

Lessons from the Rosebush – Part I
By Jeanne Loehnis

You got to Stop and Smell the roses
You've got to count your many blessings everyday
You're gonna find your way to heaven is a rough and rocky road
If you don't Stop and Smell the roses along the way

from “Stop and Smell the Roses” by Mac Davis

These lyrics have been a reminder to many to slow down and appreciate the beauty that is all around. The rose bloom is irresistible and only those who are allergic willingly resist the temptation to pause and bury their nose in its petals.

There are gifts, lessons to be learned, from the rosebush beyond that of pausing to take note of the beauty. In fact, noticing only the beauty of the bloom, often captured and displayed in a vase, actually leads to certain browning, drooping, withering, and death. Oh yes, at times the flower, before this stage, is pressed between the pages of a heavy book and dried in order to “preserve” it. Yet, it is changed – brilliant red and that amazing fragrance do not persist. The bloom was never meant to last forever; its beauty is in the glory of the moment. In fact, the health of the bush requires that old blooms be removed – both to make room for more – and, annually, to prepare for a season of rest and renewal.

How often do you find yourself hanging on – to outdated clothing, children’s activities and toys they’ve long since outgrown, hobbies that no longer excite you? Perhaps you hang on to past achievements – your “day in the sun”? Maybe you are still hanging on to a childhood dream that no longer speaks to the person you have become, yet in its ongoing presence it serves to distract you from “getting on with your life”?

Letting go of the past – its successes, its failures, its joys, its sorrows – is critical to health and to ongoing growth. Letting go makes room for what is yet to come! Letting go frees us to nurture new avenues of creativity, new relationships and new areas of interest. Letting go of heavy expectations of ourselves and others permits a time for renewal, a needed hibernation from the busyness of life.

Scary? Sometimes. Does it have to be? NOT! How much of your life did you plan? How much has happened to you that you knew, without a doubt, was going to happen? Probably not much. This journey is unique and unknowable. “Hanging on” is merely the human “non-answer” to the great unknown. Life is constantly changing whether we want it to or not. So the “answer,” “preserve the present moment,” really isn’t possible. No, releasing yesterday and moving freely into today, flowing with the seasons of bloom and rest, practicing flexibility: these are the “answers” that lead to health, joy, and fulfillment.

Spirituality and the belief in some power greater than ourselves can be an aid in the letting go process. Consider the lyrics:

It's all about changing, rearranging.
Never does it stay the same.
It's all about changing, rearranging.
Life moves on from day to day.

Going through the daily motions
the bedrock starts to shift.
It seems I've lost my footing
for I've stumbled and I've tripped.

I pause to get direction.
Through memories I sift.
Yet only straight from Spirit
do I get the needed lift!

I thought I had the answer
and knew the way to go!
But here's another curve ball
and the way I do not know.

I listen for direction
from someone in the know.
Spirit speaks so clearly
telling me it's time to row!

It's all about making, ever taking
the next clear step that we can see.
We're doing the footwork, and we don't shirk
our own responsibilities.

And for my part I'll stop and pray.
I'll listen for the guiding way.
My life moves on from day to day.

From "Life Moves On" by Jeanne Loehnis

If we allow it, life is a joy ride – a (J)ourney (O)f (Y)es. Life can be trusted. Blooms can be released. Rest can be treasured. It is in rest that we turn within and reconnect with the strength of our inner being.

Take a lesson from the rosebush – bloom in all your glory – then release and rest. Honor the seasons of your life.

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