

The Tale of Two Approaches

External vs. Internal:

In a small Indian town, a renowned ancient temple was in dire need of renovation. The temple board invited various groups to submit proposals, and after a rigorous selection process, two finalists emerged: a group of monks and a team of skilled craftsmen.

Both groups presented their cases, each confident in their ability to restore the temple to its former glory. The head priest, however, was torn between the two, and so, he devised a plan to test their skills.

He assigned each group a small, identical temple to renovate, providing them with all the necessary resources. After a fortnight, the head priest and his committee would inspect the temples and make a final decision.

The craftsmen's temple was a marvel of external renovation. The walls and roof were repainted in vibrant colors, and the furniture was rebuilt to perfection. The head priest was impressed, but little did the craftsmen know that their approach would soon be overshadowed.

The monks' temple, on the other hand, told a different story. Instead of repainting, they meticulously cleaned the temple, revealing its original, faded colors. The furniture was polished, and the doors and windows were left open, allowing natural sunlight to illuminate the space.

The result was breathtaking. The temple exuded a sense of serenity, tranquility, and harmony with its surroundings. The head priest was deeply moved, and his decision was clear.

This tale highlights the contrast between two approaches: external vs. internal. The craftsmen focused on external appearance, seeking validation and recognition. In contrast, the monks concentrated on the internal essence, allowing the temple's true beauty to shine through.

The monks' approach was free from desire, ego, and the need for external validation. They sought to showcase the temple, not themselves. Their method was one of cleaning up, rather than covering up, and their goal was to renew, not just renovate.

As the story illustrates, true renovation is not just about external appearances but about revealing the internal essence. The monks' approach serves as a powerful reminder to focus on the substance, rather than the surface.

Here's an analogy:

The Lotus Flower: A Symbol of Inner Beauty

Imagine a beautiful lotus flower. From the outside, its petals may appear delicate and stunning, but its true beauty lies within. The lotus flower grows in muddy waters, yet its inner beauty remains untouched by the impurities around it.

Similarly, people are like lotus flowers. Their external appearance may be attractive or unattractive, but their true beauty lies within. It's the inner qualities like kindness, compassion, empathy, and wisdom that make a person truly beautiful.

Just as the lotus flower's beauty is not diminished by the muddy waters it grows in, a person's inner beauty is not defined by their external appearance. It's the inner light that shines through, making them radiant and beautiful.

In contrast, external beauty is like a wrapper or a package. It may look attractive on the outside, but if the contents within are empty or flawed, the beauty is only superficial.

The lesson:

True beauty lies within. Focus on cultivating inner qualities like kindness, compassion, and wisdom, and your external beauty will radiate from within.