REFLECTION SHEET

Who Comes to You

A companion reflection for "The Elder Is the One Who Can Be Asked."

There is a difference between being helped and being asked. Most of us can name the last time someone offered to help. Fewer of us can name the last time someone came to us with something that mattered and wanted to know what we thought. This sheet is about that second thing — what it is worth, what it costs to become the kind of person it happens to, and what has to be set down first.

A Practice to Begin

Sit for ten minutes. Bring to mind one thing you are carrying that you were never asked to carry — something you picked up because you saw it lying there and you were the one who could. Do not decide anything about it. Simply hold the fact that you chose it, and notice what rises when you consider setting it down. Stay the ten minutes, even if what rises is resistance. Especially then.

Reflection Questions

1. What is your unit of value — what you can carry, or what you can be asked? Answer honestly rather than aspirationally.
2. When were you last asked something that mattered? Who asked, and what made them think they could?
3. Where in your life are you still proving capacity, and to whom?
4. You can probably let one group of people have their own consequences and not another. Which is which, and what does that tell you?
5. What would you have to stop doing to become someone it makes sense to ask?
6. If the shift from doing to being happened in you today, what is the first thing that would change tomorrow?

An Invitation for the Week

Find one person who is carrying something, and do not offer to help. Ask them what they need first — those words, in that order — and then be quiet long enough for an answer to arrive. Notice what the question does to the room. Notice what it does in you to ask it rather than to solve the thing.

“You are not the one carrying it any more. You are the one it gets brought to.”

— from “The Elder Is the One Who Can Be Asked”

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