

# Paulo Coelho

The Brazilian author was born in 1947 in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Before dedicating his life completely to literature, he worked as a theatre director and actor, lyricist and journalist. His novel, *The Alchemist*, published in 1988 became one of the best selling Brazilian books of all time. He has subsequently published a string of bestsellers and sold more than 100 million books. His work has been translated into 67 languages. In 1999 France's government awarded him with its most prestigious title "Chevalier de l'Order National de la Legion d'Honneur". Since September 2007 the author is also Messenger of Peace for the United Nations.



## The story of the pencil

✿ By Paulo Coelho (Translated by James Mulholland)

The little boy was watching his grandfather writing a letter. At a certain moment he asked:

"Are you writing a story that happened to us? And is it by any chance a story about me?"

The grandfather stopped writing, smiled and said to his grandson:

"I'm writing about you, that's true. But the pencil I am using is more important than the words I am writing. I hope you are like it when you grow up."

The boy looked at the pencil with curiosity, but did not see anything special about it.

"But it's just like all the other pencils I have ever seen in my life!"

"It all depends on how you look at things. There are five qualities in it that if you can

manage to keep in yourself will make you a person always at peace with the world.

**The first quality:** you can do great things but you must never forget that there is a hand that guides our steps. This hand we call God, and He must always guide it according to His will.



**The second quality:** from time to time I need to stop what I am writing and use a sharpener. This makes the pencil suffer a little, but in the end it becomes sharper. So, learn how to bear some pains, because they will make you a better person.

**The third quality:** the pencil always lets you use an eraser to rub out what was wrong. Understand that correcting something that we have done is not necessarily bad, but rather something important to keep us on the path of justice.

**The fourth quality:** what really matters in the pencil is not the wood or its outer shape but rather the lead that is inside it. So, always take care of what happens inside you.

**Lastly, the pencil's fifth quality:** it always leaves a mark. In the same way, know that everything you do in life will leave traces, and try to be aware of each and every action."

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