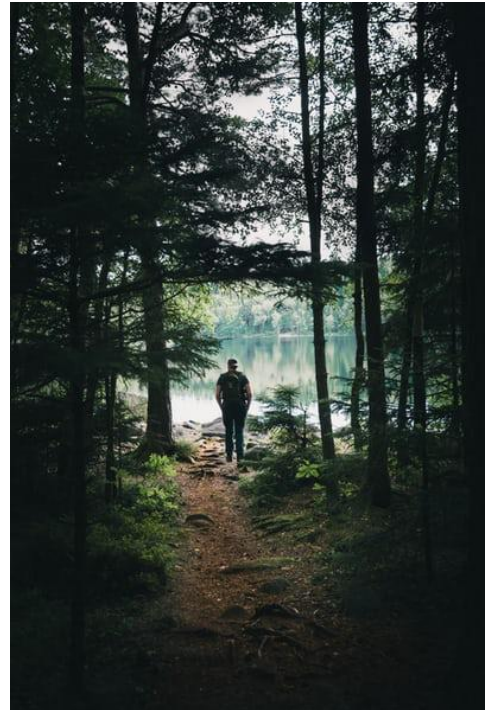


## **The Both And of Darkness** by Jules Christian

In this life it is easy to be concrete, black or white, all or nothing thinkers. We have perspectives, we choose sides and we place moments, people and the details of life into categories inside of our brains. Think about how often you see things as only good or bad. Be mindful of words like always and never. So much of the time this either/or thinking happens without us being fully aware.

I know in my lifetime darkness has been overwhelmingly ingrained in our heads as something evil, dangerous and something to be feared or avoided. Whether it is warnings of physical harm or spiritual doom, dark people, places or things are greatly impacted by the images that one sided thinking produces.

The good news is that we can change our thinking. The neuroplasticity of our brain allows us the ability to rewire or reprogram our internal thought processes. One of the most powerful lessons I have learned in my life is the power of the both/and. We can have faith and doubts at the same time, be filled with joy and sorrow in the same moments. And darkness is the same. When you think about being in the dark stretch your mind to include the both/and. Push back upon those ingrained images and consider and even say aloud the following about darkness.



Darkness is quiet and peaceful

Darkness gives our minds and bodies time to refresh.

Darkness is mysterious and filled with wonder.

Being in the dark allows me to see things I would not see in the light.

Dark skin is beautiful

I am safe in the dark

There is love in darkness

The dark was created by God and is good

God, we give you thanks for all that darkness brings. We ask you to forgive us for such narrow thinking and we ask that you stretch us to live, move and have our being in you. Knowing that in darkness and in light, in weeping and in rejoicing, in all things, you oh God are with us. Amen.