

## **Belvedere Family Community: Let's Keep Growing - Resources from this Week's Message**

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Hello everyone,

We're grateful for everyone who joined us this past Sunday! Whether you were with us in person or tuning in from afar, we hope the message about growing even in the midst of weeds encouraged and challenged you.

To help us all continue that reflection throughout the week, here are two helpful resources we'd love to share with you:

### **The 9 Weeds Stories**

A collection of powerful short stories that illustrate how growth is still possible in messy, difficult, and unexpected places.

[Read the stories here](#)

### **Growth Cheat Sheet**

This is a simple, practical guide with tips and reminders to help you stay grounded, focused, and growing in any season.

[View the cheat sheet here](#)

We hope these tools help you reflect, reconnect, and keep moving forward - no matter what "weeds" you may be navigating. Feel free to share them with family, friends, or neighbors who might need a little encouragement this week.

Would you like to send an announcement to the community?

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# Weed 1: Perfection Purslane

## *Story: "The Plant That Couldn't Start"*

Perfection Purslane had high standards.  
No, higher than that.

Her seeds were alphabetized.  
Her growth chart was laminated.  
And her watering can had a label that read "Use only after 9:00 a.m. and before 10:15 a.m. — optimal window."

She wanted to grow. Deeply.  
But every time she tried to start, something wasn't quite right.

"The sun's at the wrong angle."  
"This soil is 3% too dry."  
"I can't bloom until my trellis is perfectly symmetrical."

She spent entire seasons adjusting things.  
Plotting. Planning. Editing. Re-editing.

Meanwhile, plants with half her vision and zero spreadsheets were stretching toward the sun, blooming imperfectly — messily — gloriously.

Purslane felt both judgmental and deeply jealous.

"Look at them," she muttered. "Not even measuring soil temperature. Wild."

One day, a breeze blew by and knocked one of her index cards into the dirt.  
She gasped. "That was my 'Emergency Amendments for Spring Planting' section!"

A nearby marigold chuckled, "You know you're a plant, right? You don't bloom by planning — you bloom by blooming."

That line struck deeper than she wanted to admit.

That night, she looked out over her carefully measured garden bed, and whispered,

"What if... messy is okay?"

So she stretched. Just a little.  
One imperfect leaf toward the rising sun.

It wasn't much. But it was movement.

*Perfection Purslane says:*

*"If it's not flawless, why bother?"*

*But the healing mantra says:*

*"Progress is holy. I honor the beauty of what's unfinished."*

## Weed 2: Approval Aster

*Story: "The Plant That Couldn't Say No"*

Approval Aster was beloved by the whole garden.

She remembered birthdays, brought cookies to soil clean-up days, and left handwritten notes for any plant that looked a little droopy.

She was everyone's cheerleader — the emotional support flower of the flowerbed.

If you asked her how she was doing?

She'd smile, tilt her petals, and say, "I'm great! What do you need?"

She meant it. She really did love helping.

But behind the generous glow was exhaustion.

Aster hadn't rooted herself in weeks. She was so busy leaning toward others that she forgot to grow toward the sun.

And every time she considered pulling back, a fear crept in:

"What if they stop needing me?"

"What if I disappoint someone?"

She kept showing up, pouring out, stretching beyond her capacity — hoping it would earn her a place in the garden.

One morning, she saw a note pinned to the compost bin. It read:

"Dear Aster, You're allowed to rest. We love you anyway."

At first, she panicked. Who wrote it? Was it pity?

But something deeper settled in... and softened her.

That evening, she stood still for the first time in ages.

Didn't fix. Didn't please. Just breathed.

It felt foreign.

And it felt like the beginning of being real.

*Approval Aster says:*

*"What do you need from me?"*

*But the healing mantra says:*

*"My needs matter. Love flows through me — not just from me."*

## Weed 3: Image Ivy

*Story: "The Plant That Looked Amazing... but Never Grew"*

Image Ivy was the star of the garden.

Always polished, always shiny. Her vines draped across the trellis in perfect symmetry, and not a speck of dirt dared touch her leaves. If plants had LinkedIn profiles, hers would've had endorsements from every flower in the zip code.

And yet... there was a secret.

Beneath all that style, Image Ivy hadn't actually... grown. Not up, not out, not down. No roots, no blooms. Just presentation.

But wow, what a presentation.

She had an Instagram page — "@IvyOnPoint" — full of curated shots with captions like "Just out here thriving" (she was not thriving) and "Rooted in purpose" (she was not rooted in anything).

Other plants would stop by and say, "Wow, Ivy, how do you do it?"

She'd smile, tilt her leaf just right for the light, and say, "Oh, you know... just staying consistent with my morning dew affirmations."

Truthfully? She was exhausted. She was spending so much energy trying to appear fruitful, she had none left to actually become fruitful.

And then one afternoon, she overheard two mushrooms whispering.

"She looks amazing," one said.

"Yeah," said the other. "But have you noticed? No blooms. Just vibes."

Something about that hit different.

That night, Ivy looked at her reflection in the pond and whispered,

"What if... they loved me even without the gloss?"

She dug one root into the dirt — real, messy dirt — for the first time. It wasn't glamorous, but it was alive.

*Image Ivy says:*

*"Do I look impressive enough?"*

*But the healing mantra says:*

*"I am already valuable. My worth is not earned — it's revealed."*

## Weed 4: Moody Moss

*Story: "The Plant That Waited for the Feeling"*

Moody Moss lived on the shady side of the garden — soft, poetic, deeply intuitive. If you asked her what the sky felt like that day, she'd tell you. If you asked her what time it was... she'd probably cry.

She wasn't lazy. Oh no.

She dreamed more than any plant you'd ever met.

A book of handwritten visions, color-coded mood journals, seasonal playlists — she even had a Pinterest board titled "Future Fruits I'll Bloom When I'm Finally Ready."

The ideas were beautiful. Transformational, even.

But they stayed in her heart — not in the soil.

Every time it came time to act, she'd pause.

"I'm not in the right headspace."

"The vibe's off today."

"God feels... quiet right now."

She once spent two full weeks just deciding what shade of bloom would most express her inner truth.

Meanwhile, the beetroot two rows over — not exactly the emotionally complex type — had already popped up and produced three full leaves.

Moody Moss rolled her eyes.

"Yeah, but is it authentic?"

One day, a cloud passed over the garden, and she felt it deep in her chlorophyll. She sighed and whispered,

"Today's a no. Maybe tomorrow."

But tomorrow came and went.

Then one afternoon, an old worm slithered by and said,

"Moss, I've watched you for years. You've got enough light. You've got enough water. You're just waiting on a mood that may never come."



She didn't know whether to thank him or write a sad song about him.  
But that night, she pressed one root into the earth — not because she felt like it... but because she could.

*Moody Moss says:*

*"I just don't feel like it right now..."*

*But the healing mantra says:*

*"I can move with God, even through mystery or mood."*

# Weed 5: Overthinking Oxalis

*Story: "The Plant That Stayed in Its Head"*

Overthinking Oxalis was sharp.

Always reading, always watching, always five tabs open in his mind.

His little garden patch was neat and quiet — not much action, but a whole lot of research. He had blueprints for his future growth, spreadsheets tracking humidity levels, and a backup water filtration system he'd built himself — just in case.

He was the plant you went to when you needed the Latin name of something... or a solid book recommendation... or a lecture on chlorophyll conductivity.

But if you looked closely, you'd notice something odd:  
Oxalis hadn't grown an inch in years.

He'd been thinking about growing.  
Planning to grow.  
Preparing for the exact right moment to begin...  
...which never came.

Every time the urge to act bubbled up, a new doubt would whisper:

"Are you sure you've got enough energy stored?"  
"What if you start and fail publicly?"  
"Maybe just read one more thing first..."

One day, Peony stopped by.  
Big-hearted, a little chaotic, always flowering before she was fully ready.

"Oxalis!" she beamed. "Still preparing to grow?"

He adjusted his reading glasses. "I'm simply gathering more data."

She smiled. "Just remember — roots don't grow in theory."

He blinked. That night, while reviewing his growth journal (volume six), he paused.

Maybe Peony was right.  
Maybe movement didn't require full certainty.

So he closed the notebook.  
Breathed.  
Pressed one root into the soil.

It wasn't much.  
But it was real.

*Overthinking Oxalis says:*

*"What if I missed something?"*

*But the healing mantra says:*

*"I trust what I know now. Action will reveal the rest."*

## Weed 6: Fearful Foxtail

*Story: "The Plant That Checked Everything Twice"*

Fearful Foxtail was... prepared.

Like, emergency-backup-battery-and-flashlight-under-the-leaf prepared.

His motto was simple: "Hope for the best, prepare for at least five worst-case scenarios."

He had motion sensors.

He had contingency plans.

He even once requested the emergency exit plan for the compost pile.

Every morning, Foxtail would scan the garden for danger.

Too much sun? Threat.

Too little sun? Also threat.

Neighboring plant growing too fast? Highly suspicious.

He wanted to grow — he really did.

He'd even drafted a five-point plan for when and how to bloom.

But the final step always read:

"Grow... once it's 100% safe."

Which, unfortunately, was never.

He envied the other plants. The bold ones. The brave ones. The ones who trusted the sun.

One day, a ladybug landed on his leaf and said,

"You know... growing doesn't mean there's no risk. It just means you trust the root more than the fear."

Foxtail narrowed his eyes. "Are you licensed to give that kind of advice?"

She giggled and flew off.

That night, the wind was calm.

He thought, "It might be okay to try tomorrow... maybe."

But something deeper stirred in him.

Not the voice of fear.

A quieter voice. Steadier.

And instead of rehearsing one more danger...  
He stretched.  
Just a little.

*Fearful Foxtail says:*

*"What if everything goes wrong?"*

*But the healing mantra says:*

*"God goes with me. I am safe enough to move forward."*

## Weed 7: Distracted Dandelion

*Story: "The Plant Who Grew Everywhere but Settled Nowhere"*

Distracted Dandelion was the most enthusiastic thing to ever sprout in a garden.

Every morning, he woke up buzzing with excitement.

"Today I'm going to grow toward the trellis! No wait — the rose bush! Actually... a vertical hydroponic setup, let's go!"

He had ideas. Big ones.

A podcast, a retreat center, a collaborative garden zine.

He even started a side project called "Joy Without Borders." (He got the domain, but never wrote anything.)

His energy was contagious. His beginnings? Impressive.

But nothing... ever got finished.

Because just when a root would start to dig in, Dandelion would catch wind of something shinier.

"Oh! A new method of blooming just dropped!"  
"Should I try succulence? Maybe it's more my aesthetic."

He called it curiosity.

But the soil knew it as avoidance.

One day, Old Oak leaned over and said,

"Dandelion, your ideas are beautiful. But fruit comes from staying."

Dandelion grinned. "Totally! So inspired. Might start a new project about that."

Oak raised an eyebrow. "Or... you could just finish one."

That night, Dandelion sat with that thought longer than usual.

And the next morning...

he stayed.

*Distracted Dandelion says:*

*"Ooo... what's that over there?"*

*But the healing mantra says:  
"What I've planted is enough. I choose joy in staying."*

## Weed 8: Controlling Crabgrass

*Story: "The Plant Who Wouldn't Let Go"*

Controlling Crabgrass was strong.  
Not just strong — unshakable.  
If there was a weed that could bench press a wheelbarrow, it was her.

She grew fast.  
She grew wide.  
And if you asked her how she got so far, she'd say:

| "Easy. I never let anyone else mess it up."

She pruned her own leaves.  
She built her own trellis.  
She even fought off a squirrel once — rumor has it he still doesn't come around.

Crabgrass didn't mean to be overbearing.  
She just... didn't trust anyone else to care as much.

Delegation? A risk.  
Vulnerability? A trap.  
Waiting on others? A recipe for disappointment.

One day, Lavender tried to offer help.

| "You don't have to do it all yourself, you know."

Crabgrass huffed. "Yeah, and wait six weeks for someone to get it half right? No thanks."

Lavender smiled softly. "Fruit needs space too."

That line haunted Crabgrass.

That night, she stood over her plot — abundant, but tense. Beautiful, but brittle.

She whispered to the dirt,

| "Okay, God. Just for today... I won't grip so tight."

And for the first time,  
she let the breeze move her.



*Controlling Crabgrass says:*

*"I'll just do it all myself."*

*But the healing mantra says:*

*"God holds what I don't. Strength includes surrender."*

# Weed 9: Comfort Creeper

*Story: "The Plant That Made Peace with the Couch"*

Comfort Creeper was chill.

Like... really chill.

She wasn't loud. She didn't take up space. And if there was a meeting in the garden? You could bet she'd be sitting near the edge, nodding, half-listening, fully agreeable.

"Sure, we can do that."

"No worries either way."

"I'm good with whatever."

Creeper meant well.

She didn't want to cause waves.

She just wanted everyone to get along, and for life to be... easy.

Which meant:

She often avoided decisions.

She delayed action.

She blended into the soil so well, some plants forgot she was even growing.

And honestly? That kind of invisibility felt safe.

Every now and then, she'd hear this quiet longing:

"I want more..."

But then she'd curl up again with a cozy layer of mulch and zone out to garden ASMR.

One afternoon, a tiny sprout popped up beside her and said,

"Creeper, what are you working on?"

She blinked. "Oh, me? I don't know. Nothing big. Just helping other stuff grow."

The sprout tilted its head.

"You know... we need your roots too."

That night, something stirred.

Not a dramatic awakening.

Not a TED Talk.

Just a whisper inside that said:

| "It matters that I show up."

And for the first time in a while,  
Comfort Creeper stretched.

Just enough to take a stand.

*Comfort Creeper says:*


*"Let's just take it easy... again."*

*But the healing mantra says:*

*"My voice matters. My presence shapes the garden."*

# Handling the Weeds: Growth Cheat Sheet

| Weed Name   | The Inner Block                               | Healing Mantra   |
|---|---|--|
|  Perfection Purslane     | If it's not perfect, it's worthless.          | Progress is holy. I honor the beauty of what's unfinished.     |
|  Approval Aster          | I must meet everyone's needs before my own.   | My needs matter. Love flows through me — not just from me.     |
|  Image Ivy              | I must look successful to be loved.           | I am already valuable. My worth is not earned — it's revealed. |
|  Moody Moss            | I need to feel inspired before I act.         | I can move with God, even through mystery or mood.             |
|  Overthinking Oxalis   | I must know everything before I start.        | I trust what I know now. Action will reveal the rest.          |
|  Fearful Foxtail       | Something bad might happen if I move forward. | God goes with me. I am safe enough to move forward.            |
|  Distracted Dandelion  | Something new will be better!                 | What I've planted is enough. I choose joy in staying.          |
|  Controlling Crabgrass | I must control everything to succeed.         | God holds what I don't. Strength includes surrender.           |
|  Comfort Creeper       | It's easier to stay comfortable.              | My voice matters. My presence shapes the garden.               |

 Reflection: "Circle the weed that's most blocking you today. Underline the mantra you will practice this week."

 Encouragement: "Pull one weed. Plant one seed. Watch what God can grow."