Chinese Parable: Good Luck or Bad Luck?

Once upon a time, there was an old man in China who had one horse and one son. One day, the horse wandered away and was lost. Upon learning this, the neighbors went to the old man and told him they were sorry to hear about his bad luck.

“How do you know it is bad luck?” he asked.

Soon thereafter, the horse returned, and brought back with him many wild horses. Upon learning this, the neighbors again went to the old man, this time congratulating him on his good luck.

“How do you know it is good luck?” he asked.

Having so many horses, the son took to riding, and it so happened that he was thrown from a horse and broke his leg. Once again, the neighbors went to the old man, this time expressing sorrow at his bad luck.

“How do you know it is bad luck?” he asked.

Soon thereafter, a war broke out and the old man’s son, because of the injury, did not have to go to war.