

*Third Place Winner*

# Harmony: The Rhythm Between Us

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There's something to be happy about.

Some days, it's hard to see it. The world turns with friction, like an old machine trying to remember its purpose. But then—there's a shift. A small one. A light breeze, a warm patch of sunlight, a familiar laugh from the other room. Something clicks back into place, and you realize: harmony doesn't always announce itself. Sometimes, it enters quietly, like mist brushing your skin at the edge of a waterfall.

Imagine standing on a rocky pier or maybe even a natural platform overlooking such a fall. The sound is thunderous, yet calming. The mist rises in clouds, delicate as breath, kissing your face like a whisper of grace. If you close your eyes, you can feel the entire world in motion, flowing and falling, surrendering and forming again. Water doesn't resist the fall. It embraces it—dives into it—and becomes more beautiful because of it.

This is the essence of harmony: not stillness, not perfection, but surrendering to the flow. It's the natural interplay between different parts of a day, a life, or even a person. One moment might bring chaos, the next peace. One room might hold laughter while another holds silence. Harmony isn't about eliminating discord—it's about making space for both and letting them coexist in rhythm.

Every day is not the same. And thank God for that.

Just like a waterfall, life has many points—some sharp and cascading, some soft and smooth. Human existence mirrors this. We all contain multitudes. We wake up some mornings feeling hopeful and others unsure. Some of us carry the weight of trauma, the echo of broken dreams, or the ache of lost time. Yet, we still rise. We still try. If we can just harmonize with ourselves—balance, connect, and recognize our own depth—oh, how meaningful life can be.

Would you be the one to put the pieces together?

Let's take a jigsaw puzzle, for example. The pieces aren't made to be forced—they're made to intertwine, to meet each other exactly where they're shaped to fit. You wouldn't begin by trying to force random pieces together. You'd start with the corners, the edge pieces—the vision. That's the part of life we often skip. We go straight to the mess in the middle without stepping back to see what we're actually trying to build.

So, picture this: I'm building my life puzzle. I start with a cliff—high elevation. That's my dream space. That's my big picture. From there, I look for other shapes—pieces that resemble waterfalls, rocks, trees, people I love, people I've lost. Pieces of my past. Pieces of my future. I try to make sense of it all. And just when I think I've found a rhythm—when the colors begin to blend and form something beautiful—I'm interrupted by the sound of quarreling siblings in the next room.

It's chaotic. It's loud. But it's real.

And now I have to ask myself: what's more important—balance or selfishness? Is my desire for peace more important than their need to be heard, to be understood, even in their messy way?

Maybe the answer isn't either/or. Maybe the answer is both. Because life, at its most honest, is a case of give and take. You give energy, you receive rest. You give forgiveness, you receive clarity. You give love, sometimes it hurts. But sometimes—it heals.

Everything is not the same. You may have serenity in one room and conflict in another. That doesn't mean harmony is lost. It means it's in process.

You can't have one without the other. And this ties to life, period.

Harmony isn't perfection. It's the art of blending. It's the space between dissonant chords that somehow still sound like music. It's a universal truth—opposites coexisting with respect and rhythm. You don't erase pain to find peace. You acknowledge it. You don't ignore noise to hear stillness. You listen to both. You allow each to have its voice.

The sun doesn't fight the night. It yields. The moon doesn't rage at the tide—it moves with it. The trees don't resist the wind—they bend. They adjust. They trust.

And so should we.

I think about the times in my life where I felt the most out of sync. Times I tried to force healing before I was ready. Times I resisted rest because I thought constant motion meant progress. Times I couldn't sit still in silence because it echoed too much truth. But in hindsight, all of it was music. Every offbeat, every pause, every missed note—it was part of the rhythm I needed to understand myself more deeply. And isn't that what harmony really is? Not agreement, but understanding. Not uniformity, but unity. The coming together of all your contradictions to create something you didn't think was possible. Something whole.

There's beauty in that.

There's beauty in broken voices finding pitch. In messy families choosing love over pride. In friendships that survive rough seasons. In strangers showing grace. In you—yes, you—getting up each day to try again.

Harmony doesn't mean you won't hear discord. It means you won't be defined by it. It means you can still create, still connect, still find flow in the cracks and imperfections.

I return to the image of the waterfall—how it's not afraid to fall. How it doesn't worry about what the rocks might say. How it gives itself fully to the journey downward, trusting that even in descent, there is purpose. That there is a place to land. And in that landing, in that wild surrender, something powerful is formed: a river that keeps going.

That's harmony. That's life. So maybe today, the mist meets your skin and you feel alive again. Maybe you start putting your puzzle together. Maybe you accept that it's okay to have noise in one room and peace in another. Maybe you learn to listen to both. Maybe you understand that harmony isn't a place you find—it's a rhythm you choose.

And maybe, just maybe, that choice is enough to carry you forward, one beat at a time.