

## Manure Makes Beautiful Flowers – Recognizing How Struggle Seeds Growth

Greetings,

I'm contacting you with a story idea about how to turn difficulty into inspiration.

**The Big Idea:** As humans, we've all gone through times of struggle. Whether it's feeling frustrated in our job, caught in a toxic relationship, or besieged by bad health, life can set any number of traps to constrain us. But, after some time, we look back to these periods in our life and see how they served a meaningful purpose.

**The So-What:** While getting beyond our low points often feels beyond our control, there is *always* a way forward. Foremost is choosing to change how we look at our current struggle. Choosing to believe that, however hard or frustrating life may be in a given moment, it *will* work out in the end enables us to claim the purposefulness amid the shit and proactively turn it into manure.

**The Source:** Amy Eliza Wong is a certified executive coach who has devoted more than 20 years to the study and practice of helping others live and lead *on purpose*. She works with some of the biggest names in tech and offers transformational leadership development and internal communication strategies to executives and teams around the world. Her new book is ***Living on Purpose: Five Deliberate Choices to Realize Fulfillment and Joy*** (BrainTrust Ink, May 24, 2022). Learn more at [alwaysonpurpose.com](http://alwaysonpurpose.com).

**Key Messages:** Wong gets to the core of what holds people back and addresses:

- Why we make choices that are in direct opposition to what we really want
- How to fill the hole that can't be achieved by more money, more status or the next big thing
- How to exercise five distinct choices to feel free, whole and at peace on a regular basis
- What it means to "live on purpose"

I'd be happy to send a print-ready article, "**Manure Makes Beautiful Flowers – Recognizing How Struggle Seeds Growth**," to send a review copy of her new book, or to arrange for an interview with Amy Wong.

Regards,

Cathy Lewis

# Manure Makes Beautiful Flowers – Recognizing How Struggle Seeds Growth

By Amy Wong

Every human on the planet goes through times of struggle. Whether it's feeling frustrated in our job, caught in a toxic relationship, or besieged by bad health, life can set any number of traps that constrain us.

But, after some time, we can look back to periods in our life that were agonizing and see how they served a meaningful purpose. What felt like shit then we later see as the manure that provided fertilizer for the flowers that eventually bloomed.

While getting beyond our low points often feels beyond our control, there's *always* a way forward. Foremost is choosing to change how we look at our current struggle. We can begin to look at what we're living through as what we *don't* want, which can be a powerful catalyst for realizing what we *do* want.

Yet why should we wait for our future self to tell us how our shit turns out? Why not claim the purposefulness amid the shit and turn it into manure proactively? It's possible to thrive *on purpose* through intentional choices, as opposed to stumbling into feeling good on occasion by accident.

Here are some ways to shift our lens from futility to appreciation.

**1. Acknowledge the state you're in.** Whenever you find yourself in a challenging time or situation, stop and acknowledge that you're in a shit moment. For example: "I just got laid off." "I just discovered that my spouse cheated on me." "We're about to enter bankruptcy." Life is rife with shit moments, so tune your awareness to acknowledging these moments for what they are: shit.

**2. Choose to decide that things will work out.** Tell yourself that however hard or difficult life may be in a given moment, it will work out in the end. Choose to stop tolerating the foul stench of unprocessed shit and make the decision to compost your internal conflicts right here and now. Decide to actively convert pain or struggle into appreciation.

**3. Envision a better future.** Pick a point in time in your imagined future. It could be two years from now, five years, or ten years from now. The point in time needs to be distanced enough from your present moment so that the essence of possibility emerges. (In other words, three to six months from now might not be aspirational enough because it's easier to predict what might be true then. But two years from now, it's not as easy to anticipate what your reality will be.) Once you find that future point in time that feels spacious, then conjure up a vision of what

-more-

could be true that would invigorate you. Add specifics only if it feels pleasing. If your five-year vision begins to give you anxiety because you default to worrying how to make it happen, then don't add that much detail.

**4. Manifest your aspirational future.** As you actively compost the shit to manure, envision a trajectory that uses this manure as a launching point. For example, in the case of being laid off, acknowledge that it sucks, that you feel that your dreams are shattered, and that you're embarrassed to leave the company this way. Then realize that, with this forced time off, you have time to look inward and discover what may be holding you back. You can explore ways in which you want to grow. This can be used as a time of self-discovery to learn new things and uncover new opportunities that not only lead to success, but to feelings of being confident and free. Look at getting laid off as a launching point for finding true fulfillment.

In the same way a beautiful blossom needs both dark and stinky soil *and* sunlight, recognize that composting the shit of life into manure allows beauty to grow. Converting frustration into appreciation and pain into inspiration is about deciding that this shit moment is happening on purpose and will act in your favor for a brighter future.

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Amy Eliza Wong is a certified executive coach who has devoted more than 20 years to the study and practice of helping others live and lead *on purpose*. She works with some of the biggest names in tech and offers transformational leadership development and internal communication strategies to executives and teams around the world. Her new book is ***Living on Purpose: Five Deliberate Choices to Realize Fulfillment and Joy*** (BrainTrust Ink, May 24, 2022). Learn more at [alwaysonpurpose.com](http://alwaysonpurpose.com).