

“You know the seasons – you are patient for things to change.”

There are very few plants that are constantly in flower, and for the vast majority, the variety of the seasons is crucial to their survival and flourishing. It is not always summer, and every season brings something necessary, even though it may be hidden. **Flourishing educators know when it is February** and adjust their expectations, behaviours and practices to suit the season. This may feel contrary to the expectations within our sector, wherein one can feel the pressure to be constantly flourishing – **every lesson, every class, every student, no excuses.**

Equally our pace of change is usually anticipated to be fast – for things to turn around quickly, with urgency which can quickly become a sense of panic. On the contrary in nature, very little is rushed, and in fact when it becomes forced (such as GM foods, factory farming etc.) we instinctively know that the attractiveness of the speed of process is essentially outweighed by ethical and sustainability considerations. Yet in education, we may need to develop patience for flourishing to come. As the writer of Ecclesiastes puts it in their great poem on time: **“He has made everything beautiful in its time.”** (Eccl. 3:11).

However, flourishing educators are not simply laissez-faire, hoping for the sun to come out – they work wisely and appropriately in the seasons, playing for the long-term flourishing of their communities over against the short-term proxy measures of success. Love is patient - the story doesn't often progress as quickly as we would want, and rarely resolves how we might have imagined. This sense of patience is not merely an individual or corporate decision to take things more slowly.

Patience needs roots.

It needs to be planted in **the right place and at the right time.**

The prophet Jeremiah paints a compelling picture of flourishing through the seasons: *“They shall be like a tree planted by the water, sending its roots out by the stream. It shall not fear **when the heat comes**, and its leaves shall stay green; in the year of drought it is not anxious, and it does cease to bear fruit.”* (Jeremiah 17.8). There is a beautiful realism to this picture – assuming there will be times of intense heat, and predicting the year of drought. **This will happen, and to you.**

Patience can become our orientation in relationship with children and adults, and helps us to build compelling, attractive and reliable communities to which others are drawn. It often means endurance or perseverance, which can connote suffering or hanging in there. **Flourishing adults know that challenge is coming.** They are patient in it, holding one another to a clear vision, not swayed by short-term changes of policy or procedure. Even as the most terrifying storms will break, flourishing educators **have developed the wisdom to re-frame the storm.**

An understanding of the seasons will help our teams learn from the simplicity of rest, rotation, resources, jubilee, giving, requesting, planting, harvesting and deepening our appreciation of a life cycle that invests in a future that cannot yet be seen.

Whether it is February or August in our team, there is beauty and wonder in each, and yet things will change – we can be certain of that. Flourishing adults take time to patiently invest in those roots, knowing that **in a changing world, it is our roots that will ultimately define us.**