

STEP FIVE



STRANGER IN TINY TOWN

INDEPENDENCE

STRANGER IN TINY TOWN

Who you are now is because of the place you were born, the circumstances and events that happened in your life, the stories you tell, the you that observers, and the long string of people that helped identify your being. (Your Mom's voice in your head being one!) But at the end of the day, you are you.

You are your own unique person with your own unique perspective on life! You see the world from your very own I the Observer and no one else on this planet sees it exactly like you. Even twins have their own selves, their own make up of who they are, and their own point of view. That brings us to the next development stage of growth on this journey: Independence.

Independence is the stage at which you break away from the crowd, from the tribe, from the habits and behaviors that were given to you in your life, and you choose to have your own views of the world, you choose your own story, your own opinions, your own perspective on life and everything in it, including yourself. This is the beginning of gaining freedom to live life in a whole new way.

These independent growth spurts happen throughout one's life. It starts at the first time a two year old says, "No!" It is the reason teenagers rebel. It is why students change their majors in college and why people leave their jobs or marriages. Some go against the crowd more than others. Some have a naturally stronger independent perspective or personality in life. Some are allowed to voice their opinion more than others by family or friends or their community. Some are not.

WE ALL START IN TINY TOWN.

But, let's say you were born into a family of limited options. You only knew a few people. You lived in a Tiny Town perhaps. You saw only a few people and all these people

carried with them the same belief structure. There was no television or internet to show you the world outside of Tiny Town. You were isolated, alone in a sea of sameness.

If this were the case, your probable realities, your options for other possibilities, would be very limited. The sameness of each day would bring very few options for choices. In this Tiny Town world there would be a routine to each day that to some would seem safe, predictable, linear, consistent, familiar.

Familiarity equals safety to the human mind. It is how we learn what will hurt us and what won't. It is the phrase *the devil you know is better than the devil you don't know*. We would rather be faced with familiar danger than the unknown, even if the unknown could be better for us! It is the way we learn from infancy how to be in the world. Tiny Town can feel very safe.

This idea of Tiny Town could be your family, your town, your church, your country, your job, your world. It could be a physical place or a mental or emotional state of mind. Being born into this infinite possibility world can be overwhelming! The familiar of Tiny Town can par down the big into manageable small bites that are easy to understand. Tiny Town is the idea of living in a small World of Possibilities, of limited knowledge or options. It is a rigid structure that has many laws and ways of being that does not allow for growth. Ironically, it is very a natural state of being! Familiarity is good for survival. Knowing about how our world works makes us feel confident, secure, and solid in the world. We all grow up learning about life and it all starts small. We all start as tiny people in a Tiny Town.

We all start with a world presented to us in a way that is definitive in some way, shape, or form. We are all taught what the world is and how the world works by those around us. That is their job. That is our childhood. But we are not meant to stay tiny. We do grow up. Growth is also a natural occurrence in life and one that shows up at the door often times unexpectedly.

So here you are, tiny, living in the Tiny Town you were born into, with your Tiny Town family and your Tiny Town understanding of how the world works. You like or don't like some things, but all things are familiar to you. The same things happen in the same way in this Tiny Town.

Then one day a Stranger walks into Tiny Town. This stranger is very different. He looks different, feels different. He talks to people, tells them about different things. He says what is on his mind and what is on his mind is much different than what the people of Tiny Town have ever heard before. New ideas and new thoughts flow from this person's mouth.

Suddenly a whole World of Possibilities opens up to the people of Tiny Town. Exponentially they now have many more possible worlds, choices existing simultaneously within their realities. They have new ideas, new possibilities, and new options presented in front of them that they did not have before a Stranger walked into Tiny Town.

STRANGERS BRING OPTIONS.

Some do not like this. They can feel the options. Options mean change. Change means different. Different means less sameness. Less sameness means the unexpected. The unexpected leads to anxiety. Anxiety leads to anger. And in their anger they attack. They will do anything to hold onto their one possible reality.

Wars are being fought over this every day. Children are being bullied for this. Adults are fired, denied housing, beaten up, cast out and turned upon. Parents shun their children over

this. Siblings get in screaming matches over dinner over this. People are killed because they are a Stranger in Tiny Town.

It is an unconscious but natural human instinctive response to fight to keep the familiar. Some cannot handle change well. It is too much for their psyche and they will fight to keep their old ways. Their goal becomes to keep their one possible story as the only option for reality.

Cult leaders, Dictators, or those who need to stay in power over people, must limit the options for possibilities. They must not allow their members to see an idea, a world, or a person who is different than their version of reality. That one singular possibility cannot be questioned. Because when someone is offered an alternative to that one and only reality, it then gives them choices. They can choose to become another person or individual. They can choose to stop believing what has been taught. They can have their own opinions and choices in the world. They can, and do, often leave the old reality and the people in it behind.

That scares the people who live in their Tiny Towns who want life to stay the same! They don't want to lose people! They don't want change to come to Tiny Town, and they themselves for sure don't want to change. So they fight. They fight with manipulation, with guilt, with lies, with fear, and even with bodily harm. People do kill and die to keep their one reality alive each and everyday.

But a few people like this different viewpoint. A few people have always felt other possibilities existing, though no proof of it. They say, "There has to be another way," and "This can't be all there is."

These people are the revolutionaries, the trouble makers, and the questioners of authority. They, too, would receive some anger and pushback from those wishing to keep the familiarity of Tiny Town small. But, as long as they didn't talk too loud and continued to support the one reality of their Tiny Town they were safe.

STRANGERS BRING CHOICES.

But, now, this stranger has come to town! And this stranger shows them there is another way! They now have a choice. They now have so many choices! They can choose to stay in Tiny Town, leave Tiny Town, leave with others, stay and make changes, stay and make no changes. The world is open to them!

As the world becomes open to them, more possibilities open for them. As their possibilities open, the possibilities for the others in Tiny Town become open too! As the possibilities open for all it becomes less different and the people of Tiny Town become more open to more changes. Change itself then becomes less scary, which allows for more dialogues, and more possibilities! Tiny Town itself grows.

It is a domino effect that can and does change the world. The ones who fight Stranger in Tiny Town changes the hardest are the ones that understand this idea the best. They know that one person, one idea, or one stranger, different from their own Tiny Town, can unravel the carefully crafted world they have built around them. They know with one string pulled, the curtain falls down and all is revealed. The ones who fight the hardest are the most afraid of the Strangers in Tiny Town. They are terrified of losing whatever safety they feel in their familiar predictable and very tiny world.

What they don't know is a secret in this very Tiny Town. For it turns out, to Live in Possibility does not mean we have to leave our Tiny Towns or abandon every idea, belief, or

small world we have known to be true our whole lives. No. It means understanding that we have options, that there are other worlds out there, that there are other possibilities and that we are choosing this Tiny Town belief and life as our own.

It is okay to say, “No” to a Stranger’s ideas who comes into your Tiny Town! There is a reason society has created stranger danger ideas for children. Not all people, ideas, beliefs, or different viewpoints are best or good for us or our children. Often these “strangers” act like they know the child or their family. They use familiar as their bait. Ironically it is those who we are familiar with who can hurt us the most. New ideas, new people, new places are scary just because they are new to our Tiny Town familiar! New means we have to stop and decide if they are safe. We have a choice.

Living in Possibility means we do not act just because. We act because we choose. We are the ones in charge of our world and how we see our world. We do not need to accept anyone else’s beliefs about ourselves or the world as our own. We can choose!

Being a Possibility Person means you are discerning. You are aware. You ask Curious Questions. You learn. You discover. You grow. As you do, your Tiny Town will change, grow, and become with you!

One person’s decision can create possibilities, possible worlds, possible choices, and alternative possible lives for those who would otherwise not have known about choices at all.

This can be a very good thing, a great thing! We see someone succeeding who looks like us. They are our Stranger in Tiny Town. We read a book that inspires us. It is our Stranger in Tiny Town. We see a movie documenting another person’s culture. It opens our eyes to other Tiny Town worlds! We have an uncle, aunt, or cousin who has a cool career, or hobby, or business that we never knew existed and we want to try. They become our Strangers in Tiny Town.

We have a teacher tell us we are smart when we thought we were dumb. We see someone overcome addiction, poverty, abuse, to live a life of wellness. We are talked nicely by someone who looks just like people who were mean to us before. We eat new foods. We travel to new places. We learn a new subject in school. We change the channel and hear different points of view. All are Strangers in Tiny Town. All of these tiny yet memorable moments are Strangers in our Tiny Town belief systems that form who we are and what we believe is possible for us in our worlds.

This is how Strangers in Tiny Town work. That is how education works. That is how curiosity works. That is how learning about new to create careers, and worlds, and cultures, and people works! That is how a mentor can be the most significant person in a child’s life, finding those who have gone before to prove that we can too. That is the power of possibilities! It can change our world in an instant. It can create a world anew.

All because one Stranger decided to walk into one Tiny Town. After that, it is up to us. Decision is next.

