

ENCOUNTERS

WITH A FOOL ON THE HILL

CAN I HELP YOU, YOU LOOK LOST?

NO THANK YOU I AM FINE, JUST HEADING DOWN HILL

HELLO AGAIN, YOU STILL APPEAR TO BE HAVING SOME PROBLEMS, I COULD HELP YOU.

NO AS I SAID THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU I AM FINE.

I REALLY DO THINK YOU ARE HEADING IN THE WRONG DIRECTION!

FOR THE LAST TIME NO THANK YOU! I DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS RIGHT NOW, I HAVE A LOT OF GROUND TO COVER, SO IF YOU DON'T MIND.....

PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO HIM, THIS GROUND IS SO OVERGROWN, STILL I'LL PUSH ON, SHOULD HIT SOME CLEAR GROUND SOON.

OH NO NOT HIM AGAIN! I CAN HIDE BEHIND THIS TREE UNTIL HE GOES.

NOW I REALLY AM LOST, THICK FOREST ON EITHER SIDE AND A STEEP DECENT AHEAD.

Wow! THAT IS A LONG WAY DOWN. THE GROUND IS UNSTABLE AND I AM LOSING MY FOOTING. THERE MUST BE A SAFE WAY DOWN. PERHAPS OVER THERE.

IT'S HIM IN THE DISTANCE. SHOULD I ASK HIM FOR SOME HELP? PERHAPS NOT AFTER THE WAY I SPOKE TO HIM BEFORE, WOULD NOT BE RIGHT AS I WAS SO ABRUPT. AFTER ALL HE WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP. IF I FALL THEN I FALL, ITS MY OWN STUPID FAULT. NO ONE ELSE TO BLAME.

I KNOW HE IS OVER THERE STILL, I CAN'T SEE HIM BUT I CAN SOMEHOW SENSE HIM? WEIRD!!

THAT WAS SCARY. NEARLY WENT OVER. JUST MANAGED TO HOLD ON. DON'T QUITE KNOW HOW. IT WAS AS IF SOMEONE OR SOMETHING HELD ME BACK, STOPPED THE FALL. AT ONE POINT I AM SURE I LOST MY GRIP COMPLETELY? MY MIND MUST BE PLAYING TRICKS!!

PERHAPS I SHOULD THINK ABOUT HEADING BACK UP THE HILL IT MUST BE SAFER THAN THIS.

YOU NEARLY FELL OVER THE EDGE?

WELL YES I SUPPOSE I DID, I SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO YOU. THING IS I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT I HAD A GOOD SENSE OF DIRECTION. SO STUPID OF ME. I WAS TOO EMBARRASSED TO ASK YOU. TOO PROUD I SUPPOSE. STILL, THAT'S ME ALL OVER!

WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW?

I MAY HEAD BACK UP FOR A BIT AND THEN CUT ACROSS, SEE WHERE THAT LEADS TO.

MORE OF THE SAME, GOING STRAIGHT BACK UP IS THE ONLY VIABLE WAY OUT OF THIS DANGER. IT'S TOO STEEP, I AM NO CLIMBER, I DON'T HAVE ANY EQUIPMENT OR SUPPLIES FOR A JOURNEY LIKE THAT.

YOU COULD TAKE IT SLOWLY, STEP BY STEP.

WHAT ABOUT EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES?

MOST PEOPLE WHO GO UP THAT WAY HAVE NO EQUIPMENT OR SUPPLIES, YET THEY MANAGE.

YOU KNOW I MIGHT JUST DO THAT THEN, GIVE IT A GO. I CAN SEE SOME OTHERS UP THERE IN THE DISTANCE. IF YOU ARE NOT AROUND I COULD GET HELP FROM THEM.

BE MINDFUL THAT SOME PEOPLE ON THE HILL HAVE BEEN KNOW TO GIVE BAD ADVICE.

WHY HAVE YOU TURNED BACK?

I WAS TOLD TO GO THIS WAY, ANYWAY, IT'S LEVEL GROUND, I AM NOT HEADING BACK DOWN.
YOU ARE ACTUALLY, YOU WERE WARNED TO BE MINDFUL... GO THAT WAY, UP THERE.

WHAT NOW, WHY HAVE YOU STOPPED?

I KEEP ON TRIPPING OVER, TOO MANY OBSTACLES. ONE STEP FORWARDS, THEN TWO BACKWARDS.
IT'S STEEP IN PLACES! I TOLD YOU I WAS NO CLIMBER.

I NEVER SAID IT WOULD BE EASY.

BUT I AM NOT CUT OUT FOR THIS. NOT ENOUGH EXPERIENCE.

YOU MUST KEEP ON TRYING. WHEN YOU FALL JUST PICK YOURSELF STRAIGHT BACK UP, DUST
YOURSELF DOWN AND CARRY ON UP.

BUT I FEEL SO STUPID. WHAT WILL PEOPLE THINK.

THEY ALL FACE THE SAME OBSTACLES AS YOU. OTHERS ALSO TRIP UP.

OK I'LL GIVE IT ANOTHER GO.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING NOW?

OVER THIS WAY. WHY?

IT'S NOT THE RIGHT WAY, I KEEP ON TELLING YOU, YOU MUST GO UP!

LOOK IT'S NOT AS IF THERE ARE ANY SIGNS TO DIRECT ME, THAT WOULD MAKE IT MUCH EASIER.

THE SIGNS ARE THERE BUT YOU MUST LOOK VERY HARD TO SEE THEM. JUST KEEP LOOKING.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING SITTING THERE?

READING. A FELLOW CLIMBER HAS GIVEN ME SOME BOOKS ON CLIMBING AND MAPS TO STUDY.
I'LL JUST CAMP HERE UNTIL I HAVE IT FIGURED OUT.

ITS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR ACTUAL CLIMBING. YOU COULD GET SOME ADVICE FROM AN EXPERIENCED
CLIMBER, OR JOIN A CLIMBING CLUB, THERE ARE PLENTY OF THEM UP HERE.

NO THANKS I AM CAPABLE OF UNDERSTANDING A FEW BOOKS. IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN SITTING THERE FOR?

A WHILE I KNOW, BUT I DID NOT REALISE IT WAS THIS COMPLICATED, NOT ALL OF THE BOOKS
ARE SAYING THE SAME THING AND I HAVE BEEN GIVEN A LOT MORE TO STUDY, I HAVE A FAIR
COLLECTION NOW, BUT EACH DAY I LEARN A BIT MORE, SO I MUST GET BACK TO MY STUDIES.....

IF YOU GO ON LIKE THIS YOU WILL HAVE A WALL OF BOOKS AROUND YOU! YOU MIGHT COME TO
THINK OF IT AS THE END OF YOUR JOURNEY, WHEN IN FACT YOU HAVE ONLY JUST STARTED IT.

YOU MUST GET UP AND MOVE ON NOW.

BUT.....

LISTEN! YOU MUST MOVE ON NOW, PUT THE BOOKS DOWN.

OK. PERHAPS YOU ARE RIGHT.

LOOK, THERE ARE SOME OTHERS, OVER THERE, THEY WOULD NOT MIND IF YOU WERE TO TRAVEL
WITH THEM FOR A WHILE, IN FACT THEY WELCOME OTHERS TO JOURNEY WITH THEM.

I'LL THINK ABOUT IT, NOT SURE IF THEY WOULD WANT ME TAGGING ALONG.

YOU ARE SURE THAT THEY WILL NOT MIND.

I AM SURE, JUST GO AND INTRODUCE YOURSELF, THEY WELCOME ALL. THEY WILL UNDERSTAND.

I KNOW THIS BECAUSE I KNOW THEM WELL, THEY ARE MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY.

YES, BUT.....

JUST GO!

HAS THE GROUP GOT A NAME?

THEY ARE KNOWN AS SAFESPACE.

TO BE CONTINUED.....