



# It's Time to Bear More Fruit

1 August 2014

## **Hello**

If like me you love gardening, and you are in the Southern Hemisphere, this is the time of year when your thoughts turn to pruning. It is time to chop off the old, dead wood and make way for fresh, new shoots to grow. Pruning also helps plants and trees take on a healthier and better shape.

Now plants are not the only things in need of pruning. So much of nature serves to provide lessons for our lives, and pruning is just one of these. In the same way that plants need to be pruned, so do our lives. A plant that is not pruned is full of deadwood, is out of shape, is overgrown, and loses its capacity to bear fresh new flowers, leaves, and fruit. When you don't make room for fresh, new growth, new growth slows down and the majority of what is left is the old and worn, and sometimes even diseased and dead. If you want to rid your life of the old and dead, and grow new, fresh shoots and bear good fruit, you also need to get pruning. Your life that is - not just the plants. As with plants, you need to prune at least once a year. Well once a year make sure you do a thorough job and then touch up during the year if you need to.

## **What tools do you need?**

Please don't attack yourself with pruning shears - they work for plants, not for people. As you prepare to prune your life, you need some solitude and time to think. You need some paper or somewhere to write or record your ideas. And you need to be committed to looking at your life the way it really is right now, and opening up to what you would truly want your life to be like. If you have goals and dreams written down somewhere then pull them out and reread them.

## **How much do you cut back?**

You cut back until the old, the dead, and the bits that pull you out of shape are gone. You don't cut back so much you destroy the essence of the plant and you don't pull out the roots unless the whole plant is dead. And as much as you may think so, you are not yet dead. As you are going through your pruning exercise bear this in mind. Leave your roots that ground you. Don't cut out so much that you change every single aspect of your life in one go. You have to look at a plant or tree to decide how much to prune based on the current state of the tree. And so it is with your life. You need to take a hard look at your life, and decide what is the right amount to prune?

## **What do you prune?**

Hopefully you have no branches coming out of your body unless you are dressed as a tree for a fancy dress party or school concert. So what do you need to examine to decide what needs to be cut back or even cut out? If something is diseased or rotting, then you do need to remove it entirely as it will just destroy the rest of the plant.

Let us look at some categories where you can prune. You can also add to these. When you think about your life, there may be some things that just jump out at you as in need of pruning. Do what is obvious and will make the biggest difference first. Sometimes doing the easy bit first is also a good idea as with one success behind you, your confidence increases that you will be successful at the less easy aspects.

Activities: Write down everything you spend time doing. Then tick the things that you love to do. Tick the things you need to do like taxes and flossing your teeth that are probably not much fun, but if you don't do them there are consequences that are not so nice ahead for you. Have a look at what is left. Make a cross next to anything that you really hate doing. Then go back and ask yourself why you are engaging in that activity. If it will get you somewhere in the future then maybe keep it. If you are doing it to please someone or because your best friend loves it or because someone told you that you should do it, but you really hate it, then chuck it. There must be something you can do with a friend or spouse or family member that you both like. If you find you are doing lots of things you cannot bear to please others or to satisfy the "should's" of society, then that is a habit you also need to prune.



Thoughts and beliefs: Examining your thoughts is not easy even though thinking is something we do most of the time. Cut out the negative and limiting thoughts that hold you back in life and that are not true. For example thoughts such as, "I can never have my dreams come true", "I will never be prosperous/successful/loved", "who am I to think that I could do.....", "getting older sucks", "failure is a terrible thing", "nothing good ever happens to me", etc. Getting older is not a terrible thing. A tree that is old but is well pruned and looked after is a beautiful and productive tree. If the thought is not a fact and it is holding you back from achieving your goals and dreams, then change the thought to something more helpful.

If you have guilt then dump it. If you have done something truly horrible then find a way to apologise and make amends and then let it go. If you are feeling guilty for something that you are in no way to blame for, then you really do want to work out why, and dump that guilt. If you need some help from others with pruning, then it is silly not to get it. After all few people can prune the really high branches without some help from equipment and professionals. So get some if it is required for some necessary pruning in your life - such as cutting out the guilt, shame, the addictions, and the fears that hold you back.

Behaviours and Actions: What behaviours can you cut out that will improve your life? Some examples could be eating too much junk food, drinking way too much alcohol, slouching on the couch too much, watching too much TV, never relaxing or having fun, arguing all the time. Included in behaviours is all your bad habits you would benefit from dumping.

People: Yes, there are people you want to cut out of your life. We become like the people we spend a lot of time around. No matter how conscious you might be you cannot escape this. If you have people who are putting you down, always criticising you, always telling you what you cannot do, then ask yourself why you have them around? Mostly all they do is make you feel miserable and less competent. You want people around you who help you be the best version of you. Be careful of telling yourself you can stay around toxic people and not let them affect you. For some

people their only fun is taking down others. And if you are the toxic person then you definitely want to think about a detox as part of your pruning exercise.

Environments: What does your home or your office look like? Is there some de-cluttering and organising required? Do you need to revamp some aspects of your space? Do you have furniture you like? Do you have too much furniture with nothing matching? What difference could a few new items or a paint job make to your space?

Now you can go overboard with pruning. Just imagine a rosebush pruned away to almost nothing. So realise that if your life needs a lot of changing you cannot do it all at once. Pick some things to work on and get busy with them. If you can make pruning your life one of your new habits then great - each year the work you will need to do will get easier and easier. If you have not pruned for ages, or ever, then expect a very overgrown, complicated and possibly messy life. You will probably have lots of work to do.



### **Benefits**

What will you get from all this work? You will get more focus, more energy, and more direction. You will find new goals and activities to pursue. You will spend your time more productively and happily. You will get your life back on track with renewed vigour. A life that is more in line with who you are and what you want.

Happy Pruning!