

# WHAT DOES IT TAKE FOR US TO LISTEN?

*Rev. Paula T. Webb*

When I lived in Arizona, you really don't get much of a "winter" like most of the Midwest or East Coast. However, the temperatures in December and up until say mid-January can get down as low as the 30s in the evening and early morning hours. After moving to Arizona from downtown Chicago some years ago, my husband and I, although originally used to cold weather, had now acquired "Florida blood." Florida blood is the term I use to describe what our retired elderly relatives have, meaning, after retiring and moving to Florida after a number of years, when they would come visit us in Chicago during the Holidays, they were always cold even though the thermostat was set to 80° in our high-rise apartment. Of course, living in a warm climate for so many years had thinned their blood, and even a "balmy" day in Chicago with temperatures in the 40s would seem to be sub-zero temperatures to those Florida relatives. And, now the same had happened to my husband and I.

One "frigid" evening here in Arizona, I decided to build a fire in the fireplace. I believe the temperatures were somewhere around 45-50°, but on this particular night I felt really chilled. I went outside to get some firewood, and found the only piece to burn that we had left was an old piece that had been sitting in the log carrier for over a year. It was quite dry, and I knew it would burn well.

However, this particular piece of wood also had several holes in it. During the spring and summer months, one or two (I am not sure which), Carpenter Bees had burrowed into the wood to lay their eggs. For months, I would see the Bee(s) fly by the side of the house, on their merry way to work at clearing a space in this log for their newborns. Now, I never saw them go there in the evening, and I never saw them during the cold months, but once the temperatures started to climb, I would see the Bee(s) come back to this piece of firewood, working hard at burrowing, leaving a small trail of dust around the piece of wood. And eventually, I would see their young, rather golden yellow in color at first, make their first flight away from their 'home.'



I actually came to enjoy seeing these rather large, black fuzzy creatures, the buzzing sound they made as they flew by was quite distinctive, and quite loud. Their size was also unique, they were at least an inch long, if not larger. Several times one of them would get stuck inside the house and

I always knew where they were right away, as their buzzing would echo loud enough for me to find them, capture them in a glass and re-release them back outside. So, in my mind, the Bee(s) and I had a, shall I say, neighborly-type relationship. I enjoyed seeing them, and they might have even enjoyed the piece of wood provided them in our yard to lay their eggs.

Now, since I never saw the Bee(s) for months on end once the temperature got cooler, I figured they had moved on after their young had hatched and flown away to find their own homes. It never occurred to me that they might be hibernating in the firewood



primarily because the holes were never plugged up like say honey bees or paper wasps are, and when I looked inside the holes the Bee(s) had drilled, I couldn't see anything. So, I assumed that the Bee's eggs had hatched and flown away along with the parents.

As I went to pick up this particular piece of firewood however, I had a thought what if the Bees *were* hibernating inside? I shrugged off the thought, brought the firewood inside and starting making the fire. Although I did call my husband and ask him what he thought ~ he also asumed that the Bees had moved on after laying their eggs and the eggs having hatched had flown away as well. And so I lit the newspaper under the wood and thus began a nice toasty fire for a chilly Arizona winter night. Some moments later, I heard a horrible sound. It was the buzzing of the Carpenter Bee coming from inside the fireplace!

As I ran over and opened the fireplace screen, I could see a Carpenter Bee on top of the wood, trying to escape the flames. I grabbed a set of wrought-iron fireplace tongs and brought the steaming piece of wood out onto the hearth and brushed the Bee off the wood. The piece of wood was still burning, so I couldn't take it outside for fear of setting the living room carpet on fire, so I put it back in the fireplace and looked for something to put the Bee in to take outside.

The Bee was writhing in agony, it's little body moving from side to side on its back as it buzzed very loudly. Thinking it might just need to cool off, I put it in a cardboard box and took it outside into the cool air. Several minutes went by and the poor Bee was still in agony writhing as if its insides were exploding. I decided that I had to put this poor little creature out of its misery. I picked it up, all the while apologizing to it, carried it to the bathroom and placed it in the water of the toilet. It immediately went still and I pushed the lever to flush it down.

At this point, I was so traumatized that I started to cry. I could not for the life of me understand *why I had not listened to that voice in my head* that had told me maybe the Bees were hibernating. *What was wrong with me?* Why didn't I listen to that voice and at least go on the Internet and do

a bit of research before using that piece of firewood? What was the rush to *not listen to the voice in my head, the voice that I trust for so many other things?*

Now, you may be thinking that I am crazy to get upset over a Carpenter Bee, right?

However, the point of this message is not necessarily about one, or several Carpenter Bees per se, although I still feel horrible about burning it alive as I write this. What this message is about is the why and how we choose to *not* listen to our God-given voice, *not* listen to our spiritual guide, in other words; what is the thought process involved in using our Free Will to negate ideas and thoughts sent from Heaven above? Is it simply just Free Will? Or is it the need to be right? Or smart? Or.....?

There is no doubt in my mind that God sent that thought to me. He made me stop and think for a moment that there might just be one of His creatures, or several creatures, living inside that one last piece of firewood. And I didn't listen. I didn't listen because I made a decision to ignore His words, why? Because I thought I knew better...because I thought they had all flown away.

I convinced myself in that moment even after having the *very loud thought* in my brain that the Bee and its family might indeed be hibernating for the winter, that they couldn't possibly be in the piece of wood, simply because I had always seen the Bee(s) fly away. Pretty lame rationalization. *And certainly not one based in fact.*

After drowning the Bee, I went on the Internet to research the life of the Carpenter Bees. And much to my horror, my worst fears were realized. Yes, the Bees burrow into wood to lay and hatch their eggs, but they also hibernate in that same wood ~ *the entire family* ~ during the winter months. So, not only did I kill the Papa or Mama Bee, I had killed their entire family. Who knows how the others may have suffered deeper inside the wood? I could only hope they died quickly from smoke inhalation and not from being burned alive.

Over the next several days I lamented my actions, not of course for myself, but because of the true physical agony I saw this poor little creature endure, something I have never witnessed before. This little creature, these creatures that had brought me so much enjoyment for many months. These little creatures that did nothing to me except live their lives and I ended up torturing and killing them. I will never forget seeing the Bee suffer.

So I have to think back over my life and do some research in my memories, how many other times did I not listen to the voice in my head? How many other times might I have killed something, or someone else, possibly with an unkind word or thought or action? How many times might I have hurt another, simply because I did not listen to the God-given, truthful voice in my head because I thought I knew better? And then finding out afterward, that I did not know better?

Now I am not purporting to claim that I am the only one who has had these thoughts. Not at all! I know many people who have become vegans after visiting a beef or chicken farm, or some other

type of factory farming plant or simply changed their eating and living habits on their own. But how many times do we ever think about the insect kingdom? How many times do we think about what they may suffer, at our hands? Again, how many times do we disregard the truthful voice in our heads?

However, as I wrote in my book “Success without Fear™” even when an extremely large spider appeared inside our house, my husband and I took great pains to capture it and re-release it back outside blocks from our home! It never occurred to us to do anything else! And, when I say large, I mean large, the spider was as large as the palm of my hand. So even though I could or might tell myself that this incident with the firewood was a mistake (and several highly respected spiritual teachers have told me to look at it this way) it wasn’t. I got the “message” from God that His creatures were in the firewood, and I didn’t listen.

So where does that leave me, or anyone else for that matter, who chooses not to listen to the “Voice?” That’s simple. When you hear the Voice, simply ask yourself, “Do I want to be right? Or do I want to live my life from a spiritual perspective and trust that Voice?”

Everyone wants to be right, including myself! But I think at this point in my life and forward, I will choose to step into a higher sense of myself, a higher set of spiritual ideals, and try not to concern myself with being *right*, but rather with being a *good listener*. I don’t ever want to kill another living thing by being right at least to the best of my ability. And if that means listening to the Voice, while others may tell me I am wrong, well, that’s ok! Peace and Blessings!

### *IN MEMORY OF THE FAMILY OF CARPENTER BEES*

