



[grow roots]

Vanessa Diffenbaugh, author of the best-seller *The Language of Flowers*, offers advice on how to live like a flower by growing roots in your community.

① **Ask people to tell their stories.** Everyone has a story, full of both heartbreak and triumph, but we can't see their story just by looking at them. Asking people to share allows you to find common ground even when all you see — externally — are differences.

② **Be real.** We have been trained to broadcast our successes and hide our failures. But the truth is this: our failures humanize us, and they connect us to one another. Being truthful

about both sides of your story will help you form more honest connections with those you love and admire.

③ **Embrace your elders.** Show love and respect to your grandparents and aging neighbors. Talk to them often. Send a letter or card. Help them with chores or errands. Or really make them smile with flowers, which have been shown by a Rutgers University study to ease depression, inspire socialization and refresh memory as we grow older.

④ **Make yourself useful.** Everyone has something to give, no matter how much (or little) time you have. Find an organization that inspires you and make a difference while also meeting people that care about the world in the same way you do.

⑤ **Do what you love to do.** Figure out what you love to do, and then go do it! Take a flower arranging class at your local florist or join a local sports league. You'll meet people that share your interests, whether they are reading, running, flowers, music and more.

⑥ **Ask for help.** Don't be afraid to ask humbly, genuinely, for help when you need it. People want to help one another; sometimes we just forget to ask. Becoming vulnerable and admitting we can't do everything on our own is another way to deepen relationships. Say thank you with flowers, a plant, or another heartfelt expression of gratitude.

For more tips on how to Live Like A Flower, visit AboutFlowers.com/LLAF.