

**A Tiber Talks**  
**Vision Quest Tale**  
by  
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**EPISODE SEVEN**

**TIBER TALKS**  
**OF HABITS**



Travis had been enjoying this new school year more than he had thought he would, following a fun summer in the Catskills with his grandparents. He had also spent some quality time with his parents before returning to the school's academic and social routines. And it was great being with his friends to hear what their summer vacations were like. He couldn't tell them about his meetings with Tiber, his new mentor, and friend, but that was just another personal aspect of his life to keep to himself, and he felt that keeping it a secret was somehow satisfying.

The lessons that he learned from Tiber were really valuable stuff and a lot of fun to boot. Tiber always came into his life in very unusual ways. Once he was a mountain lion and then a dragonfly and then as many other animals, birds, insects, and even an elderly woman. This was Tiber's way of quickly grabbing Travis' attention and teaching him that there were many unusual ways of seeing what Creation was all about. Everyday life offered the so-called normal perspectives that got us through life experiences pretty easily and without too much conflict. But there were few surprises, even in that perspective. Then there was Tiber's way of seeing things, and that always had lots of unusual incidents when he shared them with you. They certainly took some getting used to, though. And he gave you unexpected explanations that sometimes didn't make much sense at first, but they always morphed into something believable if you made an effort to listen and learn.

Travis was thinking about all of those things while walking home after meeting with his friends at Starbucks. It was almost five-thirty and the evening chill was beginning. Travis found the newly cool weather invigorating. He always liked the temperature drop in the fall except when it was cold enough for his breath to turn to steam. It wasn't there yet, so he simply enjoyed a slight cooling inside his lungs as he quickened his pace to get home a little faster.

And soon, he arrived at the waterfront promenade near his Brooklyn Heights home. He couldn't resist stopping for a bit to look over the bay towards the Manhattan skyline. He leaned on the railing and continued to be sort of lost in thought. He felt a gentle rubbing on his pants legs and looked down to see what it was. He saw a beautiful calico cat that was slinking in and out between his legs and purring so loud that it was almost embarrassing. Travis loudly whispered to this cat and demanded, "Cut it out, kitty!" The cat didn't want to cut it out, and actually started to increase

the rubbing and purring. Travis decided to walk away from the fence and away from the cat. He headed towards a bench on the other side of the promenade. The cat followed him until they got there and then jumped up on the bench and ultimately on Travis' lap when he sat down.

Travis finally caught on and said with what he thought was a fierce scowl on his face. "Stop it, Tiber. I know this kitty is you, and definitely don't stay on my lap when you transform into whatever or whoever you are determined to become this time." The calico cat then jumped off of his lap and sat upright on the bench next to him.

The calico kitty looked up at Travis and roared. "You are determined to take all the fun out of everything, Travis. I think people walking by and seeing me as Tiber sitting on your lap would make their day, and certainly put a smile on their faces."

"Not on my face said, Travis. Definitely not on my face, Tiber."

"OK then, here we go." Then Tiber began to glow and expanded upward until he was sitting on the bench as a full-size middle aged man wearing Levi's and a polo shirt. Travis nervously looked around to see if anyone nearby saw this transition of a cat oozing into a grown man. He actually knew full well that Tiber would never allow that to occur, but Travis was apprehensive nonetheless.

Travis remarked, "That's better, but the cat was far better looking than you and had better manners as well."

"Smart-ass!", Tiber replied while flashing a huge smile.

"Back at you", Travis replied and then asked. "What is our lesson today going to be about, professor?"

"Your choice Travis! I have been so busy sneaking about chasing and eating mice and birds that I haven't had time to select a lesson, so you get to choose the subject. What will it be?"

"That's a downright disgusting thought. It better not be true that you have been killing and eating innocent creatures and then rubbing my legs. Thank God I didn't pet you."

"Forget it, Travis. I, like all cats, am one of the cleanest creatures that exist, and I might add that we have much more sanitary habits than humans do. When have you ever smelled a cat and found them with an offensive odor? I'm sure that I can't say the same about you."

"Ugh! Forget it, Tiber, and let's just get on with today's lesson and make it about habits, particularly knowing that cats apparently have such sanitary ones, according to you."

"OK! Habits are a great subject to learn a bit about. How do you define a habit, Travis?"

"Well, habits as defined by Merriam Webster, was a school subject a few days ago and they said that, 'A habit is a behavior pattern acquired by frequent repetition or physiologic exposure that shows itself in regularity or increased facility of performance'. Or, to keep it simple for certain older discarnate male professors, it is an acquired mode of behavior that has become nearly or completely involuntary."

"Very good boy! I appreciate the consideration of supplying a simpler description for us older discarnate males. But actually, I have been saddled with a considerable number of both bad and good habits in my many, many lifetimes. So I think I may be able to assist you in a better understanding of this subject matter than you think. But how did you come to pick habits as a subject that you need to obtain a better understanding of? I simply say that a habit is a behavior that is repeated regularly. This behavior can be an action, a routine, an obsession, or a lifestyle."

"Well, my mom has accused me of developing some less than perfect habits, but sort of leaves the details of what they are floating in the air after she makes the statement. I would prefer to make her and my dad happy about whatever habits I was nurturing, and figured that I would also be better satisfied in the long run by adopting some good rather than bad habits. So educate me please, meine professor."

"I will, my boy, and I am very pleased that you have learned another language, and German at that. How fluent are you in der duetschen sprache.?"

"Meine professor is just about the extent of it, but I was trying to impress you with it anyway, Tiber."

"Wonderfull!. But with that unique knowledge established, let's get on with the lesson in English, so I can go back to munching on the local birds and rodents. I will start out with my definition of a habit. With all due respect to Merriam Webster and others, I feel there is more to describing habits than the two definitions you quoted from them."

After waiting for Travis to stop shivering and gagging over the mentioning of Tiber's calico cat diet, Tiber continued. "We will use the Merriam-Webster definition of habits to start our discussion. But we need to discuss how any particular habit originates in a given person and how to decide whether it is a good or appropriate thing to affect your life. First, there's the why and how of the habit. The why of habits occurs if you like some particular thing such as something desirable. Such as to eat, drink or most any other affectations related to your mind or body, for some examples. If something tastes or even smells wonderful to you, you are going to have a tendency to want more of it, so you seek it out to satisfy your urges. Some activities affect your mental and physical activities. Often the physical act of jogging, fast walking, or working out by cycling, lifting weights, tread-milling or other exercises can become a desired or even needed impact in your life. Those activities often produce significant amounts of a group of peptide hormones that bind to opiate receptors and are found mainly in the brain. They are called endorphins and have been found to reduce the sensation of pain and affect emotions positively. Generally, all these and many more are perfectly fine habits unless they cross a certain line and become an addiction. It is quite easy for the human psyche to trend towards addiction, and in almost every case, this tends to become a bad thing, particularly when taking pain killers and recreational drugs to an extreme. Moderation in all things as you know my boy."

"I know!" Travis replied.

"Good intelligent response, my exceptional student! Now lets consider the how of establishing a habit. You must understand that having no habits is not a desirable thing because good habits are essential in providing a means of repeating a desirable characteristic. Repetitive exercise, proper eating, good pronunciation, excellent posture, predictable

bodily eliminations, and on and on help you determine particular habits essential for your growth. The reverse is also true. A bad habit in any of the preceding examples can seriously hinder proper actions and stunt the growth necessary for physical, mental, and spiritual advancement, essential for the process of growth and evolution. The capacity for habits has been inserted in our souls to provide an important aspect of our being human. This is to offset the fact that humans do not have the degree of instinct that most animals have. Most animals are guided by their instincts and because they have not been endowed with the extent of our wills, which is an essential aspect of our souls' evolutionary goals. It is intended by the Creator that we need to evolve into something more advanced than we are now, and a free will to acquire and maintain good habits is absolutely one of the most important elements in attaining that growth. Any questions, boy?"

"Nope!" And then, after receiving a very severe glare from Tiber, Travis said, "Oh!, except for sex. Can sex become a habit?"

This brought out a huge rolled eyes expression from Tiber. "How did I know that you were going to go there? Good, grief Travis! But of course, it can become a habit either for good or bad. If that is all you can think of, it is bad. If you are moderate in your habit's needs, it is a good habit, particularly if the pleasure is not all based on your needs but shared with your partner. Sex is a necessary tool for both procreation, and for sharing and caring. Just don't overdo it and do decide to engage in a sex act with making sure that it is desirable for your partner as well."

Travis smiled broadly at Tiber and remarked. "I was just yanking your leg, as I know all of those concepts from your previous lessons. I also wondered if you still remembered what sex was all about? Particularly with your age and lack of physical parts and all."

"Come on, Travis. You know perfectly well that I am ageless, and don't you worry about my parts. I have more of them than you can imagine, even though we use them differently than you earth-bounds do. And I have resided in your obstructed realms a lot more than you have, and remember that each and every sex act that I participated in was pretty exceptional. So there!"

"Well, don't get into a snit over it, Tiber. I'm sure you were excellent in everything you did, but I still don't want to think about it or envision it either. I put you in the same familiar's category as my Mother and Father and my Aunts and my gay Uncles. None of you in that category are supposed to engage in such things. At least as far as I am concerned."

"Oh my, how your attitude will change as you age, my Boy."

"Perhaps, but I just thought of another question. What is the best way to control bad habits or even to encourage good habits?"

Tiber answered immediately. "The solution is for you to create and implement the most important habit of them all, and that is to utilize self-discipline in everything you do. Discipline is created with motivation and willpower determined by conscious thought, and a commitment about what habit you want or do not want to become a part of your life. This requires an effort to study, by whatever means is available, to know what the consequences of any habit are likely to have on your physical, mental, and social health. You have to ask yourself. Do I want to accept the consequences of adopting this habit? If you do, so be it and if you don't like the possibilities, simply avoid it."

Tiber continued, "You also have to ask yourself if you will benefit in any way when acquiring a certain habit or if you might be damaged and let the habit become dominant in your life. As simple as this sounds, it isn't often a consideration for some people. Young adults will adopt a habit, particularly when it is popular with their peers and seems to be fun to do. Recreational drugs are a prime example, and even sugar-infused soft drinks or foods seem benign but really are not very harmless when they become a habit. And it took a long time in your current culture for people to understand that cigarettes and other types of smoking could do serious damage to your body and even kill you over time with constant or repetitive usage. And when you are a younger person, convince yourself of a truth that most habits, if taken to an extreme, keep a person from being their best, and who wants that when you are young and want to put forward your best image to your family and friends."

Travis was looking into Tiber's eyes while he was talking. He was so amazed that his friend and mentor had so many emotions that seem to be projecting from those radiant grey/blue eyes. There was an obvious

interest in who he was talking to. And there was evidence that he was caring for you. There was also a concern that he was getting his message across to Travis through his thoughts and words. And above all, there was love. It was different from the love Travis received from his parents or grandparents, and Travis knew that this Spiritual Love was honest and complete, and it radiated from soul to soul unaffected by any other influence that was likely to occur in the Obstructed Realm. Then he asked Tiber another question.

"How do you change a habit once it has become overly dominant and you have determined you don't want it anymore?"

Tiber responded, "Here again, our old friend, also known as your willpower comes into the picture. It is helpful to make a decision, which is another aspect of willpower, by the way. This will be giving you the strength to initiate, alter or destroy any habit, whichever choice is your goal. Simply having the thought to change something is never enough."

Then Tiber cleared his voice and began to speak with a more authoritative tone of voice. "You need to be deadly serious about this subject, and then use your willpower to make the changes you want to make. It's one of those efforts that is both simple and hard at the same time. There are three steps to doing this. First, decide to initiate the change, and this shouldn't really be very hard to do. Next, focus on the task of actually altering the habit, and vigorously work on that focus every day, in every way possible. Argue with and convince yourself that you will make the required changes and that you are the boss and you will prevail. Then work very hard avoiding the strength of the habit until you can bring forth the needed changes. It can be done, Travis!"

"Is that all there is to it, Tiber? Simply decide what I want to accomplish and then do it?"

"To use your sage expression, Yep! But you need to learn as much as you can about habits. And, in particular, the ones likely to affect you. Read everything you can from good books on the subject. Search the internet for relevant articles. Discuss the matter with friends and others until you don't have to question what habits are and how you can manage them to achieve your goals. Only then will it be easy to follow the three steps I had suggested to you. And with that, I feel that we have covered all



we need to speak of in this lesson. Besides, I want to get back to hunting for those tiny and delicious rodents and birds."

"Damn it, Tiber. Will you please stop reinforcing that image in my mind? I'm still retching from the first time you mentioned it."

"They don't make boys the way they used to when I was one. We always liked to make other people queasy and even get them to puke if it were possible."

"Goodbye, Tiber! It's going to be harder this time to say thank you for the lesson and even harder to say that I love you and look forward to our next lesson."

"Goodbye, Laddy! And I don't have that problem because I do love you and can hardly wait for the next session."

And with that, both Tiber and Travis leaned forward and gave each other a long, strong hug. Then Tiber did his glowing trick and started to transition into the calico cat and jumped off the bench, but not before rubbing up against Travis.

Travis smiled and sighed to himself and thought, "What a good friend to have." And then he too left the bench and began the walk home.