
THE
OPEN
DOOR

THRESHOLD 3

The Open Door

For many years I thought that strength consisted in control.

To control words.

To control emotions.

To control reactions.

To control pain.

It was an idea I had absorbed slowly, as happens with all deep convictions.

No one had taught it to me openly.

No one had told me:

"A man must not cry."

Yet that message was everywhere.

In conversations.

In behaviors.

In examples.

In glances.

In the culture itself.

So I learned early a simple rule.

To resist.

Always.

Whatever happened.

To resist.

As a young man I believed this was a virtue.

Today I know it was only a strategy.

A strategy useful in some moments.

Dangerous in many others.

Because everything that is held back too long, sooner or later, seeks a way out.

Pain does not disappear.

Fear does not disappear.

Sadness does not disappear.

They change form.

They hide.

They wait.

Then, when we least expect it, they knock at the door.

I remember a season of my life in which it seemed that everything demanded strength.

Work.

Family.

Responsibility.

Illness.

Decisions.

People who counted on me.

People who needed an answer.

People who were seeking a direction.

I could not allow myself to stop.

At least so I believed.

Every day I added a new weight.

Every day I pushed further ahead the moment when I would listen to myself.

Further ahead.

Ever further ahead.

It is surprising how long a human being can ignore his own inner world.

But not forever.

No one can do it forever.

There comes a moment when the body begins to tell what the voice refuses to say.

Fatigue increases.

Sleep changes.

The mind grows weary.

Emotions become more fragile.

And slowly you understand that you are not fighting against the world.

You are fighting against yourself.

The truth arrived in a simple way.

As authentic truths always do.

Without special effects.

Without announcements.

Without spectacle.

One day the weight became too great.

And the defenses too small.

I remember the silence.

I remember the solitude.

I remember the sudden sensation of not having to play any role.

For the first time in a long while I was not a professional.

I was not a father.

I was not a husband.

I was not an executive.

I was not an author.

I was only a human being.

And I cried.

Not an elegant weeping.

Not a controlled weeping.

A true weeping.

The kind that come from far away.

The kind that cross years.

The kind that carry with them things you did not even remember having kept.

While it was happening, I had an unexpected sensation.

Not of weakness.

Of liberation.

As if a room that had stayed closed too long had finally opened its windows.

As if the air were circulating again.

As if something, finally, stopped being held back.

It was then that I understood a fundamental thing.

Emotions are not enemies.

They are messengers.

They arrive to tell us something.

Ignoring them does not eliminate them.

It only makes them louder.

For years I had believed that courage consisted in not giving in.

In that moment I understood that courage consists also in letting oneself be crossed.

By pain.

By fear.

By sadness.

By truth.

People often imagine vulnerability as a crack.

I discovered that it can become a door.

Because in the moment you stop defending yourself from everything, you finally begin to know yourself.

And knowing oneself is much more difficult than winning many external battles.

From that day something changed.

I did not suddenly become wiser.

I did not suddenly become stronger.

I became more authentic.

Which is a different thing.

I began to speak differently.

To listen differently.

To look at others with greater understanding.

Because whoever has crossed his own pain more easily recognizes that of others.

He does not judge it.

He does not minimize it.

He does not immediately seek a solution.

He recognizes it.

And this recognition is already a form of help.

With the passing of time I began to see vulnerability in a new light.

The people I admired most were not the apparently invincible ones.

They were the authentic ones.

Those capable of showing their own humanity without turning it into spectacle.

Those who were not afraid to say:

"I am doing my best."

Because, in the end, this is what we all do.

Our best.

Some days it is much.

Other days it is little.

But it is always what we possess.

Looking back, I do not consider that moment a defeat.

I consider it a threshold.

One of the most important of my life.

Before, I thought that strength meant not crying.

Afterward I understood that strength means not being afraid of one's own tears.

Because there is a form of maturity that

arrives only when we stop pretending.

When we stop appearing.

When we stop acting.

And we finally accept our human nature.

Fragile.

Imperfect.

Wonderfully imperfect.

Today I do not remember the exact day.

I do not remember the hour.

I do not remember even all the circumstances.

I remember only what I learned.

That shared pain weighs less.

That truth frees more than pride.

That vulnerability does not destroy dignity.

It completes it.

And above all I remember a phrase that then I would not have known how to pronounce.

A simple phrase.

A phrase that changed many things.

I learned to cry.

And from that day I began to understand myself better.