

757swim,

I hope this email finds everyone well! I'm going to apologize in advance for the length of this email, but I'm hopeful this story will impact someone the way it impacted me. Side note: The "how Morgan has changed" is towards the end of this email...I promise it wasn't just clickbait!

This week our sophomore class led the Gold group chat. They presented a parable: *carrot, egg, or coffee bean?*

The story goes like this:

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and the last she placed ground coffee beans.

She let them sit and boil without saying a word. In about twenty minute she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee into a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me what you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied.

She brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled, as she tasted its rich aroma.

The daughter then asked, "What's the point, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity—boiling boiling water—but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after being through the boiling water, its insides became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" she asked the daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I?

Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength?

Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after death, a breakup, a financial hardship, or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough, with a stiff spirit and a hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you.

When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate to another level?

How do you handle adversity? ARE YOU A CARROT, AN EGG, OR A COFFEE BEAN?

May we all be coffee beans! When things are at their worst, you can get better and change the situation around you. The sophomores then posed the question: *How have you changed with the situation around us?* I thought I would share my response with you all.

1. Became more resourceful

Growing up, I spent an abundant amount of time with my German grandmother, Rhine Hilda. She grew up in East Germany and spent years in a war camp in Demark. During her time at the war camp, she was taught how to be incredibly resourceful and this carried over into the remainder of her life. I would sit around her kitchen table and watch how she could stretch out any amount of food to feed an army. She could make leftovers taste and appear to be a completely different meal. She could take scrap materials and sew them into the most elegant something (clothing item, widow covering, comforter).

I have always wanted to be as resourceful as Rhine. It only took a pandemic to get some traction in this area. I can tell you that I have NOT started to sew, but I've taken huge strides in stretching out goods and repurposing materials.

2. Leaned into my community

For those of you who do not know, I lived in Jamaica post college, working for a non-profit. One of my favorite aspects of my time in Jamaica revolves in the sense of community. People showed up for each other. People went out of their way to share resources and experiences. It fills my soul just thinking about this as I type this email.

During this time, I have gotten to know my neighbors better (in a social distancing format). This has provided opportunities to share resources and experiences.

3. Became Bolder

I am incredibly introverted. I shy away from attention and like to recharge my batteries with alone time. For the past 15 years...??...okay, maybe not that long, but for a long time I have wanted to dye my hair. I've shied away from dying my hair, knowing that it would buck against

my introverted persona. Welp...the self-dye pandemic experiment was a true phase in my pandemic experience. I know, I'll have to take my hat off for everyone to see. But seriously, from the hair dying to stretching my comfort zone in other areas, I've become bolder during this pandemic.

Huge shout out to the Sophomores on sharing this parable! May we all be coffee beans! When things are at their worst, you can get better and change the situation around you. If you are in need of a dinner table question, maybe ask your people: How they have changed during the situation around us?

Stay strong. Stay healthy. Stay connected

#WeAre757