What I learned from an apple tree

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Apples on a tree that wasn't mine! Am I allowed to pick them? Without paying anything? Without giving anything in return? Without having done anything for it beforehand? I was allowed to!

It was a few weeks ago: we were driving across the country in our car. And there they were. On a country road. Apple trees, one next to the other. Red with apples.

I was over the moon with happiness. I picked and picked, eating three of the apples and piling the others in our back seat. Always more! I couldn't even pick all the apples (there were hundreds of apples still on the trees and hundreds more on the ground). I've had apples and apples over the coming weeks and wasn't even sad that quite a few of them got rotten. There were always others. I still had more than enough.

Why was that so special for me? Well, I believe in the phrase "There's no free

lunch". This means that you don't get anything for free. And if so, then with a hidden agenda. That you have to give or do something in return.

Let's take the man who offers you a wine tasting. He doesn't just give you a glass of wine. No, he expects you to buy a case of the wine. He wants to oblige you with his gift to do something good for him.

"There's no free lunch": Unfortunately, I think that applies not only in business, but also in the private sphere. Of course, sometimes we get something for free. But you won't be able to keep a friend forever if you're just the taker.

As an adoptee, I am convinced that this sentence "There's no free lunch" always applies, also and especially in the family. I – as someone who was given away by my family and adopted by strangers – believe I have to work for love, that I don't get it unconditionally. That I have to work for everything. And if I want an apple, I have to pay for it. And if friends give it to me, I have to give them an orange or something else.

And now this apple tree! Generous! Without expecting anything from me, except helping myself to its fruits. How happy I was!

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I started to think: I think there is such a thing as this “free lunch”. God's creation is available to me free of charge. The sun! "Sol lucet omnibus" says the Latin, in English: "The sun shines for everyone." In the Bible, the Sermon on the Mount says about God: "He lets his sun rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the just and the unjust." (Matthew 5:45). The forest I walk in, the clouds I watch with fascination, the squirrel that is hopping around in my garden - all free for me without having to do anything for it!

So, I've already clarified that - and now I'm approaching the more difficult topic for me: How about my family and friends? Couldn't it be that my parents love me just the way I am? That my kids love me just the way I am? No matter how I behave? No matter whether I give them something or not? It's hard for me to believe, but now I think there's a free lunch or two for me here too!

So, and now I'm eating one of the delicious apples!