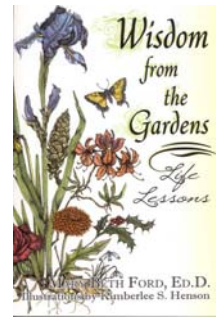




Dr. Mary Beth Ford's



Garden Wisdom Secrets

Trust and Uncertainty -- Life Lessons from Nature

Uncertainty is a predicament of life. The same questions continue to haunt us. How can we live in this uncertain world without fear? How can we approach times of uncertainty with trust? We leave nothing to chance. Chance is the enemy. But fear also eliminates opportunity for growth and renewal. Observing nature reminds us that all life has cycles of change and stability. We learn to trust that change and mystery are present in nature and in our lives. They are an integral part of growth and renewal.

Times of uncertainty offer the potential for renewal, as well as for despair. We have a choice.

The Chinese word for crisis has two symbols: one stands for danger, and the other, for opportunity. Our fear of the unknown signals danger and leads to isolation. We seek a safe harbor and allow our fear to act as an anchor, holding us in place. *When we choose to trust and let go of our fear, we accept the gift of unlimited opportunity.* But how do we learn to trust at this deep level? How do we allow ourselves the certain wisdom of not knowing what to do? We take these questions with us on our nature walks. We wait patiently. We know the answers will come from deep within.

Nature helps us understand that the essence of life is change and mystery.

As we stroll in nature during each season, we come to understand that the essence of life is change and mystery. A touch of sadness fills the air in late autumn as colorful leaves blanket the earth. The days grow shorter and colder. In late winter a lovely spring-like day follows on the path of a wicked snowstorm. Winter makes up its mind whether to stay or go. And such joy erupts a few weeks later as birds announce the return of warmth and light to the earth in a wild celebration of song. The seasons and their transitions give testimony. *Nature, like life, has cycles of change and stability--some predictable and some unannounced.*

Our life transitions offer us the opportunity to face uncertainty and learn trust.

Time in nature teaches us that each cycle passes. Change leads to stability, which sooner or later returns to change. Such is the rhythm of nature and such is the rhythm of life. *In both natural and human worlds these cycles and natural rhythms are meant to propel us forward.* They promote our growth and renewal. We learn to trust during times of uncertainty.

From observing nature, we discover that having less control opens us to the possibility of new directions and more creative responses to life. Our growing comfort in the presence of uncertainty helps us release our attachment to the known. Days of fear and doubt still come and go. But our lessening need for a particular outcome frees us from the specter of failure and disappointment. Having trust in life's process does not interfere with our goal-setting and our desire for a certain direction. It simply keeps us alert to seize other opportunities.