitled" I thought was a bit much.

And so, I did my prayer work. And in doing my prayer work, I was reminded of how complex this world we live in is. And how we all choose to create our own opinions and how that sometimes can get in the way of us being able to achieve the type of life that we really want. Because we become so focused on process that we forget about the thing that really matters in our lives -- which is the heart and the mind and the spirit, which is the soul. The thing that enables us to transcend all of the troubles, all of the challenges that kind of push us to the edge.

And it's kind of easy to find that in this little fairy tale. Because once the parents kind of got the anger out of their system, they went on with their lives. And as all fairy tales do, their lives ended with them being happy and being able to live on into the structure that they set up for themselves. And all things ended well.

There's a quote attributed to Marilyn Monroe that states, and I quote, "*Things fall apart so that better things can fall together.*" Sometimes things fall apart so better things can fall together. You can take that quote in numerous directions if you don't have a specific context for it.

And that's the same thing with "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." If we don't have some kind of context for it, we can take it anywhere we want to take it. And that brings me back to our spirituality.

What is the context for your spirit? My spirit? What is it that drives us? Is it just the moral values? Or is it wanting to make a contribution to a better world?

And I think too often we get caught up in these small little things about missing porridge and the moral mistake of going into somebody's house, doing things they weren't invited to do. Because it, in a way, keeps us from looking at the deeper issues in our lives and what is it we truly want for ourselves and for our world.

So, each perspective that we hold for ourselves, individually or collectively, contains a vast amount of expandability. If we are willing to allow our consciousness to expand and our minds to expand and our beliefs to expand, and to begin to see ourselves as true instruments of something greater than ourselves ... which is what I believe we are called to do: to expand our consciousness, to expand our world.

I read a story yesterday that may shed some light on what I'm trying to get across here. The story is about a young man. His name was Daniel Crago. C-R-A-G-O. And the caption above the story pictures him recovering in a hospital bed. His right arm is bandaged from his fingertips to his shoulders. And above the picture caption it states:

*"This is it!"* Mauled U.S. hiker recalls the moment grizzly bear locked eyes with him. As the large grizzly bear charged down at him from across a snow field in Montana and mauled him, hiker Daniel Crago had just enough time to put his arm up and think to himself, *"This is it."*

But two weeks after that perilous, exceedingly rare encounter in Glacier National Park, Crago, 32, is still alive, recovering after three surgeries. Feeling extremely lucky, he said in an interview Monday with ABC News that he was attacked by the bear off the trail in the bear's territory.

And as the story goes, the large grizzly bear charged down at him from across a snow field and mauled him. During this time, he had just enough time to put his arm up to protect himself.

And he described himself as an experienced hiker who attempted to follow the correct protocol when encountering a bear by yelling out to alert the bear of his presence, and thereby avoid frightening it. But the odd thing is they were in an area where the sound of loud rushing water made it difficult for either him or the bearer to be able to detect the other's presence.

And he said he had bear spray with him, as was recommended by the National Park Service, but he didn't have time to use it. He said the bear first stepped toward him and then roared up, and he stuck his arm up in self-defense. The bear bit on his right forearm, breaking both bones. and then dragged him about 22 feet before running away.

And thankfully, some friends and some other hikers were nearby, and so they were able to be able to get him to care and to be able to make sure that he was able to survive.

So, what does this have to do with "Goldilocks"? In this magnificent world that we live in -- just in Glacier National Park alone -- there are nearly a thousand black and grizzly bears. And the chances of being bitten by one are approximately one in 2.1 million. Yet, somebody gets bitten.

So, the maul in Goldilocks is a multi-pronged maul. We were born to create. Creation is the holy process, really. And we use these incredible tools that we have called the brain to create life for ourselves, for our family, for our community, for our world. And sometimes it gets out of whack, and we see the turmoil and the confusion and the chaos that comes as an end result.

If you haven't read the news lately and you haven't checked on the status of our great nation, there's a lot of chaos and concern and confusion; a lot of pain and a lot of angst; a lot of anger. And there's an antidote to that. And it's called love. It's called respect. It's called opening ourselves to a Power that is greater than our individual self.

And that's a practice that has to be done day in, day out. Sometimes it has to be done continuously all day and all night in order to be at peace with ourselves, and to be at peace with our health; to be at peace with our well-being; to be at peace with our neighbors.

And the small infractions that come when a child makes a mistake -- and we're all children in one way or another, or we make mistakes. Those small infractions are just that. What matters is when we're able to step up to the table and be honest and open with ourselves and with everyone else.

There doesn't need to be a lot of depth in these fairy tales. There doesn't need to be a lot of depth in our lives. There just needs to be a willingness to be open and receptive to being better, to doing better. To loving more; to caring more. To creating more, whatever that creation means in your life.

For me, in this stage of my journey, my constant method of creativity is how do I get up and do the things that's going to keep me healthy and reasonably wealthy and wise. The health part's coming pretty good. The wisdom, I'm working at it. The wealthy, it's in here. [Points to his head]