

We have choices to make and work to do. And so let me share a little story:

> An emperor in an ancient Far East country was growing old and knew it was time to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or his children, he decided to do something different. He called young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, “It is time for me to step down and choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you.”
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> The children were shocked, but the emperor continued. “I am going to give each one of you a seed today – one very special seed. I want you to plant the seed, water it, and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring, and the one I choose will be the next emperor.”
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> One boy, named Ling, was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly, told his mother the story. She helped him get a pot and planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it, carefully. Everyday, he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow.
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> Ling kept checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by. Still nothing. By now, others were talking about their plants, but Ling didn’t have a plant and he felt like a failure.
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> Six months went by–still nothing in Ling’s pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Ling didn’t say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow.
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> A year finally went by and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to

the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But his mother asked him to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace. When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other youths. They were beautiful–in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the other children laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, "Hey, nice try."

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. "My, what great plants, trees, and flowers you have grown," said the emperor. "Today one of you will be appointed the next emperor!"

All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. He thought, "The emperor knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!" When Ling got to the front, the Emperor asked his name. "My name is Ling," he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him.

The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, "Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!" Ling couldn't believe it. Ling couldn't even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor?

Then the emperor said, "One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds that would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!"

If you plant honesty, you will reap trust.
If you plant goodness, you will reap friends.
If you plant humility, you will reap greatness.
If you plant perseverance, you will reap victory.
If you plant consideration, you will reap harmony.
If you plant hard work, you will reap success.
If you plant forgiveness, you will reap reconciliation.
If you plant openness, you will reap intimacy.
If you plant patience, you will reap improvements.
If you plant faith, you will reap miracles.

We are all on edge right now, no joke, which is why we must be careful what we plant, because it'll determine what we reap tomorrow for ourselves and our loved ones. I admit I, myself, have a few weeds to pull. Ugh.

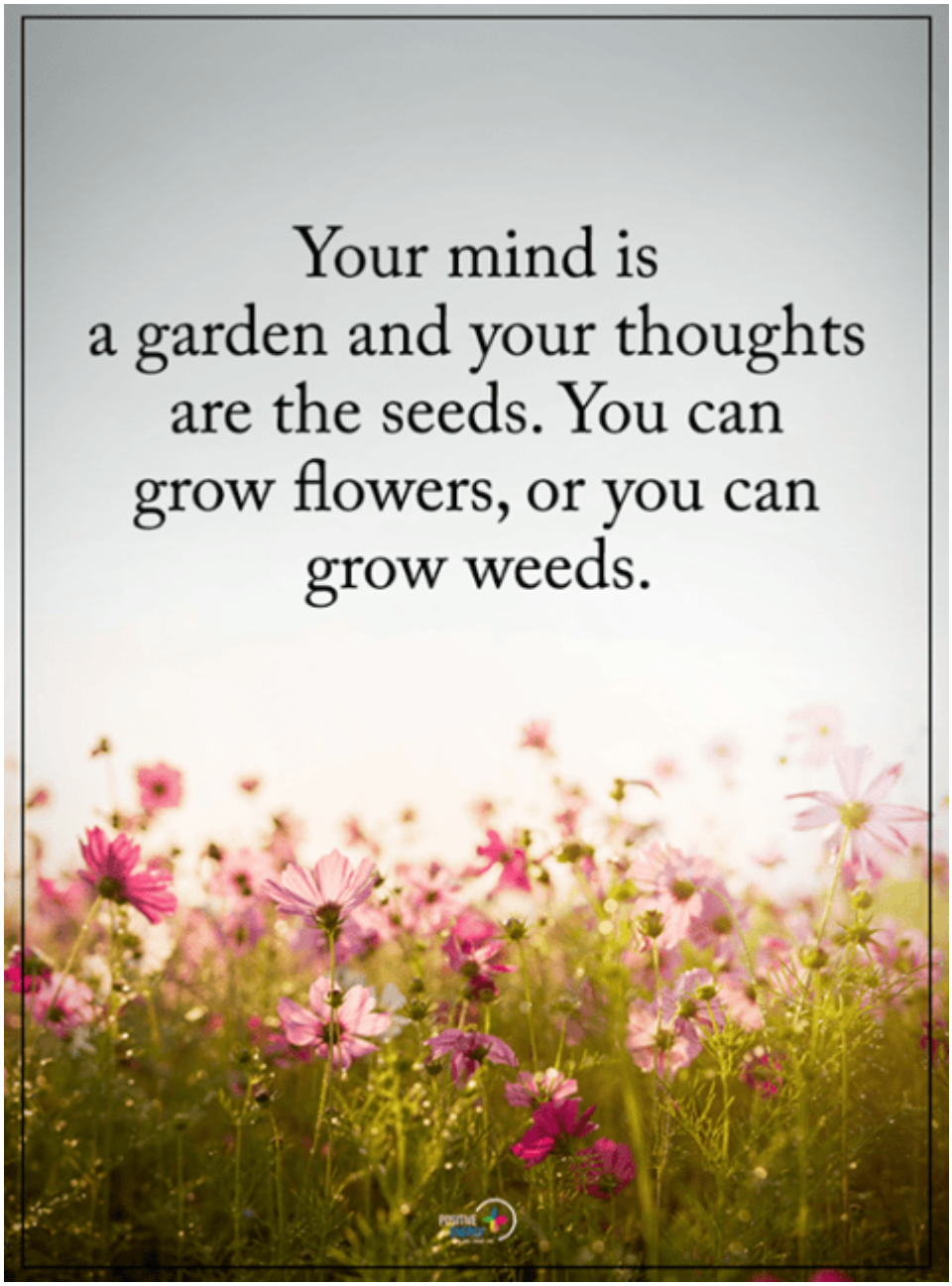
For every time the Lord nudges me to plant the right stuff in my garden, I am thankful.

What's in your garden, and what are you thankful for today?

Until next Thursday's post…si Dios quiere.

"You're frustrated because you keep waiting for the blooming of flowers of which you have yet to sow the seeds."
-Steve Maraboli

"Your brain is your garden, what you sow is what you will reap. Seed it with hope, positive energy, good manners, and creativity. Irrigate it with faith, hard work, and good company."
-Zeyad Massry



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