

The storyteller always had a way of getting to the heart of things that concerned his audience. I encountered him one day as he began telling a parable about relationships, and how they sometimes came to be:

There was once the owner of a pottery workshop who loved working his craft. He was moving some of his creations around when suddenly an adversary, jealous of his talent, ran through the pottery shop smashing items as much as he could. The person left such a mess, and the shop owner was somewhat crushed in spirit as well. But he set to the work of trying to put scattered pieces back together.

There were two broken pots that were kicked close to each other. The potter gathered the various pieces and tried to put them back together, but some of the shards were “mis-placed” and had become co-mingled. He did the best he could to put the pots back together, but some pieces became attached to the wrong original pots. Both pots were made whole in some sense and could be used again to contain water, as in the heat of the furnace along with the pitch and new clay<sup>1</sup> used to re-assemble them the pots became strong again even though they shared pieces of each other. There were small areas that showed gaps which had been filled in, and other areas extended beyond the surface of the original pot. The amazing thing was that these pots that had been so comprehensively broken had been given a new life with additional and strengthened character which had been introduced through the re-integration process.

When the storyteller finished his story, he caught my eye for a moment, and I realized that this story reflected my own situation and the relationship that had developed with my friend the artist. We were both broken and shattered when we met, but as we worked to put the pieces of our lives back together, in our developing relationship we found that pieces of each other’s lives were glued into our own, forming a lasting bond between us.

I also realized that as we became true helpmeets we are supporting each other with parts of ourselves; our strengths being fused into each other, and now we are linked together in a permanent way. We changed each other’s life – or actually through our “fusion” God changed our lives and gave each of us greater purpose and strength<sup>2</sup>.

1. The prophet Jeremiah stated that broken pot could not typically be repaired (Jeremiah 19:11), but consider the words of Nahum, “work the clay, tread the mortar, repair the brickwork” (Nahum 3:14).
2. The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. Ernest Hemingway, from *A Farewell to Arms* (quoted by Marilyn Monroe);