

## **It Does Move**

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Italian psychotherapist Piero Ferrucci has written a book called *Survival of the Kindest*. In his book, Ferrucci discusses the precious gift of connection, giving one's attention to another human being. He writes, "People who are suffering don't need advice, diagnoses, interpretations and interventions. They need sincere and complete empathy—attention." Once they have the feeling that another person is putting themselves in their shoes, they are better able to let go of their suffering and head down the path of healing.

When someone opens themselves up to you and puts their trust in you, it is the greatest gift of all. Just think about it: which relationships in your life have enriched you the most and why? These are nearly always relationships in which people gave you their trust, whereby you had the feeling that the other person trusted you. Putting your trust in someone is precious. It is the gift we should be the most grateful for.

Now here's a story from Piero Ferrucci's book *Survival of the Kindest*. It takes place on Boston Common, the oldest park in the country, and the beginning of the Freedom Trail. The characters in this story are two men with little in common. One is a well-heeled, high-powered attorney, the other a street-schooled, often ignored homeless person.

Rob slept on a sidewalk. Peter had a swank condo in the Back Bay. But every morning they would cross paths here on Boston Common, and over the course of several months, actually became good friends. How did that happen? Such contrasting men, living such different lives. You'd think after the weather and box scores they'd run out of things to talk about. And indeed, they did run out. So Peter the high-powered attorney gave Robert, the street-powered homeless person, a copy of a favorite book of his called *Water for Elephants*. Robert read the book. And discussing the book became their way of connecting, and a friendship was born.

Then one day Peter asked Robert what he had done with the book. Robert replied, "I gave it to a fella over there. I knew he liked read." So it occurred to Peter and Robert that there was an interest out there on the Boston Common that could draw people together. "You'd be surprised by how many people actually read," Robert said.

Peter and Robert started the Homeless Book Club. They meet every Tuesday in a church conference room. Peter buys the books. In the beginning he offered to bring in lunch too, but the members said "no thanks." They wanted this to be about more than just another free lunch. "For me it's a place to go and escape," said Donald, a member. "And to question things," said Louise, another member. "Yeah, I feel more sophisticated," said Jamie, a member, laughing.

Unlike the others, Jamie, who lives in a rooming house, says he never used to be a reader. His addictions were the priority. "I picked up the first book and started reading it and I couldn't put it down," Jamie said. Now Jamie is addicted to literature. "If I keep reading, and keep my mind occupied, I'm less likely to hurt myself in life," Jamie said.

Testimonials like that are now inspiring other people in other cities, even other countries, to start putting together their own homeless book clubs. And as for the homeless man who started it all – Robert – turns out, the only reason he couldn't get subsidized housing was because he had an unresolved moving violation on his record. Fortunately, he knew a good lawyer. Peter was able to clear up that traffic ticket, which is why tonight Rob is no longer on the streets. He's housed and working as a church custodian.

A connection; paying attention to another human being and giving, soul to soul. A thankful heart and a shared gift.

(Source: A Story About Connection: A Tale With a Storybook Ending by Steve Hartman CBS News. Found on [Helpothers.org](http://Helpothers.org))

### **It Does Move, Galileo**

I received a book from my father. It is a book entitled *The Future of Humanity*, and it is written by Teilhard de Chardin. Teilhard was a Jesuit Priest and a paleontologist. He is considered by many to be the grandfather of what is now called "evolutionary Christianity." I opened the book to the first chapter, skipped over the quote written in Italian (since I don't read Italian), and read these words.

The conflict dates from the day when one man, flying in the face of appearance, perceived that the forces of nature are no more unalterably fixed in their orbits than the stars themselves, but that their serene arrangement around us depicts the flow of a tremendous tide—the day on which a first voice rang out, crying to humankind, peacefully slumbering on the raft of Earth, "We are moving! We are going forward..."

I loved the quote and I became curious as to what conflict Teilhard de Chardin was referring to, so I looked back at the quote that I had skipped earlier: *E pur si muove*. Not only did I not know how to pronounce it, I didn't know what it meant, so I Googled the phrase and found that it means *We are moving*. I also learned who is famous for saying that phrase, the man was who, "flying in the face of appearance, perceived that the forces of nature" were not fixed but were flowing.

As the story goes, mumbling these words quietly to himself, Galileo left the session of the Inquisition that had found him guilty after a trial for "grave suspicion of heresy." The "heresy" was in connection with his publication of a book, *Dialogue on the Tides*, in which his belief in the Copernican notion of a Sun-centered universe had sort of "slipped in."

In Italy in 1633, suggesting that the earth – that rock-solid center of God's universe – actually moved around another body, the Sun, was not the wisest thing to do. In fact that idea could get you killed... or worse. Galileo got off easy; he was sentenced to life in prison, which, lucky for him, became permanent house arrest. In addition, he was commanded never to mention his idea again, his book was burned, and the sentence against him was to be read publicly in every university. But Galileo knew what he saw. "And yet it does move. And yet, we are moving."

### **Community Congregational Church**

You are moving! Moving together is the challenge. And it is scary. You have to let go of some precious things, but not everything. You have something precious to offer also: your love for one another. What moves you?

Feel the earth move under your feet and the sky come tumbling down.

And when the Spirit says move, you gotta move!