

MIGHTY OAK MINISTRIES



Growing Deeply Healing Progressively Maturing Splendidly

July 2010

Composting for Transformation

Let me ask you... do you have any garbage in your life?

Yeah, I thought so. Most of us do. And what do you do with that garbage? Do you let it rot, stink, and contaminate those around you? Or do you allow God to compost it into something useful? I know. You probably don't want your life compared to dirt, but frankly, the natural process of composting is a wonderful metaphor for dealing with all the junk life seems to throw at us.

I was motivated to start composting several years ago during one of the many California droughts when I realized how much water I wasted using the garbage disposal. Composting seemed like the answer that problem as well as my clay soils problems, and it spoke to my inner gardener. Now I get almost as much joy from a fresh container of compost as I do from the crops it helps grow. It's exciting to turn useless garbage into rich soil. It's like I'm part of the creative, redemptive process. Pretty amazing.

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2Cor. 3:18

But you know what's even more amazing? It's how God takes all the garbage in



our lives and transforms it into something useful, a medium for our own growth and for the growth of others.

To successfully compost, we need five elements: greens, browns, water, heat, and stirring. I would suggest that the process is the same for our personal growth.

Greens: The greens are what I call the stinky garbage--the

coffee grounds, vegetable peels, grass clippings, eggshells, and other organics. These provide the nitrogen-rich bacteria to break down the pile.

In our lives, the greens are the current issues that trigger an ungodly attitude or behavior. The fight with my husband, the disappointment at work, the loss of a job, health, or a parent. The things that cause us immediate pain are, quite frankly,

*They will be called (mighty) oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor. Isaiah 61:3*

the motivators to Christian growth and change. Without the greens in our lives, we'd remain cocooned in our happy little lives and never grow. We'd think we were "just fine." But let's face it. Pretty soon we'd stink. Fortunately, there's always something to push us out of our comfort zones. Maybe it's something small like a missed bus; maybe it's something huge like an accident that leaves you paralyzed. But the reality is, we were never meant to stay where we are, so we need the greens to instigate change.

Browns: Dried leaves, sawdust, newspaper... lifeless things provide the carbon-rich browns. Our compost bins need about two-thirds browns to one-third greens to develop a properly rich soil.



In life, the browns are the old things. Our history. Did you ever wonder why two people can experience roughly the same thing and respond

entirely differently? Usually it's because of the browns. What in their past just got triggered? What just provided a resource for coping? A person with a history of childhood abuse or neglect is going to react very differently than a person with a "good enough" childhood. A person with Christ at the center of her life is (hopefully) going to respond differently than a person without Christ. Our past provides the richness in the soil of our lives.

Water: We keep our compost moist so the bacteria will do their work. Just the right amount of waters hastens the transformation from garbage to soil.

Likewise, we need the Water of the Word, the Living Water of Jesus, to convert our greens and browns from something horrible to something beautiful. I remember that one of the songs that drew me to Jesus in the mid-70s was Bill and Gloria Gaither's "Something Beautiful," where they sang that Jesus could take my all my brokenness and strife and make something beautiful of my life. I had a lot of brown in my past. I figured if Jesus could make anything even halfway useful of my life, he could have it. Frankly, it had long ago started stinking. Looking back over the years I'm amazed how very much ugliness he's taken and turned it into a far richer soil than I could ever have imagined.

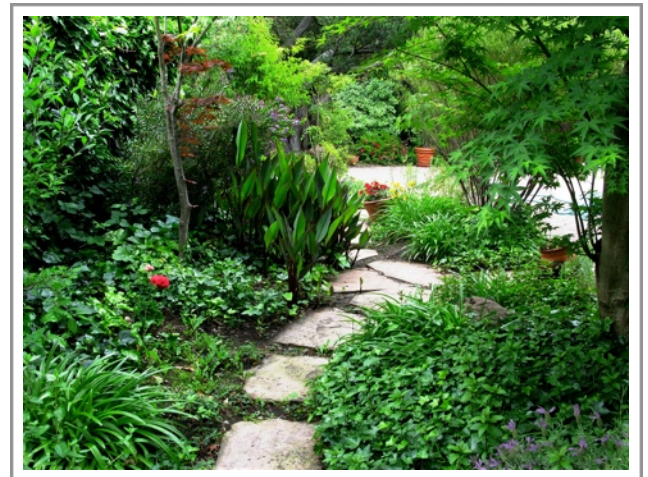
Heat: It's the heat that activates the bacteria in the rotting garbage, transforming it into wonderful soil. And it's the heat that creates enough "action" in our lives to compel us to change. Let's face it. How many of us would volunteer for change? I thought so. So our loving Father turns up the heat and lets us cook. We hate it. We squirm. We whine. We complain. But what we don't realize is that Father is using that discomfort to perfect us. To turn our garbage into wonderful soil that will be useful not only in our lives, but also in the lives of others.

Stir it Up: Periodically we need to turn our compost. Mix it up. That keeps the temperature from getting too high and adds the needed element of oxygen.

As we're growing and changing, the Body of Christ is a key element. We need one another to add oxygen, to keep us from getting overwhelmed. The prayers and encouragement of others are critical to our transformation into useful soil. Lone Ranger Christians seldom grow closer to either God or others. Those in community usually do.

This week I found a box of old photos, many from the first years of my Christian life. As a baby believer, God lovingly plunked me into a Christian singles group where I learned almost everything I know about community, growth, and maturity. It's from that group that I learned much of what I wrote in *Why Didn't You Warn Me? How to Deal with Challenging Group Members*. Those friends stirred me up, fertilized me, and encouraged growth in ways I seldom see in churches today. If you don't have close Christian friends to hold you accountable as you compost, find some. You need the oxygen of the "one anothers" in order to become rich, useful soil in God's hand.

I hope you'll take some time this week to look at the stinky stuff in your life and ask God to compost you. Mess you up. Transform you to you look like Jesus. The resources on page four can help you.



Need a Speaker?



Retreats or Conferences, Large or Small

Pat's primary goal is to minister the Word of God in a way that will encourage people to grow deeply, to heal progressively, and the mature into mighty oaks of righteousness. Pat loves working with wounded and challenging people, nurturing them to healing. Pat can speak on a wide variety of topics and is always willing to work with you to tailor an event for your audience, whether that be a dozen or hundreds. For a list of the types of workshops and retreats available, see

the [Events and Conferences](#) page on the website.

Train Your Leaders



Pat is available to train your small your leaders. She has over 30 years experience in leading small groups and coaching leaders. Her first book, *Small Group Bible Studies: How to Lead Them* remains a classic, despite being out of print in the U.S. (It's in it's 8th printing in Korea!) Her second book, *Why Didn't You Warn Me? How to Deal with Challenging Group Members* continues to answer the questions many are afraid to ask. For a list of the types of workshops and retreats available, see the Branches section of the [Events and Conferences](#) page on the website.

If you didn't receive the FREE PDF download "Making Time for Prayer" when you signed up for the newsletter, you can get it [here](#).

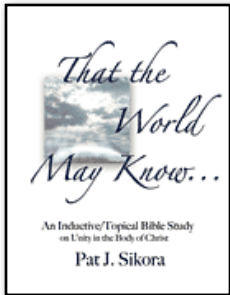
Pat J. Sikora has been encouraging Christians for over 30 years. She ministers through Mighty Oak Ministries at www.mightyoakministries.com and *Why Didn't You Warn Me* at www.whydidntyouwarnme.com.

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Resources

Mighty Oak Ministries is pleased to offer a variety of resources that will help you **Grow Deeply, Heal Progressively, and Mature Splendidly**. Visit our [website](#) for more resources.



[Order Book](#)

\$20.00

That the World May Know...

The New Testament gives us the image of the Body of Christ, saying that we are all part of one another with Christ at the head. We are called to love, serve, and help one another grow to maturity. Almost one hundred times in the New Testament, we are told how to treat one another. There are positive commands telling us what we should do and negative commands telling us what we should avoid. Taken together, these "one another" passages form the framework for unity. They teach us how to become one, so that the world may know that the Father sent the Son to offer each person eternal life. This study addresses ten of the most prominent "one another" commands, considering each one inductively, yet topically. It is a wonderful resource for individuals and small groups to help compost one another.



[Order Book](#)

\$14.49

Blessing Your Spirit by Arthur Burk and Sylvia Gunter

God designed our human spirit to rule over the soul and the body. It does this best when it is deliberately enlarged and strengthened by truth--the nutrient that most powerfully transforms the spirit. Your spirit needs to know the truth about who you are and who your God is. Some of that truth is spoken by the Spirit of God directly to your spirit; some is received through deliberate nurture and blessing.

This book offers a series of blessings designed to grow and mature your spirit. For 40 days, we explore legitimacy and identity from the Father's perspective. Then after we have seen ourselves from God's perspective, He invites us to see Him through 21 days of blessings flowing from the names of God. Finally there are several pages of verses that describe the range of functions and emotions of the human spirit. As you read these blessings to yourself and to others, you will experience an enlarging of your spirit that will enable it to bring your emotions and behaviors into conformity with the will of God. Just a few minutes per day will yield amazing benefits.



[Order Book](#)

\$24.94

Biblical Foundations of Freedom by Art Mathias

Dr. Mathias takes us on a step-by-step tour of the biblical foundations of sickness and freedom. He talks about sin; discernment; accusing spirits; and the major strongholds or principalities of Satan, including bitterness, self-bitterness, jealousy and envy, rejection, fear, and occultism, pharmakia, and sorcery. Within each chapter, he discusses illnesses caused by these strongholds and provides the biblical methods of overcoming each of them. He concludes with a discussion of our authority in Christ and biblical provisions for continuing to walk in health and wholeness. If these simple principles were followed, we would see considerably fewer illnesses in the Body of Christ. This is the book I wish I had written!