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Saved Again by the Generous Force of Life and Love

I am famous for ignoring “Occasions,” wedding anniversaries, Mother’s Day, Valentines Day, and birthdays. Buying gifts for these occasions contributes to their over commercialization, I hold forth, and my family agrees readily with me and goes ahead and buys gifts for each other and gifts for me when the occasion calls for it.

Laura is kind enough to write, “from Mom and Dad” on the gifts to our daughters that she buys, wraps, and gives.

My neighbor, Teri, was watering her lawn when I was out earlier, before I started harvesting plants from our yard. She asked me, “What did you buy Laura for Mother’s Day?”

I said, “Nothing. I don’t get into the commercialization of important days. I give gifts whenever I give them, and most of them, I make. I don’t buy.”

Her significant look made me nervous. I started to remember that people saying, “Sure, I understand. Do it your way.” does not necessarily mean it will be okay when they receive gifts from everyone but me.

She continued watering her lawn and said quietly, “Don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

My nervousness increased. So did my memories that told me sometimes somebody saying “It’s okay. I understand,” does not mean that it is okay nor that she does understand when she realizes that, despite her giving me the gift of complete freedom to be as I am, I have not commemorated her occasion with even a small gift.

I said, “But a stand for principle means something.”

Teri continued watering her lawn. She didn’t have anything further to say. She had served her purpose. It often does take some small reminder to get me properly focused for work I must do.

Newly and acutely aware of my need for a small, meaningful, and beautiful gift, I surveyed plants growing in our yard. I walked into our house and got a brightly painted, very pretty cup and filled it three-fourths full with water. I took it outside and picked my arrangement into the cup.

I picked some of the deepest green, most perfectly-formed

clover and arranged sprigs of it in the cup. I decided we could spare two of our tulips, and I picked them to stand tall, as beautiful, light yellow background for everything else in the arrangement. I chose among many available and picked twelve perfect, bright yellow dandelions. Light green plants, whose name I don't know, look like small, dense ferns, and they showed well against the dark green clover just under the tulips.

I picked tiny, purple flowers, whose name I don't know either. Three of the flowers grew close together on a long stem. I pushed the stem down into my arrangement so the three flowers nestled purple against the dark green clover leaves. The purple flowers were so small, they could almost go unseen, but they insistently drew my eye to their color, to their tininess. These are fast-spreading weeds, as are dandelions, and it is a service to my lawn and to my neighbors' lawns to keep them from seeding, but that doesn't prevent me from using and savoring the flowers before I pull the plants out of the ground. I took the bouquet into the house and put it on the kitchen table.

When Laura came home, she was very impressed by the small arrangement of plants in the brightly painted cup in the center of the kitchen table. "It's beautiful," she said.

I said, "I only needed to organize what I was freely given before I could give it to you to commemorate what I see not as just a commercial day but as an occasion to celebrate a job done well."

The occasion before that, Valentine's Day, snow lay on all our plants, and I saved myself with my own poem about my love for Laura printed on a sheet of paper amongst photographs from the history of our family. That gift was also well received. Laura framed the work and hung it on the wall above her bookcase.

The force of life and love is generous with me. Even if I never learn to plan in a more realistic fashion, I'm sure I will have more of these adventures that keep me aware of the generosity of the force for good.