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“Look To Your Weaknesses To Discover Your Strengths”

REFLECTIONS by...

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Summer time provides and excellent opportunity for each of us to slow down and truly take stock of our life. We can look back to see what we've accomplished along the way and look forward to determine where we would like to be a year from now. Sometimes, however, it is wise to ask others for their opinion as well simply because we often tend to be very hard on our selves and may not even realize that we have had a positive impact on others. What we may see as a weakness may actually be one of our strengths. Take a look at the following story and you will see what I mean.

A long time ago a water bearer in India owned two large pots. Each pot hung on one of the ends of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.



For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots of water in his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do. After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure,

it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream.

“I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you.”

“Why?” asked the bearer. “What are you ashamed of?”

“I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master’s house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don’t get full value from your efforts,” the pot said sadly.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, “As we return to the master’s house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path.”



Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half of its load, and so again the pot apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, “Did you notice that there were flowers on only your side of the path, but not on the other pot’s side? That’s because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you’ve watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master’s table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house.

The message from this story is that each of us have our own unique flaws. In a way, we are all cracked pots. However, what we see as imperfections in ourselves may not be considered as such by the people who are closest to us. In fact, as I stated earlier, what we think of as failures on our part may actually be our strengths as far as others are concerned.

So as you spend time in a reflective mood this summer, don’t be too quick to pass judgment on yourself. If you acknowledge your flaws and your shortcomings, you may discover that they are the cause of a lot of beauty and happiness that you never even realized. Look to your weaknesses and you too may discover your strengths, just like the cracked pot.