The tree that hides the forest

- By Véronique

Flaubert said that God (Light, Love, etc.) is in the details. Nietzsche maintained that it is rather the Devil (Shadow, Misery, etc.) that is in them. Personally, I think they are both present in all things. Whoever (God or the Devil) is going to take the most space in our lives is a decision that only we can take individually.

Each of us experience moments that I would qualify as being less glorious… I find it softer to my ears than "difficult"! For some of these moments, we would like to be able to delete them or press reset. Such as voice messages that can be rerecord, it would be reassuring to repeat episodes of our lives until they are spotless.

For my part, I sometimes find it almost humiliating to accept situations that hurt. I would like to have super powers that can catapult me in the past so I could replay the game of life so to speak. Eat better to prevent some health problems, breaking up a relationship instead of letting it drag or not having been able to express our thoughts in a given situation are some common examples of things we often would like to change. Why? To suffer less, that is pretty obvious. But thinking about it, who are we to think that the result would have been better if we had played the game differently?

I came to a simple conclusion for myself: I give a lot of importance to events that I qualify as "negative". I give them so much space that they often shadow over other things in my life that are doing just fine. Instead of seeing a difficult event like a cloud in a sunny sky, I see this thing as the Mount Everest, which is big, permanent, and basically not going to go anywhere else but where he stands. Everything is a matter of perception my friends. A situation may seem like a cloud, the Himalayas or any other thing of your choosing. It's really up to you.

So I asked myself very simple questions to illustrate how I sometimes generalize negatively and thus "help" the balance tipping towards the Devil's side: Could we say that a person who has suffered at times from big episodes of psoriasis, depression or any other discomfort has a poor health? Would a couple that have been together for several years and who decide, for some reason, to separate for a period of time be considered unhappy and unfulfilled? Would an individual who has difficulties professionally be an unsuccessful person?

If we focus on a person's health issues, most of us would agree that he/she does not have the best health. But if we look at all that this person is we might find out that he/she ran 7 marathons in the last year and that his/her heart is in tremendous shape! The same logic applies to the couple who decided that a temporary separation was for their best interest. They probably felt sad for a while and were at times facing much confusion about the uncertainty of the future. Can we say though that experiencing difficult times and months of confusion are indicators of them being unhappy together? Maybe this separation allowed them to see more clearly and confirmed how good they feel when they are together.

We judge situations very quickly even when we have barely anything on our hands to assess the whole picture. Looking at the entirety and not only the specific helps to get a more complete understanding and, I believe, to find the positive in everything. It's not because you've stumbled during a mountain hike that your activity will be less fulfilling. Watching the entire journey is not always easy, but it is certainly a very wise thing to do. Paying attention to the forest and not just to the first tree that crosses your path can be extremely liberating. I decided to further explore my forest. What about you?