

Life is a Privilege - By Stan Southwick



When life gets difficult and it seems like everything is going against you, it becomes easy to lay blame on someone or something else. You may compare yourself to others who appear to be better off than you and then blame them for your perceived lack. There will always be someone with more than you, no matter who you are. I believe we all have challenges, trials and just unpleasant things we have to go through. If we start to compare our problems with someone else's problems, we will soon walk away and be perfectly content with our own issues.

Dan Crenshaw, is a former Navy Seal and member of Congress, lost an eye and was almost totally blinded by an IED explosion in Afghanistan. In his book Fortitude, he explains that whether a trial is an obstacle, or an opportunity depends on the story we chose to tell ourselves. He broke his leg in BUD/S training to be a seal and had to do it twice, lost his mother to cancer, and was left nearly blind in the IED explosion. He explains that we can see this as an "I have to" experience or an "I get to experience."

I don't have to suffer through hell week again.
I get the benefit of double training.
I don't have to suffer through the loss of my mother.
I get to live a hard experience and grow from the lessons she taught me.

I don't have to wear an eye patch.
I get to wear an eye patch.
I don't have to wake up nearly blind every morning.
I get to appreciate the gift of sight – any sight at all.

It is so much more productive to look around and find the good that you are privileged to have and then use it to make life better. The truly gifted person is one who recognizes their privileges and then lives up to those privileges. As they do, greater privileges present themselves.

"Accept – then act. Whatever the present moment contains, accept it as if you had chosen it. Always work with it, not against it."

Eckhart Tolle

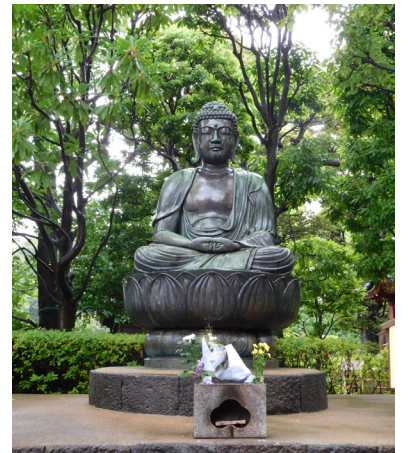
Favorite Flora: Euphorbia resinifera - By Jon Marenfeld



This month the favorite flora is one my personal favorites. While it may look like a cactus *Euphorbia resinifera*, or Moroccan Mound, it is actually a succulent. It is in fact one of the most hardy succulents and can handle temperatures down near 20F. It is native to the slopes of the Atlas Mountains in Morocco but has been cultivated here in the United States since at least the 1930's. The Moroccan Mound forms a tightly packed green-gray stems that grow vertically with the largest stems near the center. Each stem is square in shape with small white or brown spines along the ridges. It

may take a while but it will eventually be covered in tiny yellow flowers on the tips of the stems in later winter or early spring. A mature *Euphorbia resinifera* will grow to 1-2 feet high and 4-6 feet wide.

The Moroccan Mound requires little to no care once established. Plant it in full to partial sun in well-draining soils. Mine perform best with filtered sun at the hottest part of the day. Once established it requires little water but will need a little more during the hottest and driest parts of summer. Plant it as a specimen plant in a nice planter or in groupings with other succulents or cacti. A word of caution would be to handle it carefully. It will leak a milky-white toxic resin when nicked or cut. Just rinse off your skin if it gets on it and ensure that you do not touch it to your eyes or mouth.



Buddha sitting on lotus flowers
Japan
Cassi Dawes