

Pass It On®...

Extending a Hand Even During Personal Struggle

For years, Arthur ran a car dealership in a small town on the edge of the Australian Outback. The lot was full of the kind of vehicles that could take you into a stark landscape, and at night, the sky overhead blossomed with stars, anchored by the Southern Cross.

Everybody in town knew Arthur. He was fair dinkum, as they say, genuine and straight-up honest. He strolled the streets of the town, a handsome figure with handsome children in a climate that was much like him—warm, mostly, without much variation. And while he had employees that loved him and were as warm as he was, one mechanic was, as his son recalls, “recalcitrant.” The son asked why his father kept the man on. The only answer he ever got was, “Ahh, he’s all right.”

It seems unfair, what happened next. Arthur lost a son in a car accident, on the way to church no less. And it left Arthur cloudy for some time. His employees did their best to keep his spirits up, but it was a grief that stays around, an unwanted visitor. Yet Arthur never lost his smile. Not long after, Arthur’s wife got sick, the kind of illness that doesn’t go away, only gets worse. It required more time at home and less time at the dealership. The employees did the best they could, except for the mechanic. He was difficult as ever, but Arthur saw something deeper in him that he hadn’t seen before. What pain had the mechanic been through that caused him to harbor bitterness? Arthur would never know.

As his wife became bedridden, Arthur sold all the cars and trucks on the lot and shut down the dealership. The employees all found work at other lots, except for the mechanic. While Arthur cared for his ailing wife, he kept the mechanic on the payroll for over a year until he found work. It’s the sort of thing you rarely hear of. But Arthur was his only safety net, and his heart could not let a man be forgotten, no matter how recalcitrant he was.

Arthur tenderly took care of his wife for seven years until she passed away. His life consisted of cleaning and caring and sitting with her in the sun.

The mechanic softened just enough to visit a couple of times, but he had not yet learned how to be fully grateful. That was OK with Arthur. He had done what he knew was right, and in the end, he wanted to be fair dinkum with everybody, even the ones who couldn’t appreciate it yet.

We often reserve compassion for those who we believe deserve it. But real compassion is when we offer it without judgment, even to those around us who may not yet have the capacity to return the favor.

Compassion...PassItOn.com

By The Foundation for a Better Life®

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