



***"Making a difference, saving a starfish, one star at a time"***

### **The Starfish Rescuers**

- a story adaptation from Jeff Roberts

One morning after a particularly fearsome storm, a man arose early and decided to go for a walk along the sea. As he neared the beach, the early riser saw a young boy in the distance slowly, yet purposely, ambling down the shoreline. As he watched, the young boy stopped, picked something up, and tossed it into the ocean. Then, the young boy slowly straightened himself up, walked several more feet, stooped down, and once again picked up something, which he tossed into the sea.

Intrigued, the early riser moved closer. As he drew near, he realized suddenly what the young boy was doing. Littered all down the shoreline, as far as the eye could see, were thousands upon thousands of starfish cast out from the ocean by the fury of the now-passed storm. As the early riser watched, the young boy bent down, gently picked up a small, helpless starfish, and tossed it back into the ocean. He repeated the same process every few feet.

After a minute or two, the early riser approached the young boy. "Good morning" he said. "I couldn't help notice what you're doing. I commend you for what you're trying to do, but the storm has washed up thousands of starfish on this beach. You can't possibly save them all! What possible difference do you hope to accomplish?"

The young boy paused for a long time, pondering the early riser's question. Finally, without saying a word, he bent down, picked up a starfish, and tossed it far into the ocean. "It made a difference to that one," he said, with a smile.

Now, it was the early riser's turn to be silent. As he looked at the young boy with growing admiration, it seemed as if 'youth' did not matter, revealing someone wise, noble, and strong enough to stand up to any challenge.

Deeply moved, the early riser struggled for the right words, but none would come. At last, he too, bent down, picked up a starfish, and tossed it into the ocean. The young boy, watched intently. He spoke not a word, but his nod and a wink said all that was needed. "Well," the early riser said as he looked out at the thousands of starfish stranded on the beach before them, "It looks like we've got a lot of work to do."



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Just then, the two men realized they were not alone. Others, out for their Saturday morning walks and jogs had witnessed what had taken place. When they saw what the young boy and early riser were attempting to do, they too bent down and picked up starfish of their own. Soon, the morning sun shone down upon hundreds of good Samaritans - young, old, black, white, rich, and poor; each working diligently and side by side to save as many starfish as he or she was able. What had started out as one, had grown into an army of kindness.

Some time later, an amazing thing happened. As the last starfish was tossed into the ocean, a spontaneous cheer broke out among the starfish rescuers. People hugged and high-fived each other. Some exchanged names and numbers and promised to stay in touch. Others walked off together to share breakfast with new friends. To every person, each one felt they had done something important and had made a difference.

That morning, in the span of only two hours, five thousand starfish were saved, and hundreds of lives were transformed. All because one person cared enough to try to Be the Difference.



**The next time you begin to think that the good you are doing (or considering doing) won't be enough to make a difference, think back to the Parable of the Starfish. Remember... "What is impossible for one, is easily accomplished by many." But someone needs to be the difference and be the first person to throw that first starfish into the sea.**

## Throwing Starfish

**"I will BE the Difference to this one"**

### Personal Reflections:

- Why do you think the boy stopped to help the starfish?
- What will you do if you saw lots of starfish on the beach needing help?
- When the boy saw hundreds of stranded starfish, he could have been discouraged and given up. Do you think it was easy for him to keep trying?
- Are there starfishes in your life? What are they?
- Think of a time when you felt that you had a sibling/friend to help or a problem to face, but did not, because of fear, selfishness, doubt, etc? What happened?
- So what is the moral of this story?



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