

Lessons from the Rosebush – Part II

By Jeanne Loehnis

In part I, we observed that all attempt to preserve the bloom is fatal. The glory of the rose, the end product of the bush, cannot last forever. Imagine for a moment, that it could.

Imagine the rosebush, supporting every bloom that ever came to fruition. In one season alone there would be more blooms than tips of branches! The weight of those blooms would far surpass the strength of the new growth that launched their existence. The process of nourishing the blooms, supplying sufficient nutrients and moisture, would deprive the leaves and stems of those very same necessities of life. The roots would suck the earth dry and eventually die. Without healthy roots, the plant would wither, the leaves brown and fall off. The gorgeous blooms? There would be nothing left to support them and they, too, would fall, alone and unsupported, and would wither, die, and rot.

Where does this vision part from reality? In addition to the attempt to preserve forever the bloom which is temporal, this vision of life ignores the very essence of life – the critical nature of ALL which participates in the process. The bloom does not a rosebush make. No, the bloom is but one expression of a life that requires rain, sunshine, earth, root, stem, leaf, death, decay. Don't forget the worms to aerate the soil and bees to pollinate!

In our goal-driven, product-oriented society, we are encouraged to “do more”, “be perfect”, “look great”. We are bombarded with images of the perfect body, the successful executive, graduating with honors and we come to believe that only these things have value. Too seldom are we reminded that behind every success story, every gorgeous bloom, are countless others who provided encouragement, learning experiences, financial support, ideas ... the very building blocks of achievement. Rare is the message that celebrates these other “blooms” – the roots, the stem, the leaves, the thorns – the supporting actors in life's play.

Everyone cannot be the flower, the visible manifestation of perfection. And everyone who reaches the stage of flower has, in fact, traversed life's lessons found in the root, stem, leaf, and bud stages. Many of us find that our unique gifts and talents blossom at these supporting phases. A few of us move through to flourish as a flower in full bloom. The trick is to honor and celebrate the gift that we are meant to be right now -- at this point in life.

Who are you today?

- Are you root, invisible to the naked eye, often unrecognized by the mind closed to the truth, working ceaselessly to gather and process nutrients before sending them on to others?
- Are you stem, the strong channel through which others receive nourishment?
- Are you thorn, sometimes hated as you provide protection for others?

- Are you leaf, visible and beautiful in your own right, yet open and receptive to ideas from the universe that you gather and transform into energy for use by others?

Perhaps ...

- you are blooming in all your glory?
- you are the bloom past your prime?
- you are the rot, yesterday's bloom in the process of letting go that you might be transformed by merging anew with life's sunshine, rain, soil?

Wherever you may be, are you celebrating and honoring this phase of your journey? If you have found your life purpose as stem, have you ceased striving to become the flower? Have you learned to value the awesome stem, the critical support that you are, in the lives of others? If you are the bloom providing all that the world defines as beauty and success, are you shining in all your glory? Are you letting others see in you gratitude and joy, as well as the inner strength, humility and perseverance that got you to this place?

Lesson #2 from the rosebush – each part of the whole fills a critical need. You have a job to do right where you are. Shine in all your glory as you do what's yours to do.

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