



The Veranda that grounds me

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It's honestly surprising how a small plant pot can make a dull space look so alive, how a tiny flower can pull your attention for hours. Or how a small insect, barely visible, can make you follow it around to see what it does next, where it's headed, what its little world looks like.

This veranda, this quiet corner of my home, has always been that space for me. I've loved watching little snails during the rainy season here, how they glide forward so slowly, then suddenly change their path, trying to escape the puddles of water. It's strange how such tiny creatures can make you think so much about life itself. Everything around us changes, the seasons, people, even us, but somehow, this small space always feels the same. Familiar. Safe.

I often walk here just to watch the world move, the stray dogs running, cats stretching in the sun, people passing by. Sometimes, I just play music in my headphones and walk aimlessly. It's like a short escape; a quiet pause from a world that's always rushing. A break from the endless striving, the constant thought of the "next big thing." You chase something, then another, and when you don't get it, the rejections and comparisons start creeping in. That's when anxiety grows roots. And you begin to wonder if you're doing enough, if you are enough.

But here, somehow, I feel like I can breathe again. It's not like all thoughts disappear, but they soften. When I walk around this veranda, I remind myself that it's okay to just be. I don't need to fix everything or be perfect right now. That's where I've unknowingly practiced non-judging, not labeling my emotions as good or bad, but simply noticing them.

This morning, I woke up earlier than usual and decided to jog here. It's a pretty small space, honestly, but it feels comfortable and personal, like it knows me. The music played softly in the background, and as I stretched and looked around, I noticed the peacock-painted pots glimmering under soft sunlight. The string of lights (ladiya) we hung for Diwali looped around some of the plants. There's something peaceful about lights circling green leaves, as if they're wrapping hope around life itself.

The music felt like a thought-blocker. It silenced the rush of my brain and let me exist in that moment. That's when I realized this was non-striving in its truest form. I wasn't doing yoga or meditating to feel calmer. I just was. Moving, breathing, existing without trying to "achieve" calmness.

I sat down on a cozy chair I'd recently placed near the side wall and instantly, memories came flooding in. I remembered how we used to gift small plants during festivals, neatly potted ones tied with ribbons. How neighbors and friends would ask where my parents bought those beautiful pots. I remembered being small, watching the drip irrigation system my parents had set up along the wall. It was fascinating, seeing the water fall drop by drop into the pots. I was completely mesmerized by how something so simple could save so much water. That's when I first learned about sustainability, even though I didn't have that word for it back then.

Thinking about that now, about the quiet excitement I felt as a child, made me smile. That's beginner's mind: seeing ordinary things as if for the first time, with curiosity and awe. Somewhere while growing up, I forgot that feeling. I forgot how beautiful simplicity could be. Sitting there today brought it all back: the innocence, the wonder, the joy of learning something small but meaningful.

And I realized, maybe I've also learned patience from this space. Plants don't rush to grow. They don't compare themselves to each other. They just grow, slowly, quietly. They take the sunlight, the rain, the care they're given, and keep becoming what they're meant to be. Maybe that's what we should do too.

This veranda, in its silence, has taught me to trust- that life will unfold in its own time. Not everything needs to be planned or predicted. Some things, like growth, just happen naturally if you let them.

As I sat there, I felt a strange wave of stillness, almost like I'd let go of all the noise inside my head, the "what ifs," the "should haves." For a few minutes, I was simply me. No expectations, no comparisons, just me and my plants.

And when I think of acceptance, this is what it feels like. Accepting that not every day will be perfect, but that even a few quiet minutes can ground you again. That sometimes peace doesn't come from escaping your thoughts but from sitting beside them in a space that feels like home.

One moment, I was stressing about college applications, the next I was remembering how I used to watch snails and collect flowers as a child. I didn't even realize how much of that part of me still existed, buried, maybe, but still alive.

Every time I spend a few minutes here, I feel different, a little calmer, clearer, and more myself. And every time I don't, I can feel the restlessness building up again. Terrible days, bad mood, or just life.

Maybe greens aren't just greens. Maybe they're reminders of the balance between stillness and growth, of the patience to bloom when it's time, of the hope that always finds its way back through cracks of sunlight.

This veranda isn't just a physical space anymore. It's a reflection of what mindfulness feels like, being grounded, grateful, and gently aware.

It's not about perfection. It's about coming back home to yourself, over and over again.

Sitting in this space today, I realized mindfulness isn't just about feeling calm for myself, it's about noticing the world around me, appreciating life, and understanding my place in it.

When I slow down, I see small ways I can make a difference, like caring for plants, saving water, or being more thoughtful about how I consume resources.

This calm, awareness, and presence give me the energy to act, to contribute to my community, support sustainable practices, and be more intentional about protecting our planet.

It made me understand that even small actions, when rooted in mindfulness and care, can ripple outward and create meaningful change.

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