

Stories about Blessing

As we seek to bless, first we need to acknowledge and appreciate the blessings given and received. Two stories seem pertinent to this dynamic. The first comes from a film called 'Pay it Forward'. Perhaps not the greatest film ever to grace the silver screen from Hollywood, it does nonetheless underline the importance of thoughtful and powerful action and how this can impact the world around us.

This leads on to the second story about the little boy and the starfish.

A class of school children in 7th Grade of High School are challenged by the humanities teacher, Mr Simonet, to do something to change the world.

One pupil called Trevor McKinney, takes the idea and runs with it. What if each person in the world did three 'acts of random kindness', acts which were truly generous, truly transformative for the person receiving them and totally unconditional except for the hope and expectation that the recipient would then offer the same kindness in response, another three acts of radical kindness? The generosity, the blessing, the grace would cascade down, or radiate outwards from the courageous action of one individual. These actions in themselves might seem small and insignificant, but their impact would be profound if everyone passed the blessings on, or 'paid it forward' making unwarranted acts of extreme generosity throughout the world.

An old man was doing his daily walk along the beach one morning, when he spotted a young boy crouched by the water, scooping something up from the sand and throwing it into the sea.

The beach was normally empty at this time of day, and so the old man stopped to watch for a while.

He noticed that the boy kept on shuffling a little further down the beach, then repeating this same action again and again – stopping, scooping, throwing, moving.

"What are you doing there, boy?" the old man asked, walking closer.

"I'm saving these starfish that are stranded" replied the boy, "if they stay on the beach they will dry out and die, so I'm putting them back into the ocean so they can live."

The old man was silent for a few seconds.

"Young man" he said, "on this stretch of beach alone, there must be more than one hundred stranded starfish. Around the next corner, there must be at least one thousand more. This goes on for miles and miles and miles – I've done this walk every day for 10 years, and it's always the same. There must be millions of stranded starfish! I hate to say it, but you'll never make a difference."

The boy replied, "well I just made a difference for that one", and continued with his work.