



# Reflections of a Potted Plant

March 12, 2009 By [Richard Ferri, PhD, ANP](#)

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I have been thinking about my three days in a nursing home (excuse me...a rehab facility...but it sure as hell looked and smelled like a nursing home to me!) after I was discharged from the hospital after recuperating from my deflated right lung with a numerous rib fractures. I hated the nursing home. I mean hated it. But I also saw it as my way out of the hospital and back to home so I gleefully went and immediately felt the despair knife twist in my heart once I hit the door. It was like my lung collapsing all over again.

However, the reality was I was too weak to go home and be on my own. I needed a few more days of rest and supervision before I could be independent again. While this reality was constantly on my mind the other reality of being potted plant in a corner room with little need of anything more than some pain pills, food, and water was also front and center.

There wasn't anything wrong with care at the nursing home. In fact, it was excellent. The nurses and therapists were professional, caring, attentive, and practiced very good medicine. The problem was me. First my attitude about being in a nursing home, which surprisingly scared the hell out of me, since I started my clinical career as a gerontologist. In fact, I wrote one of the best selling clinical books of all time on nursing home care. The book made a small little fortune. I was also the director of education for a major organization championing the rights of the elderly called Aging in America. If HIV hadn't come along I am sure I would still be in geriatrics. So what the hell was my fucking problem?

Like any good recovering drunk (which I am - for today at least) can tell you the problem was ME. It usually is. It wasn't like when I was actively drinking and drugging. Everyone else was to blame for my swilling vodka by the gallons and slamming grams of meth into my veins every day. I had no responsibility for my drug use and I had no responsibility for my despair in the nursing home. I was wrong on both accounts. I had and have total responsibility for my life and I simply gave it up since I was in a "bad place". I was a fool.

So I suppose the actual reality was I a scared potted plant that needed more than a little water but did not know how to ask for it. Remember, I am the one who sings the Mighty Mouse Theme Song every day. Just cut and paste the tag into your browser on this posting and hear what I was hearing in my head.

I am a fool. I am not Mighty Mouse. Hope never to think of myself as Mighty Mouse again but know I will. But at least for now I am putting my cape back in storage and simply going to bed.

Even potted plants need rest.

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