

Scouts' Own Worship Service Nonsectarian and Interfaith Resources

Boy Scout Troop 149

Stories

Note: These stories should NOT be read, but rather should be learned and told naturally.

The Carpenter's House

An elderly carpenter was ready to retire. He told his employer-contractor of his plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family.

He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

When the carpenter finished his work and the builder came to inspect the house, the contractor handed the front-door key to the carpenter. "This is your house," he said, "my gift to you."

What a shock! What a shame! If he had only known he was building his own house, he would have done it all so differently. Now he had to live in the home he had built none too well.

So it is with us. We build our lives in a distracted way, reacting rather than acting, willing to put up less than the best. At important points we do not give the job our best effort. Then with a shock we look at the situation we have created and find that we are now living in the house we have built. If we had realized that we would have done it differently.

Think of yourself as the carpenter. Think about your house. Each day you hammer a nail, place a board, or erect a wall. Build wisely. It is the only life you will ever build. Even if you live it for only one day more, that day deserves to be lived graciously and with dignity. The plaque on the wall says, "Life is a do-it-yourself project." Your life tomorrow will be the result of your attitudes and the choices you make today.

Author Unknown

Perspectives

One day a father and his rich family took his young son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose to show him how poor people can be. They spent a day and a night in the farm of a very poor family. When they got back from their trip the father asked his son, "How was the trip?" "Very good, Dad!"

"Did you see how poor people can be?" the father asked.

"Yeah!" "And what did you learn?"

The son answered, "I saw that we have a dog at home, and they have four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of the garden, they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lamps in the garden, they have the stars. Our patio reaches to the front yard, they have a whole horizon. "

When the little boy was finishing, his father was speechless.

His son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are!" Isn't it true that it all depends on the way you look at things? If you have love, friends, family, health, good humor and a positive attitude toward life, you've got everything!

You can't buy any of these things. You can have all the material possessions you can imagine, provisions for the future, etc., but if you are poor of spirit, you have nothing!

Author Unknown

The Cracked Pot

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on the end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots was perfectly made and never leaked. The other pot had a crack in it and by the time the water bearer reached his master's house it had leaked much of its water and was only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you." "Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws, you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path."

Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it some. But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again the pot apologized to the bearer for its failure.

The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of your path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I took advantage of it. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table. Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But if we will allow it, God will use our flaws to grace his table. In God's great economy, nothing goes to waste. Don't be afraid of your flaws. Acknowledge them, and you too can be the cause of beauty. Know that in our weakness we find our strength.

Author Unknown

Attitude

The longer one lives, the more one realizes the impact of attitude on life. Attitude is more important than facts, more important than circumstances, failures or successes, and certainly more important than what other people think or say. It's more important than appearance, talent or skill. Attitude can make or break a man, a home, a family, or an organization. It can shatter dreams, ideas, relationships, and children's futures

Every day, each one of us has a choice regarding not only the clothes we wear, but the attitude we present for that day. It's the last thing we put on as we leave our home. People should all have a mirror by the door, just to make sure their attitude is on straight.

We cannot change, as God cannot change, the past, nor can we guarantee that those we smile or say "Good Morning" to will be pleasant or even civil, since anger has a way of inserting its sharp words into pleasant as well as strained conversations.

The time we spend interacting with people may vary from a few seconds to hours, and happens under all circumstances, such as walking down the street, or school hallway.

We may think that a head nod, or a brief "Hello" is insignificant, but think again. As a clown, I have come to realize that those few moments, are what children, or people remember.

Two weeks ago, another clown and myself were at a Friendly's restaurant in Concord. We had just finished a parade, and were still in costume. We were tired, hot, and hungry. Since it was during that heat wave, many parents were there with their children, and you know how clowns react with children. So we made balloons and passed them from table to table until all the kids had at least one. Just as our food arrived, a small boy, around nine years old, came from somewhere and tugged at my sleeve and said "When I grow up, I want to be just like you." We never did get to eat.

What I'm trying to say is that whether you interact with people in three minutes or three hours, you leave behind you a feeling (attitude) of caring or non-caring, of sensitivity or insensitivity, and as one clown said "You walk away leaving a legend or a nightmare."

Each one of us should realize that as we walk away, we leave something behind. What that is depends on us.

--A.L. (from the internet)

The Black Door

There's a Middle Eastern story of a spy who had been captured and sentenced to death by a general of the Persian army. The general had fallen upon a strange and rather bizarre custom. He permitted the condemned person to make a choice. He could either face the firing squad or pass through the black door.

As the moment of execution drew near, the general ordered the spy to be brought before him for a short, final interview, the primary purpose of which was to receive the answer of the doomed man to the question: "Which shall it be---the firing squad or the black door?"

This was not an easy question, and the prisoner hesitated, but soon he made it known that he much preferred the firing squad. Not long thereafter, a volley of shots in the courtyard announced the grim sentence had been fulfilled. The general, staring at his boots, turned to his aide and said, "You see how it is with men; they will always prefer the known way to the unknown. It is characteristic of people to be afraid of the undefined. And yet I gave him his choice."

"What lies behind the black door?" asked the aide.

"Freedom," replied the general, "and I've known only a few men brave enough to take it."

Like so many stories out of the Middle East, this one carries a pretty hefty message. The first is, of course, that we will often choose the familiar, even if it's undesirable, over the unknown, which might be a wonderful opportunity. And second, that few people are brave enough to choose freedom.

I'm not saying we should reject the familiar---not by any means. But we should question the familiar. Just because it's familiar doesn't make it good, better, or the best thing to do.

When you heard the story about the black door, you probably said to yourself, "I would have chosen the black door. I would have had nothing to lose; the firing squad was certain death." And most people would say the same thing. But actually faced with the choice, would you? How many doors to freedom have we passed up during our lives because we tend to cling so fiercely to the familiar?

How many times have events come about that we worried and stewed about--- even thought calamitous at the time---and that later proved to be blessings in disguise? Each of them was a black door through which we passed to greater freedom. But at the time, we would have chosen to keep things as they were if we had been given the chance.

At any rate, it's one of those stories that makes for interesting discussion at the dinner table, or with friends. Tell the story of the black door, and see what sort of reaction you get.

It's good to remember, if we can, that it is often those things we worry about and most fear that turn out to be blessings in disguise.

Time

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening the bank deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!!!! Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow". You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realize the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who failed a grade. To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby. To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper. To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet. To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who missed the train. To realize the value of ONE SECOND, ask a person who just avoided an accident. To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND, ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Treasure every moment that you have! And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time. And remember that time waits for no one.

Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it's called the present!!