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### One is Roots, the Other is Wings

I was once a small, round pod with no significant features other than a dull color of beige. But with the water of the rain came the compassion and potential that oozed through the cracks of my seed coat until it soaked into the center of my being. For the longest time there was nothing; nothingness tests the strength of patience. But the water continued driving through to my core and the sun's rays possessed no hesitation when presented with the opportunity to toast the edges of my shell golden brown and warm my innermost being with the red hot desire for success. They never lacked in patience. The absorption of energy inside of my core expanded exponentially, then forcefully, and finally explosively; the pressure was only relieved by the blessing of sweet, green sprouts poking through the cracks of my pod.

The sun beat down upon my soft, newly grown leaves, which taught them how to protest failure in the face of destruction, and also to value the benediction of warmth. At times when the rain poured, drowning seemed inevitable. Gargling through the water, I would vow to curse the rain as soon as I had the breath to do so. In the hindsight of my sprouting life, the wet weather was teaching me to persevere and it was always present when I needed a sweet drink.

Time passes leisurely, unhurried, and steadily as one begins to grow. Sometime between the hard lessons and patient nurturing from both the sun and rain, I began to grow rough bark and sprout twiggy branches. I was not much of anything yet, but it was time for me to decide on my own in which direction I wished to flourish. There are many unanswered questions when making future decisions, but with the compassion I had received, I possessed the council needed to cultivate the new phases of my life. The greatest gift of all is teaching one how to plan and account for themselves. Even as a smooth, tiny pod, I was given so much love

that it could have drug me through hell with a smile for miles.

There is a quote from Hodding Carter that says, " There are two great things you can give your children: one is roots, the other is wings." I have been reading these words ever since they were hung in my bathroom when I was a little girl. (Or little seed, rather.) This quote captures the essence of the wise words of Benjamin Franklin that read, "Think of these things, whence you came, where you are going, and to whom you must account." *Whence you came* are one's gift of *roots* . The sunlight and shimmering rain in my life are my parents who were always there even *before* I had roots. This part of Franklin's quote is valid because in order to move forward, one must know where they are starting from. Remembering the roots of whence you came enables humbleness in the soul. Moving forward is not possible without the groundings of home.

Knowing where one is going is the path to success. Even if one doesn't know where they are going, setting goals sets dreams into place. Within the fate that life brings, almost all is spontaneous. But setting one's future and choices is completely up to him or her. Even in the most despicable circumstances of fate, it is the individual, and only the individual, that can pull his or her hollow self from the darkness and make what was in sight theirs again. This is what shapes success. My "roots" have guided me to be able to make these plans for myself. They have supported me, unconditionally.

This brings me to Franklin's last thought: *to whom you must account*. All the fame and money granted to an individual is nothing compared to the treasures they already contain inside themselves. These treasures are the gifts of lessons from the roots. Once one is to make it to the top, they are to look around and see who came along with them. Without our roots we have no origin; we may lack purpose. But if one

is to account all of their purposes, set all of their plans, and thank every village member that it took to raise them, there is nothing standing in their way of having a fulfilled, happy life.