



A Quantum Moment

Messages from the Other Realm

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Altering Destiny

It was a small act. A generous one, I thought. To put a row of breadcrumbs on the railing for the Blue Jay in the nest opposite. I wanted to show her she was welcomed to stay at my home and raise her babies in the artificial tree I'd placed there, outside, under the top deck, away from the rain. It was the fourth year she'd perfected her first nest that ended in tragedy.

Last year, her third attempt, I'd scared her away coming out of the sliding glass doors leading to my pool for a swim—too many times, too early in the process. This year, when I saw her and her mate flying across the valley and diving under the top deck I knew they were rebuilding the nest for yet another try, so I vowed to tread softly to the pool and make as little noise as possible while I swam—no music this time, I wanted them to stay and be successful.

I prided myself in sharing my home with the creatures around me: 3 squirrels, a battalion of Robins and Finches, 2 chipmunks, yes, gophers, lizards, 12 deer, a beautiful fox and a very, and I mean very large brown bear. All were welcome to drink from my cascading fountain and cross my property. To prove that fact, I occasionally put out carrots and old broccoli for the deer, breadcrumbs and seeds for the birds, therefore it was no different for the Blue Jays sleeping below my top deck in the artificial tree. I would offer them a treat as well.

The first year I had not noticed the nest at all, I was rarely going out to swim then. One day as I walked across the lower deck, a Blue Jay flew out from the tree and I saw 5 little bobbing heads sitting in a nest within my height. Oh my, I thought, what a place to build a nest. It was an artificial Fichus, dragged up here from San Diego where I used to live, placed inside my home. There wasn't a place for it in this one so it was relegated to the outside, under the top deck, as I said, out of the rain.

I was thrilled to see the babies there. Each day I would stand by the sliding glass doors and watch the babies flap their wings and push each other around in the nest. I took pictures of them through the glass. Told my friends and neighbors about them, posted them to friends far away. As the days passed I thought they would soon be flying away.

One morning I came downstairs to see if they were still in the nest and to my surprise and elation they were not! They were all gone! I went outside to see if they were close by flapping their wings and making small flights. I saw feathers and bits of nest lying on the decking. Then I saw the blood, the smears of blood and feathers by the pool deck, around the corner, and then I saw the cat—sitting on my driveway, contented, licking herself clean. I looked at the murder scene: the tree and then I saw the table I'd pushed next to the tree to get it out of the rain right next to the nest and my heart sank. I hadn't known then, that the table next to the

tree would be a problem for the Blue Jay. I wouldn't have known because I hadn't noticed the nest, but still, after knowing about the nest, I was blind to the table being a stepping stone for a predator to take the babies. I never saw it in all the times I peeked into the nest. I never looked around to see if anything would put them in danger.

The second year they built another nest in the other artificial tree under the top deck, identical to the first one and only three feet away, but they abandoned it for a reason I do not know. The third year I scared them away. The fourth year I was determined to make them successful. I checked to see that the table was nowhere near the tree or anything else that might help a predator. I treaded quietly. I spoke to the Blue Jay often saying she wouldn't come to any harm this time, she could trust me, so don't be scared of me. She squawked back at me in these conversations. And kept coming back to her nest. I took a picture once when she was away. Four big beautiful spotted light blue eggs. We stared at each other when I came out of the sliding glass door each day. I was sure everything would work out. I was so happy! I wanted to give her a gift of breadcrumbs to prove to her I was happy to share my home with her. She accepted me.

I did wonder, though, if leaving out the breadcrumbs so close to the nest would attract other birds, birds that would scare her or harm her. I thought about this several times, even pictured it in my mind, a bird coming that shouldn't, but I put those thoughts out of my mind. I did nothing about it.

One day as I was swimming in my pool the Blue Jay kept squawking at me—flying about, coming to the railing, not eating the crumbs but walking over to them squawking at me then flying toward the nest but not settling down, instead, flying off across the property but returning in the next few minutes and repeating the same pattern: walking on the railing, squawking, flying toward the nest, veering off, flying away then returning. She did this at least twenty times. She did it until I got out of the pool and went inside. As I walked across the deck I stared at the crumbs and wondered again about them, but again, did nothing.

An hour later, I heard a thump and looked up to find a large Raven standing on the railing of the top deck. I ran downstairs and found the lower railing devoid of crumbs and the nest devoid of eggs. They were gone! Only a few sticks of the nest were scattered on the deck. The Blue Jay gone. Their voices gone. Their energy gone from my home and I knew it was my fault. I knew she was telling me to remove the crumbs—I had put her at risk by doing so—much like putting the table next to the tree.

I had altered the natural course of things by putting out those crumbs. True, the Raven could have found them without my help but that nest was really well hidden and in a very unlikely place for a Raven to look. Nature has a system that humans have no place in when things are working as they should.

My lesson in all this? To remember that life is set up for certain outcomes and if they are left to play out the purpose is achieved. If messed with or altered, that purpose is not realized. Instead, a different pathway opens up, a different set up created, a different end promised. That is the way life works. Stop feeding the wildlife! Question is, when is it appropriate to intervene? Ever?

In these sad days I wonder if the Blue Jay will return next year. I wonder if I will leave her alone then.