

Lessons from the Rosebush – Part III

By Jeanne Loehnis

In parts I and II, we learned that each part of the rosebush: leaf, stem, root, and all energy sources: sun, rain, soil, are critical to the production of the rose. And the rose itself, while intensely beautiful, does not last forever and would harm the bush if it did. The lessons we learned were the importance of releasing, of not hanging on too long to anything, and the lesson of being ourselves and celebrating our unique and vital role whether we are the bloom or the root.

In this, the final lesson from the rosebush, we no longer imagine ourselves as bloom or stem, thorn or root. Instead, we view our being as the entire, healthy rosebush. We are all of its parts: the strength of the stem, the bite of the thorn, the beauty of the bloom, the stench of the rotting petals which unite with soil to become nourishment through the hidden pathways of the root system.

Every life has its joys and sorrows, its day in the sun and its dark night of the soul: every life. No one is exempt from the ups and downs, which when acknowledged, accepted, and experienced as gift, provide for our every need. Without the rot, the rosebush has no nutrients for ongoing health. Without the process of working through challenges, we do not gain a depth of understanding meant to support our neighbor through her darkness.

Yet no one wants to experience pain. The natural tendency is to avoid it all cost! Creature comfort – isn't that what we work so hard for? Yes ... but ... as the saying goes: "Stuff happens". What do we do when life hits hard? How do we survive the tough times?

Imagine the lone rosebush in your front yard after a hailstorm. Not very pretty, is it? In fact, it may not even be standing after such a beating. Now imagine that same rosebush in a rose garden after that same hailstorm. Perhaps we see a different picture? Maybe, as hail was pelting on that bush, hail was missing each of the surrounding plants. The strength of the neighbors served to support the bush in its time of need. Just maybe, that very same plant after that very same hailstorm was alive and well because it received support from neighboring bushes during its time of greatest need.

How do we survive the tough times? On the physical level, we can look to community, to our friends and neighbors, coworkers and family. For emotional support, we can turn to counselors, books, and self-help groups. On the spiritual level, we may be fortunate enough to believe in a power greater than ourselves which wants only our good and which, through our faith, provides reassurance that "this too, shall pass". In the New Thought tradition, we are all interconnected in Spirit and have an endless source of good to support our life journey. Consider these lyrics:

The Tree of Life

There is but one great Spirit tree.
Connected one and all are we.
Its roots grow deep and nourish all.

Its branches reach out wide and tall.

I am a branch, unique and strong.
With other branches I belong.
As life delivered from the root
produces from us Spirit fruit.

Seasons come, seasons go.
Yet never stops the blessed flow.
Nourishment from deep within
is ever feeding us again.

And with each pause to stop and rest,
having given life your best,
feel the flow of Spirit true
strengthening the inner you.

Together, not alone are we,
connected to the Spirit tree.
Sweet love will flow through all who remain
one with the tree of life this day.

From "Tree of Life" by Jeanne Loehnis

All are connected to the single source of life and energy. We are meant to thrive in community, in mutual support of one another. Human life is bound to have joys and sorrows, times of activity and times of rest, times of being the rose, beautiful, front and center, and times of being the root, underground, invisible, doing the work of restoration to full strength.

Wherever you are on your life journey, whatever situation life has presented you with today, remember the rosebush. Know that moving through today is necessary for the overall health of your rosebush. Know also, that you are a bush in community. You are one unique, glorious, and needed bush in the rose garden of life!

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