

The Other Option... - By Stan Southwick



In a small Italian town, hundreds of years ago, a small businessman owed a large sum of money to a loan-shark. The loan-shark was a very old, unattractive looking guy that just so happened to fancy the businessman's daughter. He decided to offer the businessman a deal that would completely wipe out the debt he owed him. However, the catch was that he would only wipe out the debt if he could marry the businessman's daughter. Needless to say, this proposal was met with a look of disgust.

The loan-shark said that he would place two pebbles into a bag, one white and one black. The daughter would then have to reach into the bag and pick out a pebble. If it was black, the debt would be wiped clean, but the loan-shark would then marry her. If it was white, the debt would also be wiped clean, but the daughter wouldn't have to marry the loan-shark.

Standing on a pebble-strewn path in the businessman's garden, the loan-shark bent over and picked up two pebbles. Whilst he was picking them up, the daughter noticed that he'd picked up two black pebbles and placed them both into the bag. He then asked the daughter to reach into the bag and pick one. The daughter naturally had three choices as to what she could have done:

Refuse to pick a pebble from the bag.

Take both pebbles out of the bag and expose the loan-shark for cheating.

Pick a pebble from the bag fully well knowing it was black and sacrifice herself for her father's freedom.

She drew out a pebble from the bag, and before looking at it 'accidentally' dropped it into the midst of the other pebbles. She then said to the loan-shark; "Oh, how clumsy of me. Never mind, if you look into the bag for the one that is left, you will be able to tell which pebble I picked." The pebble left in the bag was obviously black and seeing as the loan-shark didn't want to be exposed, he had to play along as if the pebble the daughter dropped was white and clear her father's debt.

Moral of the story: It's always possible to overcome a tough situation through out-of-the-box thinking and not give in to the only options you think you have to pick from.

The last 10 months have provided some tough situations that require out-of-the-box thinking. The next several months will probably not be much different. This is a good time to reset our thinking, look at situations differently, and find win/win solutions to the new normalcies around us. Truly make this a Happy New Year!

"One who takes the road less traveled earns the rewards most missed."

Matshona Dhlwayo

Favorite Flora:

Pittosporum tobira 'Variegata' - By Matt Durham



We covered the dwarf version of the Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira* 'Wheeleri') in a previous SLAM edition. This month will focus on its full size, flashier relative. Variegated Mock Orange (*Pittosporum tobira* 'Variegata') grows to 6-8 feet tall and wide. This variety has variegated leaves, or leaves made up of more than one color, with a majority made up of mint green contrasting with off white edges. It is native to Japan, China and Korea but does well in lower water use landscapes in Las Vegas. This shrub is known for its hardiness and adaptability.

Variegated Mock Orange is grown in ornamental landscapes around the world. It can be left to grow naturally, shaped into hedges, or pruned into small trees. Variegated Mock Orange can grow in sun or shady conditions but prefers to avoid the hottest exposures in Las Vegas. Its flowers, which peak in the spring, are small, white, and insignificant to look at but are very fragrant. Try pairing Variegated Mock Orange with Fortnight Lily (*Dietes bicolor*), Sago Palms (*Cycas revoluta*) and Prostrate Germander (*Teucrium chamaedrys*) to create a lush, evergreen landscape.



Fall Colors
Duck Creek Utah
Cassi Dawes