

## **WISDOM, ADVICE, PHILOSOPHY, & INSPIRATION**

“Never argue with an idiot; they’ll drag you down to their level and beat you with experience.”

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#### **WELCOME AT MY WATER BOWL**

A man and his dog were walking along a road. The man was enjoying the scenery, when it suddenly occurred to him that he was dead. He remembered dying, and that the dog walking beside him had been dead for years. He wondered where the road was leading them. After a while, they came to a high, white, stone wall along one side of the road. It looked like fine marble. At the top of a long hill, it was broken by a tall arch that glowed in the sunlight.

When he was standing before it he saw a magnificent gate in the arch that looked like mother-of-pearl, and the street that led to the gate looked like pure gold. He and the dog walked toward the gate, and as he got closer, he saw a man at a desk to one side. When he was close enough, he called out, “Excuse me, where are we?”

“This is Heaven, sir,” the man answered

“Wow! Would you happen to have some water?” the man asked.

“Of course, sir. Come right in, and I’ll have some ice water brought right up.” The man gestured, and the gate began to open.

“Can my friend,” gesturing toward his dog, “come in, too?” the traveler asked.

“I’m sorry, sir, but we don’t accept pets.”

The man thought a moment and then turned back toward the road and continued the way he had been going with his dog. After another long walk, and at the top of another long hill, he came to a dirt road leading through a farm gate that looked as if it had never been closed. There was no fence. As he approached the gate, he saw a man inside, leaning against a tree and reading a book.

“Excuse me!” he called to the man. “Do you have any water?”

“Yeah, sure, there’s a pump over there, come on in.”

“How about my friend here?” the traveler gestured to the dog.

“There should be a bowl by the pump.”

They went through the gate, and sure enough, there was an old-fashioned hand pump with a bowl beside it. The traveler filled the water bowl and took a long drink himself, then he gave some to the dog. When they were full, he and the dog walked back toward the man who was standing by the tree.

“What do you call this place?” the traveler asked.

“This is Heaven,” he answered.

“Well, that’s confusing,” the traveler said. “The man down the road said that was Heaven, too.”

“Oh, you mean the place with the gold street and pearly gates? Nope. That’s hell.”

“Doesn’t it make you mad for them to use your name like that?”

“No, we’re just happy that they screen out the folks who would leave their best friends behind.”

## **RED MARBLES**

I was at the corner grocery store buying some early potatoes. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature, ragged but clean, hungrily appraising a basket of freshly picked green peas. I paid for my

potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Mr. Miller (the store owner) and the ragged boy next to me.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?"

"H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin them peas. They sure look good."

"They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?"

"Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time."

"Good. Anything I can help you with?"

"No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?" asked Mr. Miller.

"No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with."

"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?"

"All I got's my prize marble here."

"Is that right? Let me see it" said Miller.

"Here'tis.. She's a dandy."

"I can see that. Hmmmmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?" the store owner asked.

"Not zackley but almost."

"Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble". Mr. Miller told the boy.

"Sure will.. Thanks Mr. Miller." Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said, "There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes, or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, when they come on their next trip to the store."

I left the store smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Colorado, but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys, and their bartering for marbles.

Several years went by, each more rapid than the previous one. Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his visitation that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them.

Upon arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could. Ahead of us in line were three young men. One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts.... all very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing composed and smiling by her husband's casket. Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved onto the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket.

Each left the mortuary awkwardly, wiping his eyes. Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and reminded her of the story from those many years ago and what she had told me about her husband's bartering for marbles. With her eyes glistening, she took my hand and led me to the casket. "Those three young men that just left were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim "traded" them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size.... they came to pay their debt."

"We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho." With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three exquisitely shined red marbles.

The Moral : We will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds. Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath. Today I wish you a day of ordinary miracles ~ A fresh pot of coffee you didn't make yourself. An unexpected phone call from an old friend. Green stoplights on your way to work. The fastest line at the grocery store. A good sing-along song on the radio. Your keys found right where you left them.

Send this to the people you'll never forget. I just did... If you don't send it to anyone, it means you are in way too much of a hurry to even notice the ordinary miracles when they occur.

### **THANK YOU LETTER - TO RESTORE FAITH**

This will warm your heart, especially if you have lost faith in human kindness. This letter was sent to the principals' office after an elementary school had sponsored a luncheon for the elderly. An old lady had received a new radio at the lunch as a door prize, and was writing to say thank you. This story is a credit to all human kind!

Dear Faculty and Students,

God bless you for the beautiful radio I won at your recent senior citizens' luncheon. I am 84 years old and live at an Assisted Home for the Aged. All of my family has passed away. I am all alone now and it's nice to know someone is thinking of me. God bless you for your kindness to an old forgotten lady. My roommate is 95 and always had her own radio. Before I received this one, she would never let me listen to hers, even when she was napping. The other day, her radio fell off the nightstand and broke into a lot of little pieces. It was awful and she was in tears. She asked if she could listen to mine, and I said f\*\*k you.

Thank you for that opportunity.

Sincerely,

Agnes

### **DON'T MESS WITH OLD PEOPLE**

The IRS decides to audit Grandpa, and summons him to the IRS office. The IRS auditor was not surprised when Grandpa showed up with his attorney. The auditor said, 'Well, sir, you have an extravagant lifestyle and no full-time employment, which you explain by saying that you win money gambling. I'm not sure the IRS finds that believable.'

'I'm a great gambler and I can prove it,' says Grandpa. 'How about a demonstration?'

The auditor thinks for a moment and said, 'Okay. Go ahead.'

Grandpa says, 'I'll bet you a thousand dollars that I can bite my own eye.'

The auditor thinks a moment and says, 'It's a bet.'

Grandpa removes his glass eye and bites it. The auditor's jaw drops. Grandpa says, 'Now, I'll bet you two thousand dollars that I can bite my other eye.' Now the auditor can tell Grandpa isn't blind, so he takes the bet. Grandpa removes his dentures and bites his good eye. The stunned auditor now realizes he has wagered and lost three grand, with Grandpa's attorney as a witness. He starts to get nervous.

'Want to go double or nothing?' Grandpa asks 'I'll bet you six thousand dollars that I can stand on one side of your desk, and pee into that wastebasket on the other side, and never get a drop anywhere in between.'

The auditor, twice burned, is cautious now, but he looks carefully and decides there's no way this old guy could possibly manage that stunt, so he agrees again.

Grandpa stands beside the desk and unzips his pants, but although he strains mightily, he can't make the stream reach the wastebasket on the other side, so he pretty much urinates all over the auditor's desk. The auditor leaps with joy, realizing that he has just turned a major loss into a huge win.

But Grandpa's own attorney moans and puts his head in his hands.

'Are you okay?' the auditor asks.

'Not really,' says the attorney. 'This morning, when Grandpa told me he'd been summoned for an audit, he bet me twenty-five thousand dollars that he could come in here and piss all over your desk and that you'd be happy about it!'

**Don't Mess with Old People!!**

## WHEN INSULTS HAD CLASS

"He has all the virtues I dislike and none of the vices I admire."

Winston Churchill

"I have never killed a man, but I have read many obituaries with great pleasure."

Clarence Darrow

“He has never been known to use a word that might send a reader to the dictionary.”

William Faulkner (about Ernest Hemingway)

“Thank you for sending me a copy of your book; I’ll waste no time reading it.”

Moses Hadas

“He can compress the most words into the smallest idea of any man I know.”

Abraham Lincoln

“I’ve had a perfectly wonderful evening. But this wasn’t it.”

Groucho Marx

“I didn’t attend the funeral, but I sent a nice letter saying I approved of it.”

Mark Twain

“He has no enemies, but is intensely disliked by his friends.”

Oscar Wilde

“I am enclosing two tickets to the first night of my new play; bring a friend...if you have one.”

George Bernard Shaw to Winston Churchill

“Cannot possibly attend first night, will attend second...if there is one.”

Winston Churchill, in response.

“I feel so miserable without you; it’s almost like having you here.”

Stephen Bishop

“He is a self-made man and worships his creator.”

John Bright

“I’ve just learned about his illness. Let’s hope it’s nothing trivial.”  
Irvin S. Cobb

“He has the attention span of a lightning bolt.”  
Robert Redford

“He loves nature in spite of what it did to him.”  
Forrest Tucker

“His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork.”  
Mae West

“Some cause happiness wherever they go; others, whenever they go.”  
Oscar Wilde

### **DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED BURGER KING EMPLOYEE**

From THE ONION: MANCHESTER, NH—Despite his third-grade reading level and IQ of 71, developmentally disabled Burger King employee Andy Ehrman is the only competent member of the 22-person Frontage Road staff.

“I will help you with that!” the 28-year-old Ehrman told a drive-thru customer Monday, hustling to put the customer’s order in a bag after cashier Daniel Genz dropped it on a tray and walked away. “There you go! Thank you! Have a nice day!” As Ehrman waved goodbye to the customer, Genz leaned against the shake machine, making a cell-phone call to his girlfriend.

“Don’t forget to shut the drawer, Daniel, or someone can take all the money,” said Ehrman, pushing the register closed and straightening the stack of trays under the counter. “Then we’d all get in trouble!”

In addition to his usual lunch-rush duties—making sure the dining area, condiment island, and restrooms are clean and stocked—Ehrman spent 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday voluntarily sweeping and mopping the

floor in the prep area, helping an elderly customer find her purse, and throwing salt on the icy walk outside the restaurant.

During the same two-hour stretch, 20-year-old Jenna Sanders, Ehrman's direct supervisor, incorrectly prepared three orders, spilled a jug of oil in the kitchen, and had a 25-minute conversation about the band Slipknot with coworker Debi Price.

"[Sanders] double-charged me for a BK Big Fish Value Meal," customer Terry Unger said. "Then she got my order completely wrong. I was about to storm out of there and never come back again when this retarded kid, all smiles, comes up and asks if I need help. Sixty seconds later, he hands me the correct order and change, and apologizes for the trouble. Finally, someone who understands how to treat a customer." Unger added that in addition to having the only clean uniform in the store, Ehrman seemed to be the sole employee with basic interpersonal skills.

"Maybe they teach it in the special-ed classes or something, but he's the only one who actually speaks in sentences as opposed to grunts," Unger said. "And when I asked for extra ketchup packets, he handed them to me and said, 'Here you go,' instead of rolling his eyes." Ehrman is also willing to perform tasks beyond those in his job description, offering to help coworkers stock shelves or run the dishwasher when they fall behind. Most nights, Ehrman even volunteers to clean the grease traps.

"I don't mind," Ehrman said. "I'm helping!"

Willis Barnett, a delivery driver who makes twice-weekly dropoffs at the Frontage Road store, is among the many people impressed with Ehrman.

Above: Employee Randy Leyner (left) sits while Ehrman clears a table.

"I love it when I make a delivery and they've got that tard working in the back," Barnett said. "He always knows exactly where everything goes. Everyone else just says, 'Uh, I don't know—toss it on the floor or something.'"

Among his many other qualities, Ehrman boasts a near-encyclopedic knowledge of Burger King protocol and safety regulations.

“[Assistant manager] Kerri [Sheckley] said the dishwasher uses the green stuff, and [manager] Bob [Hundhausen] said it uses the purple stuff,” Ehrman said. “But then I saw on the TV show [training video Cleaning The Burger King Way] that you use both, ‘cause one is the stuff that kills germs and one is soap. So I use both.”

Ehrman also makes an effort to bring potential safety hazards to coworkers’ attention.

“Hey, Randy, we can’t put cardboard boxes or anything paper under there,” Ehrman told Randy Leyner, 26, upon seeing him put a stack of french-fry cartons under the fryer. “It could start a fire!” After being ignored by Leyner, Ehrman dragged the cartons to the rear storage closet himself.

Unlike other members of the Frontage Road team, Ehrman never shows up late or asks to leave early. In fact, when Ehrman works the morning shift, he can usually be seen waiting in the front lobby by 5:30 a.m., 45 minutes before the morning manager arrives to unlock the door. But despite working substantially harder than any of his coworkers, Ehrman bears no resentment toward them.

“I used to work at the hospital in the mailroom, but it was boring and people were mean to me,” said Ehrman, plugging his nose and shaking his head to signify that the job “stank.” “I like to work at Burger King better. There’s always lots and lots to do. And I get a free Whopper to take home!”

Miriam Donnelly, the social worker who placed Ehrman at Burger King, is extremely pleased with his success.

“Andy has trouble with basic addition and spelling his name, but he fits right in at Burger King,” Donnelly said. “The work seems almost tailor-made for someone with special needs.”

Donnelly added that everything at Burger King, from the touch-pad registers to the step-by-step diagrams for folding the apple-pie sleeves, is designed to help low-functioning individuals succeed.

“Andy may go a little slower than some of the other workers, but he does one thing at a time, focuses on it, and, in the end, gets it right,” Donnelly said. “Actually, now that I think about it, he’s not really any slower.”

## CHINESE WOMAN

An elderly Chinese woman had two large pots, each hung on the ends of a pole that she carried across her neck. One of the pots had a crack in it while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the woman bringing home only one and a half pots of water. 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 could only do half of what it had been made to do.

After 2 years of what it perceived to be bitter failure, it spoke to the woman one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house."

The old woman smiled, "Did you notice that there are flowers on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, so I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you water them."

"For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Each of us has our own unique flaw. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've just got to take each person for what they are and look for the good in them.

So, to all of my crackpot friends, have a great day and remember to smell the flowers!