



spirituality spirituality spirituality spirituality spirituality  
 spirituality spirituality spirituality spirituality spirituality  
 spirituality spirituality spirituality spirituality spirituality



# The path of archery

by Paulo Coelho

Paulo Coelho explores the importance of repeating the same thing over and over...

An action is a thought that manifests itself. A small gesture denounces us, so we have to make everything perfect, think about the details and learn the technique so that it becomes intuitive. Intuition has nothing to do with routine but rather with a state of spirit that lies beyond technique. So, after practicing a lot, we no longer think about all the necessary movements: they become part of our very existence. But for this to happen, you have to train and repeat. And as if that were not enough, you have to repeat and train.

Watch a good blacksmith working the steel. To the untrained eye he is repeating the same hammer blows over and over again. But those who know the importance of training know that each time the hammer is raised and then lowered, the intensity of the blow is different. The hand repeats the same gesture but as it approaches the iron it knows whether to touch it harder or softer.

Look at the windmill. Whoever sees its vanes just once imagines that it always turns with the same speed, always repeating the same movement. But those who know windmills know that they are conditioned to the wind and change their direction whenever necessary.


The hand of the ironsmith was trained after the gesture of hammering was repeated thousands of times. Windmill vanes can move fast after the wind has blown a lot and polished their gears. The archer lets many an arrow pass far from the target because he knows that he will only learn the importance of the bow, posture, the string and the target after he repeats his gestures thousands of times without being afraid of making a mistake. Until he reaches the moment when he no longer needs to think about what he is doing. From then on the archer becomes his bow, his arrow and his target. How to observe the flight of the arrow. The arrow is intention projected into space. Once it is fired, there is nothing left for the archer to do except accompany its

path towards the target.

From then on, the tension necessary for the shot has no more reason to exist. The archer therefore keeps his eyes fixed on the flight of the arrow, but his heart is at rest and he smiles. At that moment, if he has trained enough, if he has managed to develop his instinct, if he has maintained his elegance and concentration throughout the whole process of the shot, *then* he will feel the presence of the universe and he will see that his action was fair and deserved. Technique makes both hands always ready, breathing always precise, eyes able to fix on the target. Instinct makes the moment of the shot perfect.

Whoever passes by and sees the archer with his arms open and his eyes following the arrow will fancy that he is stopped. But the allies know that the mind of the one who fired the arrow has changed dimension and is now in contact with the entire universe: the mind goes on working, learning everything of a positive nature that the shot has brought, correcting any mistakes, accepting his qualities, and waiting to see how the target reacts when it is struck.

When the archer stretches the string, he can see the whole world inside his bow. When he accompanies the flight of the arrow, this world comes close to him, caresses him and makes him relish the perfect sensation of having fulfilled his duty.

A Warrior of Light, after fulfilling his duty and transforming his intention into gesture, need fear no more: he has done what he had to do. He has not allowed himself to be petrified by fear, for even if the arrow fails to reach its target, he will have another opportunity, because he has not been a coward. 

Translated by James Mulholland ■ [www.paulocoelhoblog.com](http://www.paulocoelhoblog.com)