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Embracing the person I am

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Thich Nhat Hanh, the Buddhist teacher, shares a story in his book, No Mud, No Lotus, where he tells us that God said 'Let there be light'. Light apparently said to God, 'I need my twin darkness'. God in turn said, 'Darkness is already here'. So light said, 'Then I am also here'.

On reading this story, I was reminded of a preacher who once told a congregation of young girls that 'God made all good girls in green and all naughty girls in red'.

The preacher then turned towards a young girl and asked her what colour she was.



The child without hesitation said, 'I am streaky, a little green and a little red'. We are a bundle of what we imagine is good in us and what we believe is not so good in us, yet we keep telling ourselves 'I do not like my not-so-good side'.

This seems like a terrible paradox. Light is recognised only because there is darkness. Thus my goodness is highlighted because I also embody some qualities that people may consider not so good. If I choose to disown the part of me I do not like, I in effect deny even my good too.

A boss of mine in my first job once told me, 'I like you when you are obedient but do not like you when you argue'. I could not respond then, for fear of being asked to leave, yet I realised by saying what he said to me, he was negating who I was. It hurt for he was unwilling to accept me for who I was and was therefore denying me my humanness. I left the organisation shortly thereafter for I felt devalued..

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