

The Elephant and The Rope



Your attempt may fail, but never fail to make an attempt.

A man was passing tethered elephants when he suddenly stopped, confused by the fact that these huge creatures were being held by only a small rope tied to their front leg. No chains, no cages. It was obvious that the elephants could, at any time, break away from the ropes they were tied to but for some reason, they did not. He saw a trainer nearby and asked why these magnificent powerful animals just stood there and made no attempt to get away.

“Well,” the trainer said, “when they are very young and much smaller we use the same size of rope to tie them and, at that age, it’s enough to hold them in spite of repeated attempts to break free. As they grow up, they are conditioned to believe they cannot break away. They believe the rope can still hold them, so they never try to break free.” The man was amazed. These animals could at any time break free from their bonds but because they believed they couldn’t, they were stuck right where they were.