



DANDELION DAYS

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The closest thing we get to even the appearance of snow balls during San Diego winters are dandelion globes. I always smile when I see them growing, because they bring back childhood memories of playfully scattering their seeds. However, of late, I have a new reason to smile when I see them on my morning walks.

Recently, I slowly savored Elisabeth Elliot's *A Pathway Through Suffering*. Each chapter began with a botanical example from Liliias Trotter. While I found them all to be challenging and beautiful, one in particular has stayed with me upon completion of the book.

"The seed vessel hopes for nothing again. It seeks only the opportunity of shedding itself; its purpose is fulfilled when the wind shakes forth the last seed, and the flower stalk is beaten low by autumn storms. It not only spends, but is 'spent out' at last."

Trotter, a gifted writer and observer of nature, has painted seed dispersal in beautiful terms; yet, death to self is less poetic and more painful in actual practice.

Lately, it has helped me to imagine my life as a field and each day its own individual dandelion globe (technically called blowballs or clocks). The entire purpose of such a globe is to release its scores of individual seed fruits (technically called achenes). Thus, for the dandelion, losing its last threads of its self is technically winning. In dying to itself, it is fulfilling the very mission for which it so intricately exists: to scatter and shed abroad its seeds of life. Its death means the new life of countless more dandelion plants who, in time, will return the favor!

I tend to want to hold on to my time, my energy, my plan for the day, and my wishes and wants. After all, everything in my flesh agrees with everything the world and the Enemy of my soul feed me in every radio wave, internet connection and whispered lie. Hold on to your life. Protect your own. Treat your self. After all, who else will?

Yet, each day, I am offered various experiences intended to help me die to myself that others might live.

To throw the baseball when all I want to do is text a friend. To absorb an angry email, offer the frustration up to Jesus, and to respond in gentleness and humility. To stop what I am focused on to listen to my husband process his day. To cook a meal even though I would rather read a book or take a walk.

Tiny deaths, but chances to practice dying to myself that others might receive life just the same. For some reason, imagining another little seed parachuting off to plant life somewhere has helped me to see these tiny deaths to self as tiny victories rather than terrible inconveniences.

Death to self as one great, heroic act feels overwhelming and impossible to my self-centered soul. However, faithful daily dying to self that leads to a lifetime of self laid down for the sake of and by the power of a Savior's love feels far more do-able to me.

Faithful daily dying leads to faithful final breath. May we let the light breezes or gale force winds of our days help us to let go of our lives, seed by seed. May we be able to confidently say with Paul, we are...

...always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. 2 Corinthians 4: 10-12.

