

Water Bearer

A water bearer had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream, to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his master's house.

Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, "perfect to the end for which it was made." But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the water bearer. "What are you ashamed of? "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to slowly leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts." The pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion, he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful wild flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this did cheer it up some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the pot apologized to the bearer for its ultimate failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were wild flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pots side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted wild flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful wild flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house." And the master has stated that he values the beautiful wild flowers decorating his table each day, much more than he would value two full pots of water.