



The Great Exposure

“Sometimes there is only a sixty-second divide between youth and maturity, childhood and adult, strength and weakness, life and death. That life is vulnerable is the key to its longevity.

We are surrounded every day by the exposure to sudden and devastating calamity. Despite all efforts to the contrary, there is no device by which we may get immunity from the ‘slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.’

Here is a man (woman, non-binary being) in the full prime of active life, with all the strength and vigor of a rounded maturity – disease strikes, he withers and dies quickly, without warning and often without premonition.

Here is a carefree happy child surrounded by all the love that wise devotion and careless rapture can give – a plane crash, both parents parish and what at ten o’clock was a child becomes, at ten-one, a desolate creature shunted across the Great Divide that separates hope from hopelessness, dependence from independence. Thus, it goes in one vein...

Sometimes much energy is spent in a vain attempt to protect one’s self. We try to harden our fiber, to render ourselves safe from exposure. We refuse to love anyone because we cannot risk being hurt. We withdraw from participation in the struggles of our fellows because we must not get caught in the communal agony of those around us. We take no stand where fateful issues are at stake because we dare not run the risk of exposure to attack. But all this, at long last, is of no avail. The attack from without is missed and we escape only to find that the life we have protected has slowly and quietly sickened deep within because it was cut off from the nourishment of the Great Exposure. It is the way of life that it be nourished and sustained by the constant threat, the sudden rending.

Then...

Welcome to each rebuff.
That makes life’s smoothness, rough.”

- Rev Dr. Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart*