



Parasites, Pearls and Pigs

Discovering your pearl and then
knowing what to do with it

Audio book and study guide

Barry Pearman

Parasites

Parasites have no other reason but to take the life away from the host.

In molluscs, such as oysters, a small parasite drills its way through the shell with the express purpose of taking the life away from the oyster.

Reflective questions

1. What has entered your life and wants to take your life away from you?

It could be small or large, but it's there. Unresolved and sucking your life away.

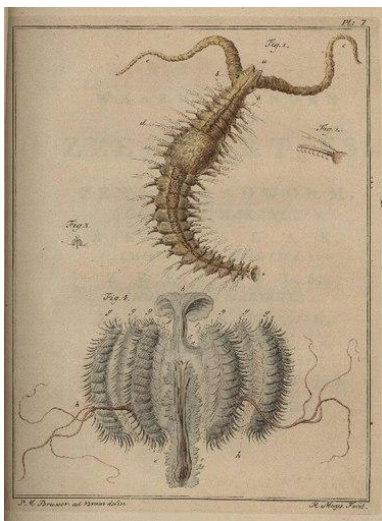
It could be a traumatic experience, major or minor.

A little slight may join hands with others and form a parasite.

What I fear most about stress is not that it kills, but that it prevents one from savouring life. Jean-Louis Seven-Schreiber

2. What parasites prevent you from savouring life?

Take ownership. Don't point the finger at others. Look at the attitudes and beliefs that have burrowed into your life.



Polydora ciliata

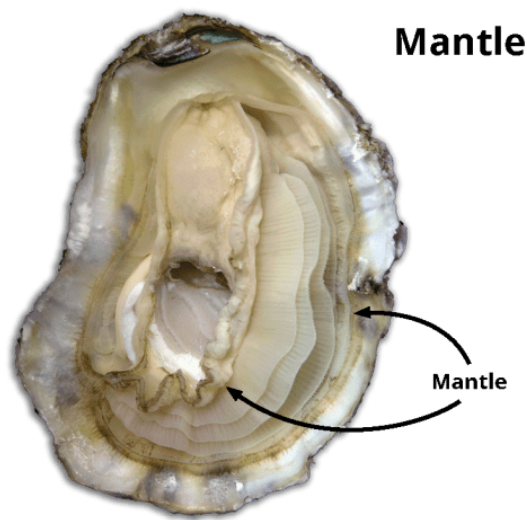
The Pearl

Inside the shell of the mollusc are various body parts designed to enable it to live its life to the fullest.

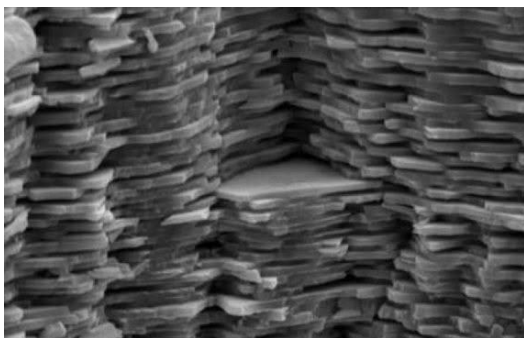
The purpose of the mantle is to create the shell. The protective layer on the outside.

It also has a role of protecting the mollusc from invading parasites.

When a parasite enters the body, the mantle secretes nacre around the parasite. Layers and layers of nacre (calcium carbonate) suffocate the parasite. This layering creates a pearl.



Electron microscopy image of a fractured surface of nacre



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bruchfl%C3%A4che_eines_Perlmutterst%C3%BCcks.JPG

Reflective questions

1. What is the purpose of a pearl?
2. What is the pearl a reflection of?
3. What has caused the pearl to be formed, and how was it layered up?
4. What are the layers that have been laid down to make your pearl?
5. What is the purpose of your pearl?

Your string of pearls

Rack the muck this way. Rack the muck that way.

It will still be muck.

In the time you are brooding, you could be on your way, stringing pearls for the delight of heaven. (Hasidic teaching)

Philosopher [Martin Buber](#) adds to this.

You can rake the muck this way, rake the muck that way – it will always be muck.

Have I sinned or have I not sinned?

In the time I am brooding over it, I could be stringing pearls for the delight of Heaven.

Martin Buber

Reflective exercises

- Write a sentence about a pearl of wisdom you have seen formed in your life from a battle with a parasite.
- Write some other sentences about other individual pearls.

String them together. One after the other.

- [Prayer beads](#)
- [Wreath of Christ](#)
- [Beads of Courage](#)

Read further

[Stringing Pearls for The Delight of Heaven](#)

The Pearl Merchant

Jesus tells a little story called the parable of the pearl.

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls;
on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

[Matthew 13:45-46](#)

Pearl merchants - those who know what a fine pearl looks like and then seeks them out.

Reflective questions

1. What is it like to be sought?
2. What is it like to be found?
3. What would a pearl merchant do with your pearl?
4. How open are you to presenting your pearl to those who are genuinely seeking it?
5. What are the qualities of safe people - pearl merchants - where you can share the pearl?

Reflective exercises

- The next time you are in conversation with someone, listen for the pearl that might be hidden. Ask gently curious questions as to the microscopic battle going on in the soul. What parasite is the pearl being formed over? Are you excited by what is being created?

Read further

[Parable of the Pearl: The Delight of Being Sought](#)

Pigs

Jesus once said this

Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you. [Matthew 7:6](#)

Pigs - those who don't value your pearl.

Reflective questions

1. What experiences have you had where you have presented the pearl to someone and they have not understood the value?
2. Have they, in a greedy demand for slop, mauled you and trampled your pearl into the ground?
3. What fences do you need to form to protect your pearl?
4. Do you value your pearl enough to protect it?

Read further.

[Throwing Pearls to Pigs](#)

What to do with your pearl?

You have a pearl.

You actually have a string of pearls.
What do you do with them?

You form them into a garland for God. Psalm 76:10

Reflective questions

1. Why do some people want to present their parasites all the time?
2. In what ways can you create your pearls into a living reminder for yourself?
3. How can you present your 'pearls of wisdom' to others respectfully honouring the parasite battle they are in?

Reflective exercises

- Create a piece of art related to your pearl. It could be some writing, a poem, a sculpture, painting, or photo. Really anything that captures your creative imagination. Share it with someone who is like a pearl merchant to you. Send it to me!
barry@turningthepage.co.nz

Poetry

The Pearl of Great Price

It drew me in
It held my gaze
Its beauty was a magnet
It held me all my days

This delight
This incredible joy
This pearl of beauty
Became my all in all

I sold everything I had
It captured and stole my heart
Everything else
Was second to this art

People thought I was stolen away
They wondered where I had gone
But when you taste the honey of God
All you want is more

Come find your pearl
There is one for you
You will have to surrender everything
Nothing else will fulfill

Sell everything you have
Burn the ships that call you to go back
Abandon hope in anything else
In this pearl you will not find lack

I found this pearl
Where others overlooked
Perhaps the greatest treasures
Are hidden in plain view

Barry Pearman

Under the mantle

Sweep over it with your mantle
Envelope it with your love
Don't let it burrow in
Take from me your hope

Make something good
Out of its hideous task
Layer the little worm
Suffocate with pearly glass

Layers of love
Layers of self respect
Layers of truth
Over lay plates of pearl

Rounded I will see
Wisdom pearls created be
Not the hard sharp angles of a bitter soul
But smooth, fine, and parasite free

I surrender to the work
Of the mantle of a man
Who walked this parasitic place
Pearls of wisdom in his hand

Come cover over my every hurt
Transform them in to something good
Pearls of beauty gifts for thee
All contained under shelly hood

One day I will present my pearls
Beauty on you to adorn
Wedding gown
Wedding feast
Silent love kisses oh so sweet

Barry Pearman

Stringing pearls

I'm looking for pearls
Scouring the land
finding the beauty hidden
Examining it in my hand

It's cost me everything
The pearl of great price
Others think I'm foolish
But they have not the pearl merchants' eyes

I take this precious pearl
This wisdom beauty formed
Drill the finest hole
Through the centre of its core

There is another pearl
I found within my soul
Another formation of struggle
Provision for me to show

I find a silken thread
Strong and created made
Thread it through the holes I've drilled
Knots on either side

Every pearl has a glory
There is a wisdom's worth
Every pearl has a story
Of how it came to birth

Each pearl becomes
A prayer bead on a thread
I recite the wisdom found
They keep me in good stead

I focus my eyes on the gift
Beauty out of struggle made
I only show them to a few safe others
Those who will honour Gods beauty made

Not to pigs or to dogs
Not to those who delight to rake the muck
They won't value the wisdom God has made
Out of all the yuck

I string a pearl
Angels sing a workman's song
Choirs break out in celebration
All for the delight of heaven

Barry Pearman

To be sought

Into the marketplace
He slipped unseen
Rummaging through fake beads
Until he saw me

I don't know why
I caught his attention
I'm simply some calcium carbonate
Layered into a ball

He examined me closely
I don't know what for
His gaze never left my surface
I could see he wanted more

I was a little bit scared
By his relentless steer
But it was his compassionate love
That calmed my fear

He was searching
I longed to be found
My purpose to be empowered
God's beauty unbound

I was never meant to hide
Amongst plastic baubles
Fake jewelry
Fig leaf garden lies

He sold his everything
To bring me to display
That's what happens
When agape comes to play

Both he and I now seek
Other pearls hidden away

Hidden under marketplace muck
Quietly longing someone to pay

Please pay quiet attention
Give 'no strings attached' love
I want to be owned
I want to be sought

I didn't think I had beauty
I didn't think I had worth
Until someone like you
Gave me new birth

Barry Pearman

I have this beautiful pearl

I have this beautiful pearl
It cost me everything
It fills a vacuum in my heart
Wisdom glowing in the dark

I have this beautiful pearl
People call me a fool
But they have not seen what I've seen
When wisdom stepped in the room

Pigs won't ever understand
The beauty of my pearl
They have not been where I've been
This beauty to unfurl

I have this beautiful pearl
Some say 'Sell it to feed the Poor'
But they know not the wisdom that can flow out
From the struggle with God's lore

I have a beautiful pearl
I want to share it's glow
Would you give up some time
For it for you to know

Wisdom is this pearl
Seek for it if you dare

You won't find it in a pigsty
Or in the Satan's lair

Seek and you will find
A beautiful pearl just right for you
An open hand is what you'll need
For wisdom to meet with you

I have a beautiful pearl
I will hide it in my heart
I will share it with the very few
Pearl merchants just like you

Barry Pearman

Blogposts

- [From Parasite to Pearl](#)
- [Stringing Pearls for The Delight of Heaven](#)
- [Parable of the Pearl: The Delight of Being Sought](#)
- [Throwing Pearls to Pigs](#)

Photo by [Paige Johnson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Did you find this audio book and study guide helpful?

Tell me about it.

I love to hear feedback. Email barry@turningthepage.co.nz