

*Hope,
The Miracle
Hibiscus*



*By
Lubomir Ottl*



This book is dedicated to all the small people who have not grown up yet (children) and all the big people (grown-ups) who may feel small, insignificant, useless and without a purpose or hope for anything good to come their way... We do not know what we do not know. You may feel small today, but who knows, you may just be someone great tomorrow. Things change and people change too.

Some of the greatest treasures are hidden in people's minds and hearts where no one can see them. Believe me, they are there. Although not visible to others or even ourselves, we all have gifts and talents. You just need to find them. Your greatness will come if you keep on keeping on. So have faith and get on the journey. Believe me, even when everything has been lost, there is always hope. Because even when there is no hope, hope still is.

1 Corinthians 13:13 “Three things will last forever-faith, hope, and love-and the greatest of these is love.

Hebrews 11:1 – “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

Romans 15:13 “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

“Hope is a wishful or uncertain expectation of something better..the greatest we can hope for is love and peace..” L.O.



Hope, The Miracle

Hibiscus

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Summary:

“Hope” is a story about a piece of a dry, dying hibiscus twig that was not ready to give up. It came from a plant that was moved from our first house but never did well in its new home. The mother plant struggled for many years, barely giving out a bloom until we finally decided to remove it altogether. The uprooted plant had only one twig with a single leaf hanging on it. Still, even after a full week on full sun with no water and no dirt, the leaf kept on hanging on...Wow! What a resilience. Is it dying or still trying? Just one last leaf, imagine what

might happen to this twig if we tried to save it? Well, here is the full story. "Hope" you like it.



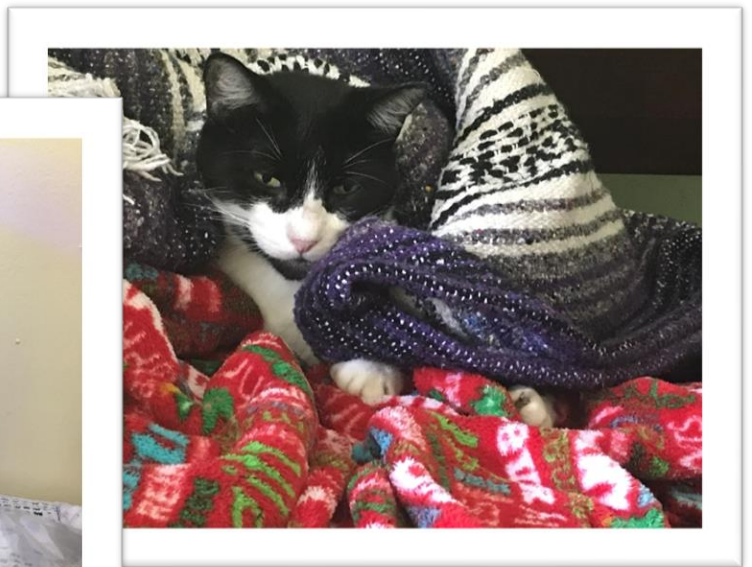
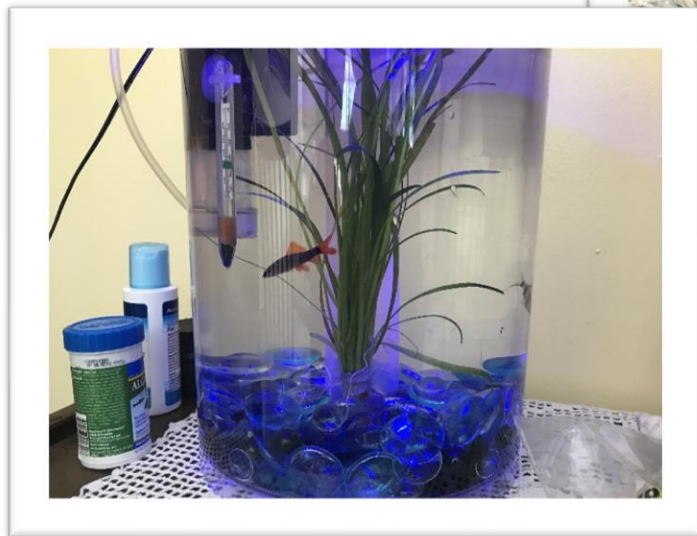
Hope, The Miracle Hibiscus

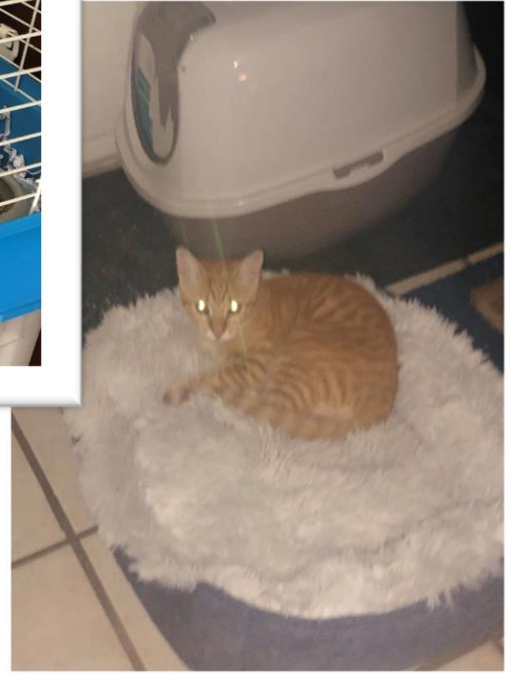
When we moved from our first house to our current house, one of the things that came with us was a hibiscus plant. It did well where it came from but not so much in our current house. Could it be the fact that we replanted it from its original place? Is it because it is now in a shaded area of the yard with virtually no sun and a lot of oak leaves? Maybe. It is moved to a new place and not liking it.

The new home was an area of our yard that also served as our pet cemetery where we buried all the family creatures, great and small, that (sadly) ended their journey while staying with us.



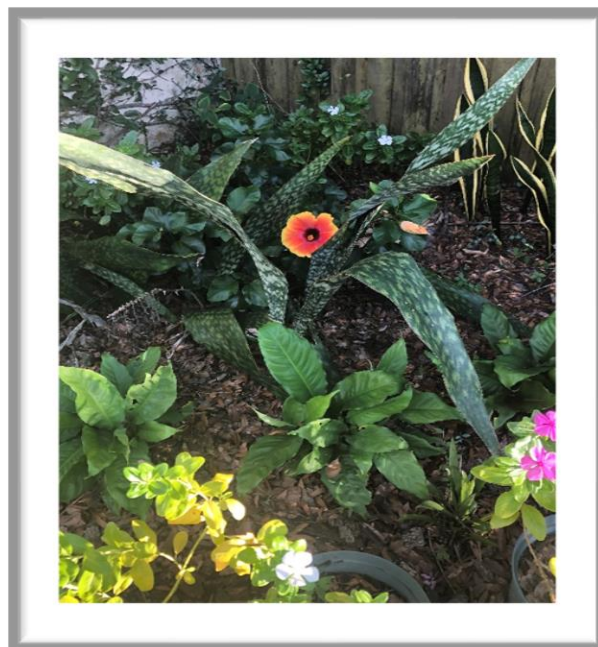
There was a Padtunk the Fish, Bun Bun the Rabbit, a dwarf hamster called Double Eagle, another dwarf hamster called Ruby, our guinea pig Freedom (may she rest in peace) who also happened to be the official mascot of SpartsAcademy.com, our home education program, and probably a few others only our children would easily recall.





We would hold a memorial ceremony with a prayer, dig up a hole, place our animal friends in there, covered them up with a good foot of dirt, wish them good journey to Pet Heaven, and..and then we planted flowers on top, like this hibiscus.

Looking more like a Halloween decoration with one main branch completely dead and dry, while the other barely making it with a few green leaves at the end, this plant still gave us about 1 or 2 blooms every other year. It was trying and somehow this plant still survived 10 years in its new home. It barely grew though, struggling in the shadow of an oak tree standing just a few feet from where all dead pets were laid to eternal rest.



Eventually, we decided to pull the plant out and give some other plants a try instead. What else would you do after the years of no grow, no bloom? I am sorry, one bloom at the end of mostly dry stem that resembled a Halloween-style stick. Yep! We pulled it out.

Not sure why, we let the pulled bush out in the yard, on the direct sun for about a week. The last few leaves on the stem mostly died, except for one. Weird! A mostly dead plant, two of the three main stems dead completely, solid dead, and the last stem has a tiny twig sticking out with one leaf left. One leaf, just one, still hanging on after one week of no water, no dirt, and plenty of Florida “summer” sun. One leaf!

What should I do? I am thinking I need to burn this hibiscus bush and move on. It is dead, except for one leaf. Burn it! Or do you know what would really be cool? What about planting that one twig with a single leaf on it. How crazy it would be if it actually grew again?

I should mention I am not an experienced gardener by any measure. Seriously, here is my record:

First, I killed a cactus with too much water. Apparently, they do not need water every day. Then, I planted a banana plant in the shade of a large oak (not a good place for bananas because it is too acidic and they need sun) and still grew 4 tiny bananas that eventually became rotten while I went on a trip.

I also grew one tiny tomato on a plant with one leaf. Yes, turns out I accidentally planted it in a shade and the plant was stretching sideways and seeking some sunshine, pushing out a tiny tomato with one leaf at the end of almost six feet long stem. Next, according to our children, I harvested the smallest pineapple in the world and burned sprouting vegetables on the Florida sun because I did not plant them early enough, and everything else I grew to eat was eaten by pests. I did a decent job growing milkweeds but even those eventually got chewed up by caterpillars in the end.



Ok, regardless of my gardening record, I decided to plant that twig with one leaf. First, I put it in a bucket of water in the yard with rainwater I forgot to dump, minimum effort. I reasoned this would give me more time to figure out what needs to be done next. It had plenty of mosquito larva brewing in it already, and now, a hibiscus twig with one leaf that somehow did not die after a one week on a burning sun and out of the dirt. There it goes, from a drought to a flood, I forgot all about it.

It must have been another week or two before I went back and stumbled upon the bucket with my one-leaf-twigg again. I checked it out, still one leaf. But WHAT!? The end of the stick had some fuss at the end of it. Some kind of fiber started to sprout off the end of the



twig. No way, I grew a root!! Really, the stick grew it, but somehow, I felt this “I did it” feeling.

Shortly after, I am on a mission. Growing that tiny root got me excited. I am looking for a place to plant my twig with one leaf, and a root? Should I keep it inside the house? What about planting it back in our pet cemetery? I came up with a great idea. I chose to put the twig in a small pot, covered the bottom with foil to keep the water in, and planted the plant together with its pot in front of our house, right on the sun. Nothing grew well there before; it is either too hot or too wet as the rainwater rolls off the roof and floods the patch of dirt by the entrance. Truly a piece of prime real estate with VIP (Cats) using it as toilet. I planted it anyway.

The twig now made a beautiful center piece, next to our US flag we use for morning ceremonies. We are a home-schooling family with three scouts after all and so starting the day with a prayer, Pledge of Allegiance, Scout Oath and Law, is in place here.



First week, the twig is there with one leaf. Second week, the twig is there with one leaf. Third week the twig is there with one leaf. The fourth week the twig is there with one leaf. We were amazed. What a resilience.

Remember? This is the same one leaf that was on the bush while the original plant was still living (or dying) in our pet cemetery's mini garden, left out on the sun with no dirt and water, dying...but clearly trying. Put in a bucket of rainwater, pushed a tiny root, planted in a crappy spot, watered with crappy water from our house vacuum machine that uses a water tank instead of air filters. Standing! With one last leaf left and not giving up. We agreed to call it "Hope," the miracle hibiscus.

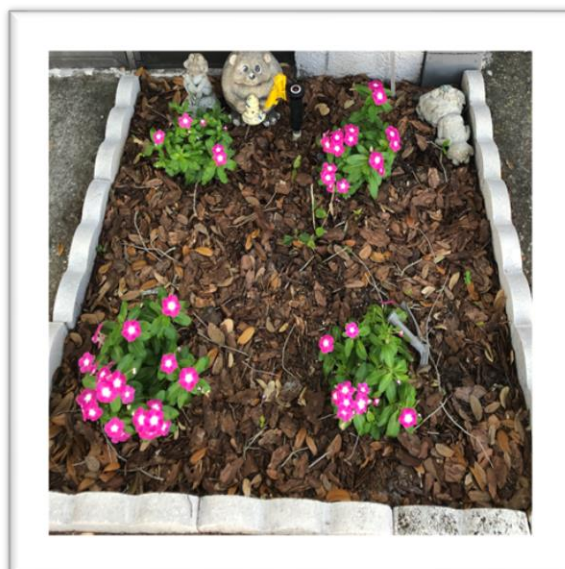
Then comes the fifth week. Leaf is still there. The sixth week the leaf falls. The plant finally died. That is it. The twig is officially dead. The last leaf fell down. This is the end. I know you probably wished for a better end but what do you expect? No surprise here since we forgot to water it too. Actually, we did. We poured dirty water from our water-based vacuum all over it. It has a tank that captures the dirt and dust and sometimes cleaning solutions. We dumped all the clunk and junk right on that sad-looking, leafless twig. Now there surely is no hope for Hope. Time to move. So, we did.

Life goes on, we keep doing our morning ceremonies to start the day, every day, sometimes with a little help of our (then) pet cat Puss Tiger Stripes. May he rest in peace as well but more about that later.



The dead leafless twig keeps on being dead, drying even more...and..BOOOOOM!!!! Whoa!! What is that? Hope is not dead? Is my vision going bad, or actually getting better?

I am seeing something on Hope's dead twig that looks like a small pest infestation. Looking closer, I see the twig has a bunch of tiny sprouts on the side of its stem. How crazy is that? Short few days later, Hope started to push out tiny leaves from its stem and grew a bit taller. More sprouts started to pop on it and soon the tiny leaves got bigger. Within a few days, it was clear Hope did not die. Rather, it is growing new leaves and it even grew a new stem. We are excited. Hope is alive!



Day after day, ceremony after ceremony, clean-up after clean-up, we keep dumping more dirty clunky water on Hope. Sometimes, we pour the entire pot on the twig. Excuse me, Hope. It is making it!

A few weeks later, the plant is a few inches taller. It grew and almost doubled the original size, with a few new leaves, and a couple more stems. Three months later, Hope is three feet tall, beautiful looking hibiscus, even popping a few flower buds. Is that crazy of what? Hope is about to bloom. Yes, blooms! We are so excited, Hope blooms.



Turns out that Hope, the Miracle Hibiscus, was not ready, or even meant to dry out and die. That one leaf not willing to give up, that one twig not willing to give up, was just an amazing story in the making. A miracle. It just needed someone to notice, someone to believe in just enough to give it a chance. The whole time Hope was a twig with one leaf not growing on the outside, it was growing on the inside.



Hope did not stop at 3 feet and a few blooms either. It tricked us again. For another 7 months to be exact. Preparing for its future full size and beauty, Hope was not growing for 7 months on the outside because it was growing on the inside.



We all missed it. We did not see it because we could not see it. It was growing roots below the surface. And just like it was growing roots with that one last leaf to become 3 feet tall, now it was growing more roots so it can one day be 3 feet wide and six feet tall, with tens of gorgeous blooms blooming at once, day and night.

It had to grow roots first to be strong enough to carry the whole plant, the whole future plant. It was putting all its energy into building a foundation of its future glory. One full year of doing the work in the dirt where no one can see it so it can proudly display its beautiful booms on the sun for everyone to see.

We are no different; we too grow roots. We hope that the story of Hope, a true story of the miraculous new life and transformation will inspire you and help you remember that anyone can do or become something great. Regardless of past or current challenges, even when no one sees, no one believes, even when all is lost, hope still is.

Making better choices or learning new skills takes time. Developing good relationships and building character takes time. Correcting mistakes or healing takes time. Transforming to someone new and better takes time. Sometime hope is all we have and sometime all we need is “Hope.”

When all is gone, hope still is. Hope is beautiful and gives life. Live your life and grow your roots today to become beautiful tomorrow.

**The
End!**



...or just the beginning.



A true story written for our sons, our home-education friends at SpartsAcademy.com, and for anyone who needs hope.

Love & Peace,
Lubomir

About the author..

Native from Czech Republic, former Czechoslovakia, came to USA at age of 21, hoping to learn English and make more money to save up for a nicer car and house before heading back home to continue work as a police officer. Life had another plan and just one month into the American “Adventure” with no work, for sure no knowledge of English, \$30 to his name, and no place to stay aka “homeless on the street”, decided to stay a bit longer, eventually leaving everything behind, driven by fear of going back home as a failure and pulled by hope for something better, chose to stay in the US and took a leap of faith into the unknown. After many life successes and failures, losing work, business, relationships, health, and even sanity at age of 38, started to rebuild his life as a home educator to 3 sons. One needed special help, the other in diapers, and third on the way..10 years later and now 25 years in the USA, Lubomir is actively serving his family, community, nation, and most importantly the Lord who gave him everything after losing it all..

With unmeasurable gratitude to so many who helped along the way. Thank you! -Love & Peace-

