



A Personal Note from Single Steps Strategies Founder Mary Grace Musuneggi

Raising Plants and Other Living Things

When I look around at the signs of spring, the flowers, the trees, the bushes, the shrubs, and all the other greenery; I totally agree with the poet, Joyce Kilmer, who said that “only God can make a tree.” I know this because if anything is left in my hands to grow and flourish, it doesn’t survive. I somehow manage to take home a beautiful, healthy flower from a flower shop, or a thriving plant from a nursery, only to discover that weeks later it has withered and died. Not wanting to take any responsibility or blame for its early demise, I would only assume that it somehow committed suicide. I had always believed that it should be enough to give it water and sunshine, but it was apparent that it needed something more.

Then there is always that one person we all know whose house is filled with plants that are the fullest, tallest and that just naturally bloom more beautifully and more fragrantly than one could ever imagine. I have a friend like that. Her house plants grow double the size of any others I have seen. So during a conversation with her one day, I asked her to share her secret. Did she really have the proverbial green thumb?

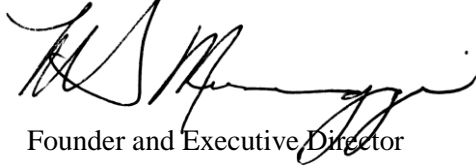
She told me that plants grow best for those people who care for them the most. When we bring them home we agree to be their caretakers. They depend on us for everything. We are responsible for furnishing them with adequate water and sunshine, but also with food, nutrients, warmth and humidity. They need us to protect them. They need to be kept away from extreme heat; from pets that gnaw and scratch them; from kids that bump them or knock them over. They need our time and attention.

As she was sharing her “secret” with me, I began to realize that what she was talking about could apply to all the living things in our lives. All living things need nourishment, caring, protection and attention. I started to wonder if there weren’t other living things that somehow I had left “withering on the vine?”

Do we somehow bring friends, and relationships, and even children and pets into our lives and then just assume that if we give them the basics to survive, that somehow they will? Do we routinely forget that for things to grow they may need more than just nourishment and sunshine? Do we overlook the conditions in which they exist? Don’t they need our time? Don’t they sometimes need our undivided attention?

We want our plants to grow, our pets to be happy and healthy, our friendships to flourish, our relationships to thrive and our children to prosper. When we bring them into our lives, we have to recognize the responsibility that we have committed to. If our relationship with these living things is not all we want it to be, maybe what it needs is more of the one thing that only we can give. What it needs is more of us.

Mary Grace Musuneggi

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Grace Musuneggi', written in a cursive style.

Founder and Executive Director

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