

Youth Dew

By Laurie Copeland

I was cleaning my bathroom today...or should I say for the past *three* days. Yes, it took three days to clean my bathroom. Now, in my defense, before you think I live in pig squalor, I must explain that this wasn't just any cleaning. It was get-down-on-the-floor-and-sort-through-junk-before-you-even-*begin*-cleaning.

In the medicine cabinet, I unearthed almost full bottles of prescription drugs marked, "Take all medicine to completion", dating back to 1993. (I guess I was waiting to come down with the same thing again so I could consume the contents "to completion".) In the pull out drawer underneath the mirror, I found the little eye-dropper we used to administer "the pink stuff", to my then baby daughter, now 12 years old. And in the cabinet drawer, I found second-only-to-Mt.-Everest mound of hotel treasures: French Milled soaps, all in one shampoo/conditioners, leaking lotion, never used sewing kits and the all important lint mitts.

But the biggest find of all was the mysterious aqua box with great smelling powder inside called, "Youth Dew". The name brand on the box indicated this lovely item must have been a gift. We girls always buy nice things for others that we would never buy for ourselves, am I right? I lifted the lid and found...nothing. Nothing, except

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a powdering mitt and three holes poked into what appeared to be a false bottom, made from a strong paper. From underneath this paper, came the glorious aroma of “Youth Dew”.

I remembered getting the powder as a gift when I was in my twenties, but didn’t really know what to do with it at the time. I had quizzically poked a few holes in it, and hoped that would send some of the powder up through the false bottom onto the application mitt. Nothing. I closed the lid and shook it. Opening it, I had found a few sprinkles, but nothing to sneeze over.

It was such a pretty box, and expensive too. I hadn’t wanted to risk ruining it, by tearing the false bottom. Nor did I want to prove just how uncouth I really was by inappropriately ripping off the paper, totally engulfing the mitt with the powder in a quite uncivilized way. So I had set it aside. I tried it again a few months later, as if I could figure it out by simply letting some time pass. No revelations.

Fast forward to today, twenty or so years later (yes, it *is* amazing I horde things this long!) with my head under the bathroom sink, pulling out a dust-covered powder box. It had been through three moves, and was currently taking up lots of precious real estate in my bathroom. *It’s a nice box, but why haven’t I ever used it?*, I thought. I poked a fourth and fifth hole in it, but the same pitiful sprinkle came out. I smiled as I thought, “Why not?” I ripped open the whole paper covering to reveal the soft, fragrant powder lying underneath, dormant all these years.

I lavishly loaded up the powdering mitt, and patted it all over my body. Did I ever smell good!

Then the thought struck me. I must be a dead ringer for the Hello, Anyone Home? Club. Here I am, over 40 years old, and I have to wonder how many *other* gifts (talents) have been given to me, that I've neatly pack up and put away, simply because I didn't know what to do with it. I was afraid to rip open the paper false bottom of the unknown and see what lay beneath. I would poke a few holes of exploration and if it didn't come up a success, I shrugged my shoulders and chose the safe way...the way where no one would laugh at me, if I made a mistake. What if I ripped open my opportunity, and blew it? Would that be my only chance? Maybe it's better to just let it sit there and not try it. At least not try it today. Or tomorrow. That way, the opportunity is still there...waiting. Maybe.

Right...that's good. Sure, put it away and never use it because I don't want to ruin it. Or never use it in fear of doing it wrong. Makes sense, doesn't it? Wrong! Funny...I was wrong in letting the fear of doing something wrong get in the way of doing something right.

Jesus speaks of this in a parable found in Matthew 25, where a master handed out talents (or money) to three servants to take care of while he was gone. He divvied them out, "according to their abilities". When the master returned, he found the first two

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servants had doubled their talents given them. The third, however, had stashed his in the ground *in fear* of losing it. The master was really ticked off and told him he should have invested it more wisely.

My little powder box now sits on my bathroom counter and daily reminds me of how I've let fear get in the way of good things. And how God *requires* us to use whatever opportunities he gives us...money, talents, spiritual gifts, intellect, whatever. When you think about it, the third servant really didn't do anything all that bad – he didn't steal it, spend it, lose it, or squander it. He wanted to protect it. Doesn't sound that bad, right? Yet the master considered him *unfaithful* because he didn't do anything with it.

Whoever said faith is a crutch hasn't tried it. Faith is risk. God is asking us to be risky, trust Him and put our "talents" to use.

That can be downright scary at times! What if I'm not prepared? What if I'm not talented in that area? What if I can't pay the bills? What if they'll think I'm stupid? What if, what if, what if...

What false bottoms do we carry that keep us from the sweet essence of being in God's plan? Playing it safe is a waste of time. Take a chance. We may have missed opportunities in our past, but now's the time to start anew. See what God has for you. Rip off that false bottom and smell the "Youth Dew".