



How to Cultivate the Garden of Your Mind
Create an Inner Sanctuary of Joy,
Peace & Tranquility

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“Every plant my father in heaven has
not planted shall be rooted up.”

--Matthew 15:13



My daughter's birthday is in May and we held a party for her at our home several years back. To prepare, my husband and I took on the task of re-mulching the flowerbeds in the front yard. For those of you who do not know what mulching is, because although I had always seen it, I didn't know the official name for it, it is basically the application of either natural or synthetic materials poured over topsoil or sand to help maintain moisture and regulate temperature during the various seasons. And, it just makes your yard look nice and purrtee.

As part of the re-mulching process, we raked up most of the old mulch and had to pull several weeds that had pushed through to the surface. Pulling the weeds was mainly my job. As I pulled those pesky plants, some slipped out rather easily. Others weren't as easy and required quite a bit of maneuvering to loosen them and free them from the soil. Others were so firmly rooted that I ended up snapping off the tops of most of them and had to use a hand shovel to loosen the sand around the weed and dig deep in order to completely set it free.

As I went through this process I realized how much pulling actual garden weeds paralleled the idea of pulling the mental weeds in our minds.

If you've ever been through an emotionally tough time and took the often difficult steps to heal, I'm sure looking back you can see how your own healing also involved weeding out the negative thoughts, beliefs and patterns that may have left you feeling vulnerable, naked, stuck, confused and hopeless.

Just as pulling the literal weeds in my front yard varied from extremely easy to surprisingly difficult, so will be the process of pulling the weeds from your belief system. And while this may not speak to all weeds, here's the discovery I made regarding the physical makeup of the actual weeds I pulled:

- 🌸 All run deep, some just deeper than others
- 🌸 Some have a long, thick roots with many small, thin roots extending from them
- 🌸 Some have just one long, thin root with no extending roots

Now before I go any further, I should tell you that weeks before the re-mulching adventure, I had pulled and plucked several weeds in their entirety (so I thought) just in the course of hanging outside with my kids while they played. To my surprise, by the



time we got around to re-mulching, many weeds had replaced the ones I pulled in the same spot!

AND, to make things even more interesting, we had pulled some of the old mulch back weeks prior as well and put down some black weed cloth that allows moisture to penetrate the soil, but does not allow weeds to break through to the surface. We only put the cloth down in one area to see how it would work and what I saw when we re-mulched the entire flowerbed was that weeds did not push through where the cloth was, but they did wind their way underneath the cloth until they found an opening in which to spring up! So, weeks later, here I was pulling new weeds and some of them I had to lift up the cloth to trace back to the origins of the surface weeds and their roots. Amazing!

In doing all of this, I learned some very interesting things about weeds in general and how whether literal or the weeds in our minds, they have the exact same





characteristics:

- 🌺 When extracting weeds, be it physical or mental, if the ENTIRE root system is not removed, IT WILL GROW BACK.

- 🌺 If only the top of the weed is cut or broken off but the root system or the erroneous belief system is left in place, the outer appearance will look clean, polished and well manicured. Unfortunately, this is a temporary fix. Eventually, the strength of that root or belief system will overpower the facade and weeds will start to break the surface of the soil and spring forth in the form of self-sabotage, procrastination, clutter, self-doubt, lack of self-care and love, short temper, anger, addictions, etc.

- 🌺 Even if you use weed-preventing measures like the weed cloth we put down, weeds will still manage to wriggle and maneuver their way to the first opening they can find if the entire root system is not destroyed.

So as it relates to the weeds in your mind, this is how I parallel the characteristics of literal to the figurative:

🌸 As you work to improve certain areas in your life by weeding out people, places, habits, beliefs, etc. that are not healthy and beneficial to your growth, if you do not extract the entire belief system, or the entire root of that belief system and its many appendages, some of those unhealthy people, places, beliefs, etc. will reappear.

🌸 Cleaning up the surface or the results of your belief system is only half the battle. Suppose you are someone who comes from a large family where you are the oldest sibling. Your parents (not meaning any harm of course) gave you the responsibility to be in charge and take care of your younger siblings. In many ways you became the parent by making sure the beds were made, teeth were brushed, chores checked off and homework was completed correctly. You prepared meals, cleaned house and watched over the younger ones while they played outside. From the maternal role you took on at such a young age, you began to believe that you *had* to be in charge in all situations.

As you've moved through life you've





taken on a domineering position of authority.

You've been an unfair and demanding boss or co-worker. You have few if any "true" friends because most just won't deal with your pushy attitude. You believe that you are just a "strong" woman and that most people are weak in comparison to you. In fact, you often use the words "strong, confident, self-assured, determined, motivated and resourceful" to describe yourself.

If you've been fortunate enough to find love you've probably chosen someone whom you can control as they possess a gentler more passive personality than your own. You make most of the decisions in the relationship and probably control the finances. His friends call him hen-pecked. If you have children your parenting style is all about power and control. Your children probably feel weak and more like robots than human beings with the ability to make their own decisions in *some* matters.

Again, you proudly wear the badge of being a strong woman who does what is necessary to get things done. But the real truth is deep down you feel cheated. You missed out on being a child yourself because you were

taking care of someone else's children. The roots of your belief system are that you have to be in control because you've always been in control and you don't know how to be any other way.

You never experienced being carefree or temporarily irresponsible because it was your job to keep your carefree and irresponsible siblings in line and to you that just wasn't fair! The experience of just relaxing and letting someone else take the lead is unfamiliar territory and you've heard people tell you "You need to loosen up" more than a few times.

The weeds that show up on the surface appear as overbearing, bitchy, domineering and possibly even Mother Hen to all. So even though you try to disguise your behavior as being a confident, take charge woman, the root of that negative belief system of being in control because you were cheated out of a childhood and thrust into a parental role way too soon was never removed. You only cut off the weeds on the surface and replaced them with buzz words, but you never took the time to truly get to the heart of the





matter, which of course is always found inside.

🌸 There are many mental weed-preventing measures like positive affirmations that you tell yourself daily. The problem with that however, is that if you are not digging deep to get to the root of your belief system, examine it and pull it out, the manifestations of that belief system, or the weeds, will wiggle their way right through your positive affirmations. So no matter how many times you tell yourself "I am abundantly prosperous and spend money wisely", if you are still spending foolishly by eating out for lunch everyday or buying a new blouse each time your boyfriend or husband makes you mad and you justify it by saying it's because "you deserve it", you haven't gotten to the root of the matter that causes you to believe you are not abundantly prosperous, which in turn gives you this false sense of justification for your poor spending habits.

If you want to kill the weeds of self-loathing and self-sabotage once and for all, there are some mind gardening rules you should become familiar with.

1. **Recognize** what types of weeds are showing up on the surface. Are you lazy or a procrastinator? Are you angry all the time or cloaked in guilt over something that happened in the past? Or, do you show yourself little self-love or respect by the way you dress and treat your body? Pay attention to and become aware of your behaviors and repeating patterns to help you identify where you need to focus.

Surface Manifestations:

Anger, Shyness, Sexual Promiscuity, Domineering Personality, Obesity, Worry, etc.



Negative Root System:

Fear, Buried Hurt such as domestic violence or sexual abuse which leads one to believe they aren't worthy.



2. **Understand** that when mental roots are deep, they took some time to create – they didn't just appear overnight. You'll have to do some focused processing to understand from whence and where the root was created. For example, you may have a base root of fear with an extension of a lack or limitation mindset. You

may not be able to pinpoint where that came from, but it is a reality in your life nonetheless and probably has been for a long time.

And here's how you'll know that it's been around for awhile using the example of money and finances...it is second nature for you to make comments like "I can't afford that", "It's too expensive", "I'm broke" or "I don't have the money for that". If you say these or similar statements, chances are when you were growing up you constantly heard your own parents saying these very things, or, you watched them work one, two, maybe even three jobs like my mother did just to keep the bills paid and food on the table. These experiences became your way of life and grounded your belief system that life is a constant financial struggle and you'll never truly be able to afford the things you really want.

3. **Decide** that you no longer need or want the negative belief systems that are rooted in your mind. Decide that you are going to completely eradicate anything that does not reflect love, self-acceptance and beauty. But keep in





mind, in this step it is as equally important to understand that taking steps without fully deciding isn't a full decision. Without fully deciding to be rid of a thing will not remove it completely. It will be like the chopping off the tops of weeds from the surface but not pulling the roots as mentioned earlier. Without making a firm decision, those weeds will continue to grow.

4. **Work** diligently to remove as many roots as you can. Some weeds will be easy, others won't. The easy ones won't take much more than you seeking out the origins and saying or deciding, "I'm done with you." Others will be more challenging. They will require deeper work: reprogramming of thoughts and beliefs, forgiveness, spiritual guidance, letting some things or people go from your life and probably some lifestyle changes.

“It is a lazy man who says ‘it is only because I have not time that my farm is overgrown with weeds’.”

--Nigerian Proverb

5. **Replace** those weeds you worked so diligently to pluck with beautiful flowers of new positive thoughts, ideas, expressions of gratitude, healthy mental habits and ways of being that will bloom into a life that is rich, abundant and colorful.



6. **Get Support.** We weren't meant to go through life alone. As women so many of us take on our responsibilities like adding a layer of fur to our bodies and we don't think we can shed that extra coat without feeling cold, naked and completely exposed. But the truth is, once we becoming *willing* to shed that heavy layer of over independence, we will find there are others around us who can and will embrace us and keep us warm and protected. It's called ASKING FOR HELP.

Just because you reach out for help does not mean that you are incapable or unable to successfully meet life's challenges alone. That is so

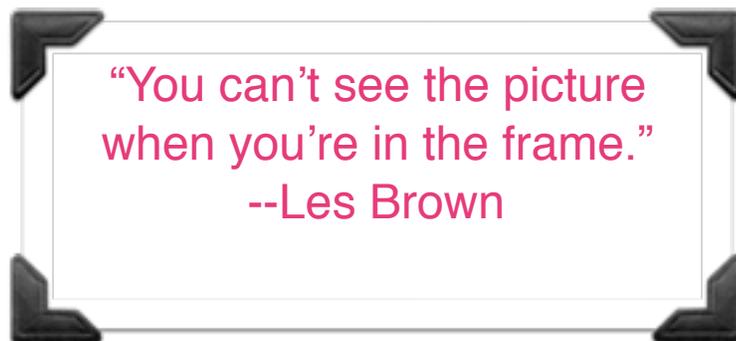


important that I must repeat it.

Asking for help is not a sign of defeat or surrender. It is a declaration to the survivor spirit within you. It is a sign that you are aware and conscious enough to know that there is strength in numbers and sometimes, we need someone

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outside of ourselves to be our eyes and help us see what we would not have been able to see on our own.



Of course family and friends are good choices as they love you unconditionally, but sometimes family and best buds love us too much to see things in an unbiased and neutral point of view. They may be as deeply embedded in the situation as you are so like





you, they are unable to view the situation from a different vantage point.

It is during these times where the help of someone like a coach or spiritual advisor who is specially trained to guide you through life's challenges is invaluable. Support groups or communities of people who share common interests and goals is another great option. They all provide safe and unbiased guidance and help move you into action by taking the necessary steps to embrace change. A trusted colleague or that really special friend who tends to view the world differently than most and looks at things with an open mind and isn't afraid to tell you the truth when you need it is a good choice as well.

I have no problem when it comes to asking for help. I am an advocate of coaching as I have used several different coaches in the past and continue to seek the aid of coaches, spiritual advisors, family and special friends in all areas of my life. I just can't imagine going through life without that extra support.

7. **Enjoy** the beauty of your new mental garden. Nurture and cultivate it through regular practices of spiritual and personal development so that it remains a place of

“One beam, no matter how big, cannot support an entire house on its own.”

--Chinese Proverb

love and joy and not one of worry, fear and doubt. When your mind is constantly nurtured and watered with loving thoughts and gratitude, you will find life's challenges can be faced with with more ease and grace and that

At first it may seem like a daunting task. **Let's be honest**, change can be difficult and scary. If you've been living with the weeds of erroneous belief systems in your life for a long time, remember, you wear their outer appearances like an added layer of fur.

Let's say for example you were told since you were a child that you are fat and ugly and you were never encouraged to appreciate your body or your beauty. The manifestation of your erroneous belief system or your extra layer of fur may show up as obesity and a sloppy appearance....something you've





been accustomed to since childhood because why on earth should a fat ugly person care about how she looks **The damage runs deep.**

Beginning the work will be difficult. You'll have to clean out your refrigerator and pantry of all the junk foods so you won't be tempted. You'll have to start eating smaller portions and your new food options will include more fresh fruits and vegetables, lean meats and less dairy. If you're a vegan or vegetarian that may mean fewer fried foods, sweets and fatty treats masquerading as healthy food because they're vegan and/or reduced fat...think reduced fat chips made with sea salt or coconut milk ice cream.

At the same time you're clearing out your pantry and fridge of junk food, you'll also be tasked with clearing your mind of the mental junk that's accumulated over the years. This process may be harder than tossing junk food. Picking yourself apart and being honest about your faults and shortcomings isn't easy for anyone, but it is absolutely necessary if you are to create a mental garden that flourishes in fertile soil. So be prepared for some discomfort and the surfacing of difficult emotions and as much as you'll want to quit and go back to your weed-riddled **stinkin'**

thinkin', take a deep cleansing breath and keep moving forward!

You'll have to begin exercising – something you may have never really done before, or you've done it and just didn't like it. Committing to an exercise schedule despite your already overbooked calendar will help keep you on track.

There will be temptations – office parties; daily stressors that will cause you to want to emotionally binge like you usually do; girlfriends and family members who may secretly want to see you fail because they need to lose weight too but don't want to see you leave their circle of overweight kinship, so they entice you with circumstances that could easily cause you to blow off your workout and indulge in some of your favorite unhealthy foods. You'll have to rise above all of these seemingly impossible challenges and tell yourself that it is all worth it in the end, that **you're worth it** – even though in the moment it doesn't feel like it.

And as you continue to stand firm in the decision you made and keep working at uprooting those negative belief systems, in time you will start to notice that the weight





is coming off and your body is taking on a new shape with definition. Your mind is becoming stronger and more confident as you deny the lies that were told to you as a child....those same lies you believed as an adult.

Before long, with diligent and consistent work, a new woman will emerge; one who is strong, healthy, confident and grounded mentally, emotionally, physically, and yes, even

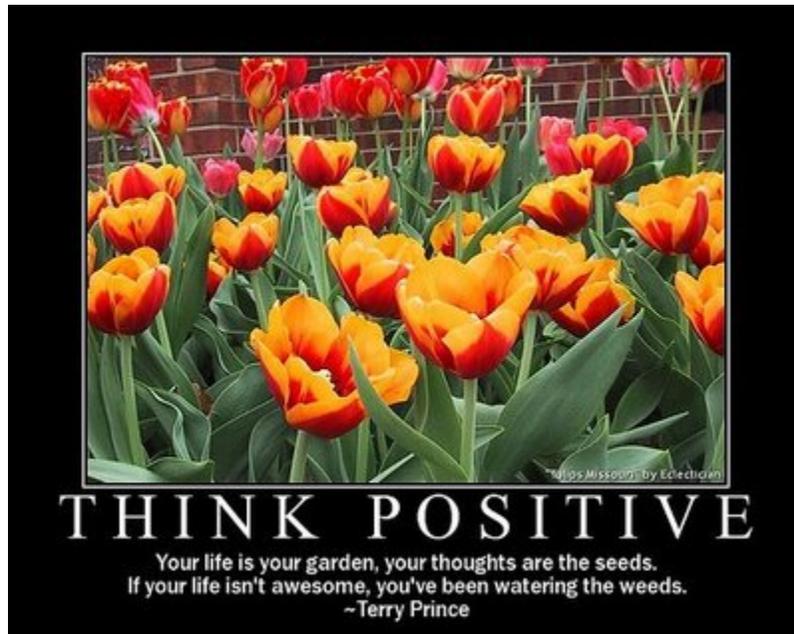


spiritually. Because let's face it, it is pretty much impossible to go through such an amazing transformation and not experience some type of spiritual growth.

But the truth is there really isn't a *new* woman that has emerged. It is the **true essence** of who you are, who you have always been – you finally just did the work that needed to be done so that you could step into being that remarkable woman.

This is what happens when you weed out the bad and negative—you create room for the good, positive and beautiful to show up. And when it does, you must do everything in your power to nurture it and keep it healthy. A few weeds may pop up here and there, but after the

massive work you've put in, you'll know how to quickly get to the bottom of the problem and yank them the in no time.



Life is a beautiful journey to be enjoyed and cherished, not a sprint that causes you to miss the joy and miracles along the way.

If you have some less than desirable habits, be honest enough with yourself to explore what could be the root cause, and once you figure it out, be open enough and willing to change. You don't need to seek outside of yourself for the answers (but you may need to seek support in the process and that's okay!). Everything you need is already





inside of you, you just have to be sick and tired of being sick and tired and truly ready to change the circumstances of your life. It's one thing to say you're ready and don't take action, but it's a completely different thing when you say you're ready, you're willing to change, take action and won't let anything stand in the way of you achieving your goals.

Allow the proper time and space needed to get acquainted with yourself. Be patient with yourself. A flower doesn't bloom in a day, but with consistent nurturing, love and attention, you will blossom to your full God-given potential.

I wish you a joyous journey of self-discovery.

In Love & Health,
Kitara R. Wilson

