

The Emperor's New Clothes  
by  
Hans Christian Andersen  
(1837)

There was once an emperor who loved clothes more than anything else. He spent all his money buying them, and proudly showed off every new one that he bought.

One day two men came to the city where the emperor lived. Convincing the residents that they were weavers, they declared that they could make the finest cloth that ever was. In addition, any clothes made from that material were so remarkable that they were invisible to any man who was unfit for his office or unforgivably stupid.

The emperor knew he had to have a suit made from that cloth. Cost was no object. The two weavers were only too eager to oblige. But they had no intention of making a suit or anything else for the emperor; they merely pretended to do so.

The emperor and everyone else were curious indeed to see who among them might be exposed as unfit or stupid. Soon, eager to know how the weavers' work was progressing, but anxious lest he himself not be able to see it, the emperor sent first one employee trusted for his honesty, and then another and another, to observe.

Each employee in turn saw nothing, but after weighing the potential consequences of admitting that fact, even to himself, with some slight encouragement from the weavers, each convinced himself that the suit was the most beautiful he had ever seen, and they reported thus to the emperor.

Soon, the entire city was buzzing with the news of the emperor's magnificent new suit. Finally, one day, accompanied by several attendants, the emperor himself visited the weavers to witness their progress firsthand. And all were amazed by the remarkable beauty of the suit—which none of them dared admit to the others they were actually unable to see.

After the visit, plans were made for the emperor to wear the suit publicly for the first time at a special procession. The day arrived. The emperor undressed and was helped into his marvelous new outfit by the two weavers. They spared no superlatives in complimenting the emperor

on how wonderful he looked in the clothes. He echoed their enthusiastic comments.

Outfitted in his remarkable new suit, the emperor went forth into the streets of the city. There he was greeted by cheers of approval from the crowds, as each person looked, saw no clothes – and promptly concluded that he was mistaken and that the emperor was indeed wearing the most beautiful suit imaginable.

And then a child's voice was heard saying, "But he has nothing on." For so it was, as the naked emperor and all the other adults could no longer deny even to themselves.

Spiritual Lesson: *Surrounding ourselves with only those who tell us what we want to hear can deprive us of important truths.*