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ROBERT KIRWAN

Operating An Independent
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Since January 2006

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LOOK BEYOND THE SILVER LINING

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They say that every new day is another opportunity to make significant changes in our life.

As we search for these significant changes, let us all take a few moments to consider the following story. Perhaps the answer lies therein.

There once lived a rich man who couldn't understand why he was unhappy. He had wealth beyond imagination, but was always in a miserable mood. He lived in a huge mansion by himself. One Christmas Eve he visited a wise old man and confided in him about his dilemma. The wise old man took him to a window.

"Look out there," he said.

The rich man looked out into the street.

"What do you see?", the wise old man asked.

"I see men and women and little children," answered the rich man.

Then the wise old man took the rich man to a mirror.



"What do you see now?" he asked.

"I see myself," the rich man answered.

Then the wise old man explained, "Behold, both the window and the mirror are made of glass. But the glass of the mirror is covered with silver. No sooner is silver added than you cease to see others and see only yourself."

The rich man left the wise old man and drove to his only sister's house for his annual Christmas Eve visit to deliver some very expensive gifts that he had purchased for her family. It was the only day of the year he saw his sister and he usually just stayed long enough to drop off the presents and wish them a Merry Christmas.

When he arrived at the door, he was warmly greeted by his sister, her husband, and their five year old daughter. His sister and her husband were of modest means, living in a small apartment, yet they were always happy. The rich man was still confused from the advice given by the wise old man.

It was just then that the little girl ran into the living room and returned to give her rich uncle a present. The look in her eyes would have one believe that it was something very precious. When the rich man opened up the package, it was an angel pasted on a pie plate. It mattered not that the angel looked like a clown, nor that it was pasted on crooked. What mattered is that the little girl had given the rich man something that all the money in the world couldn't buy. For the first time that he could remember, there were tears in his eyes, as the little girl gave him a big hug and asked him to stay for a while to play with her.



The rich man's sister and her husband were both surprised and delighted when the man accepted the little girl's invitation. It was the first time he had ever entered the apartment, although he was often asked. When he left several hours later, he realized that the little girl had given him one of life's finest gifts. When she kissed him good bye and told him that this was the best Christmas she ever had, he suddenly understood what the wise old man was trying to tell him earlier in the day.

As he drove home that evening the stars in the sky seemed to be shining a little bit brighter. From that day onward, the rich man stopped spending time looking in mirrors, and instead, looked through every window he could find. He discovered that real joy comes not from accumulating riches or hoarding material things, but from doing something worthwhile for others. The little five-year old girl showed him that all the expensive presents in the world were not as important to her as spending a few hours playing with her uncle. The rich man never again felt unhappy! And he never again spent Christmas, Thanksgiving or birthdays alone.

This year, let us all take the time to look through windows so that we may truly see the things in this world that count. Let us all make a commitment to spend those precious moments with our loved ones as we discover the most precious gifts of all.