“Why do we have to listen to our hearts?” the boy asked, when they had made camp that day.
“Because, wherever your heart is, that is where you’ll find your treasure.”
“But my heart is agitated,” the boy said. “It has its dreams, it gets emotional, and it’s become passionate over a woman of the desert. It asks things of me, and it keeps me from sleeping many nights, when I’m thinking about her.”
“Well, that’s good. Your heart is alive. Keep listening to what it has to say.”
“My heart is a traitor,” the boy said to the alchemist, when they had paused to rest the horses. “It doesn’t want me to go on.”
“That makes sense. Naturally it’s afraid that, in pursuing your dream, you might lose everything you’ve won.”
“Well, then, why should I listen to my heart?”
“Because you will never again be able to keep it quiet. Even if you pretend not to have heard what it tells you, it will always be there inside you, repeating to you what you’re thinking about life and about the world.”
“You mean I should listen, even if it’s treasonous?”
“Treason is a blow that comes unexpectedly. If you know your heart well, it will never be able to do that to you. Because you’ll know its dreams and wishes, and will know how to deal with them.
“My heart is afraid that it will have to suffer,” the boy told the alchemist one night as they looked up at the moonless sky.
“Tell your heart that the fear of suffering is worse than the suffering itself. And that no heart has ever suffered when it goes in search of its dreams, because every second of the search is a second’s encounter with God and with eternity.”
“Every second of the search is an encounter with God,” the boy told his heart.
“Everyone on earth has a treasure that awaits him,” his heart said. “We, people’s hearts, seldom say much about those treasures, because people no longer want to go in search of them. We speak of them only to children. Later, we simply let life proceed, in its own direction, toward its own fate. But, unfortunately, very few follow the path laid out for them—the path to their destinies, and to happiness. Most people see the world as a threatening place, and, because they do, the world turns out indeed, to be threatening place.
“So, we, their hearts, speak more and more softly. We never stop speaking out, but we begin to hope that our words won’t be heard: we don’t want people to suffer because they don’t follow their hearts.”

*From “The Alchemist”*