

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on one end of a pole which he slung across the back of 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 home 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 water bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made. But the 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 must apologize to you," it said. "Why?" asked the water bearer. "What are you ashamed of?"

"I have long been able 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," the pot answered. "Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts."

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion and wisdom said, "As we return to the master's house today, *I want you to notice something*: the beautiful flowers along the way."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of how the sun warmed scores of beautiful wildflowers on the side of the path, and this vision cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, the pot still felt bad about its "disability"—because once again it had leaked out half its load—and thus once again it apologized to the water bearer for its perceived failings.

The water bearer said to the pot, "Did you happen to notice that there were flowers only on your

side of the path, and 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 have walked 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. If you were not just as you are, he would not have such beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique flaws; *we are all, in some way, "cracked pots."* But, if we will recognize this and the potential benefits of those flaws, we will see that we can "grace the beauty of the master's house."

Don't be afraid of your flaws or limitations. Acknowledge them and how they may confer advantages you may never have dreamed of in life's pathway. Go out boldly, knowing that in our weaknesses we often discover our strengths as well.