



**LOOK AROUND**

*If you try to comprehend air  
before breathing it,  
you will die.*

*If you try to understand love  
before being held,  
you will never feel compassion.*

*If you insist on bringing God to others  
before opening your very small window of life,  
you will never have honest friends.*

*If you try to teach before you learn  
**or leave before you stay,**  
you will lose your ability to try.*

*No matter what anyone promises—  
to never feel compassion,  
to never have honest friends,  
to lose your ability to try—  
these are desperate ways to die.*

*A dog loves the world through its nose.  
A fish through its gills.  
A bat through its deep sense of blindness.  
An eagle through its glide.*

*And a human life  
through its spirit.*

*—Mark Nepo*

It seemed like I had been programmed to “leave” before I “stayed.” In my constant attempts to improve my life with financial fixes, I had missed the lessons that were revealing that for which I genuinely longed.

I pondered the consequences of “leaving” before “staying.” Mark Nepo’s poem says that “leaving” would result in “losing your ability to try.” Could it be that staying, or honestly facing what was happening