

*Doing*  
GOOD *for*  
GOODNESS'  
SAKE



*Heartwarming Stories  
and Inspiring Ideas  
to Help You Help Others*

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## They Gave at the Office

*We make a living by what we get.  
We make a life by what we give.*

WINSTON CHURCHILL

It was the worst possible news: The doctors had found a malignant lump in her right breast, requiring an immediate lumpectomy. Cydel was only fifty-five years old. Her parents were in their eighties and took it very hard. Her two adult daughters were naturally very concerned, but it was winter and they lived out of town; the closest one, Julie, was some six hours away. Cydel's husband, Brian, took over most of the daily household chores, but between the doctor's appointments, mammograms, biopsies, and the surgery itself, the fight for her health took over Cydel's life.

Just two weeks after the surgery, she returned to her job as the secretary of administration to the sheriff of Ida County, Iowa. Cydel was one of "the new kids on the block," having worked only three years in a small office of sixteen people. Sitting at her desk, she wondered whether she could get through her workday and the chemotherapy and six weeks of radiation treatments that lay ahead. Cydel put in five- to six-hour workdays that first week, and the next week she was back to full time. Could she fight for her life and keep her job at the same time?

Italy has an average of 42 days of annual vacation, while France has 37, Germany has 35, Brazil has 34, Britain has 28, Canada has 26, Japan has 25, and the United States has a paltry 12.

Two months after returning to work, Cydel was busy at her desk when the chief deputy, Tom Peterson, called her into the deputy room, where he waited with Sheriff Wade Harriman and Deputy Kevin Frank. He nonchalantly handed her some paperwork. Scanning the internal office memo, Cydel first thought he was claiming compensation time for a vacation. But she burst into tears as she read the note.

The state of Iowa had allowed Cydel six weeks of vacation days and overtime to be used for her radiation treatments and recovery—donated by six of her coworkers.

Secretly, they had gone to their boss, Sheriff Harriman, and explained what they wanted to do. They had even called Thomas Miller, the Iowa attorney general in Des Moines, to secure permission to transfer their hard-earned hours to her record. This group of deputies was sacrificing their hours—vacation days and overtime—for her.

Dave was an investigator and a gentle giant. Mike, a shy, young fellow, had just joined the department and had been working there for only six months. Sheldon was always cracking jokes and talking trivia. Kevin was a murder and burglary investigator. Randy was one for telling a good ani-

mated story. Tom, the chief deputy, could talk to anyone and make them feel special.

In all, six deputies had given Cydel Maxwell one week each of their precious time. A grand total of 240 hours, some of which could have been paid out to them in cash. Without their help, Cydel would not have had enough time to cover her daily treatments, plus the two-hour roundtrip ride to Sioux City.

With excitement and relief, she tearfully accepted their generous offer. And all through the day, as the deputies returned to the office from their beats, Cydel thanked each of them individually for helping her do the impossible.

Six months later, after successfully finishing her treatments, Cydel invited the whole office over to her home for a backyard barbeque—to honor her special guests for their gift of life. Looking around at the six deputies that warm summer's day, Cydel smiled as she recalled Ida County's motto: "To Protect and Serve."

And how!

*Bertamae Anger Ives*



### *Brighten a Coworker's Day*

- Pitch in and help with some unpleasant office tasks.
- Tell your colleagues how much you appreciate them.
- Invite someone new to lunch.
- When a coworker needs to talk, have lunch with him or her and listen with compassion.
- Walk an employee to a car or bus after hours.
- Drop off a treat at someone's desk or bring in a weekly treat that everyone can share.
- Offer to baby-sit a colleague's children so he or she can have an evening off.
- Remember employees' birthdays.
- Organize a regular potluck lunch.
- Invite a coworker's child to follow you around for a day and learn about your job.
- Do some yard work or cooking for a coworker who is ill or recovering from surgery.
- Teach one of your skills to a coworker and learn a skill from her.
- Give employees the option to take half a paid day to volunteer at a local charity of their choice. Help them research a charity that most interests them.
- Offer to switch a shift with a colleague who needs time off.

## The Blue Angora Hat

*Parents can only give good advice or put  
them on the right paths, but the  
final forming of a person's character  
lies in their own hands.*

ANNE FRANK

I must have been about twelve that December. We had already had a fair amount of snow, and the temperatures stayed in the low teens. By Swedish standards, however, winter had hardly begun.

The remote village where I lived had a very small school. Any education beyond fourth grade meant either being boarded with another family or a daily train ride of two hours each way.

I rode the train. The passenger cars were well heated, and that morning I reluctantly removed my blue angora hat and placed it on my lap. Angora hats were the “in” thing that year, and for weeks I had been the only girl in my class who didn’t have one.

The angora goat, an enchanting animal, is one of the oldest surviving animals known to man and is said to have originated in the mountains of Tibet, homeland of the pious Tibetan monk.

My parents were trying hard to make ends meet while raising five children. Since I already had a hat, I knew better than to ask for another one. And then, one day, my mother handed me a package. It was really a Christmas present, she explained, but with the weather already being so cold, she decided to give it to me before the holidays. The angora hat was everything my heart had desired. At that moment I didn't care if it was the only present I'd get that year.

The train had stopped. When the doors opened, I looked up from my history book and watched the new passengers embark. As they slowly proceeded down the aisle, I realized with dismay who they were. They were all patients from the institution.

Right above the train depot, surrounded by woods and fields, stood a large brick building. It was a home for the mentally retarded. Occasionally, as the train passed by, the patients would wave, and sometimes we waved back. Then, invariably, someone would make a snide remark.

A short, slender woman, obviously the nurse in charge of the group, now steered one of her patients over to the seat across from mine. Then the nurse left.

Uneasily, I resumed my studying while furtively watching my new companion. She was dressed in a brown shapeless coat that was much too large, almost reaching her ankles. Her head was covered by a wool scarf that was tied under her chin. Although she was looking out the window, her eyes did not seem to focus on anything in particular, and her face was without expression.

For a while I kept an eye on her, but she seemed harmless enough. Soon I turned my attention back to my home-

work. I had some math to do, and I moved the angora hat from my lap to make room for my notebook.

I didn't see her get up, but suddenly she was sitting next to me. Clutching my books, I instinctively moved closer to the window. Then I saw why she had moved. She had seen my hat. Her hand was gently stroking the soft, feathery yarn.

My first reaction was to yank it away from her—how dare she touch my most precious possession?—but then I stopped myself.

There was something in the way she was looking at the hat that suddenly touched my heart. It was the hunger for something unattainable, a desire for what you could not have—and oh, how I could identify with that feeling.

Noticing my stare, she focused her eyes on my hat. Smiling gently, she said, "Nice. Nice hat."

"Yes," I said somewhat reluctantly. "It's nice. Blue is my favorite color."

Unexpectedly, the nurse appeared. She took her patient by the arm and guided her back to her seat.

A look of bewilderment came over the woman's face, as if she had been scolded for something that she didn't understand.

Now I put my hat on. "Do you like it?" I asked.

Her smile returning, she nodded vigorously.

My heart warmed toward her. "It was supposed to be a Christmas present," I confided, "but I got it early. . . ."

I wasn't sure whether she understood, but again she nodded.

"Would you like to try it on?"

Now the smile vanished, and she looked uncertainly at



me. It came as a shock to realize that she was a young woman. Somehow, because of the way she was dressed, she had looked like an old lady.

I held out the hat while indicating that she needed to remove her scarf.

The transformation was miraculous. The hat made her look almost beautiful. The color brought out the blue of her eyes and made her face glow.

I jumped up from my seat. "Come on," I cried. "Let's go and look in the mirror."

She took my hand as trustingly as a child, and we walked over to the narrow mirror at the end of the aisle. Hand in hand we stood there, a skinny girl with blond pigtails and freckles and a young woman with straight hair and rosy cheeks wearing a pale blue angora hat.

Our eyes met in the mirror, and for a brief moment we were sisters, sharing the pleasure of something beautiful that transcends all ages and all mental limitations.

"What is your name?" I asked my newfound friend. "Mine is Elisabet."

But before she had a chance to reply, the nurse was there. She gave me a friendly nod. "This is where we get off," she said. "It was nice of you to talk to Anna. You'd better take your hat back."

She reached out to get it, but I put my hand on her arm.

"No," I said. That I would be the only girl in class again without an angora hat suddenly seemed unimportant. "No, I don't want it back. I have another one at home."

The nurse looked doubtful. "Are you sure you want to give it away?" she asked.

“Yes,” I said. “Yes, I’m sure.”

I discovered I was still holding Anna’s hand. Now I moved it up to touch the hat.

“For you,” I said. “A Christmas present.”

As they stepped off the train, I rolled down the window and leaned out.

“Good-bye, Anna,” I cried. “Good-bye.” I waved at her and she waved back.

The train started moving. Soon Anna was only a blue dot in the distance—and then she was gone.

*Elisabet McHugh*



### *Teach Children about Giving*

- Encourage your kids to help care for an ailing friend or neighbor, a household pet, or a young plant or tree.
- When your child does something altruistic, let him know that you value his generosity to others as much as you value his achievements at school or on the sports field.
- Volunteering can be a lot of fun for a child. To start, look for a cause that involves your child’s interests or talents. For example, if she is interested in baseball, she could take time to help to clean up the diamond. If he is good at art, he could find a preschool program that needs help supervising the youngsters.

Most schools and churches, and many communities, have volunteer groups for kids.

- Set a shining example. Look after an elderly neighbor, serve dinner at a local woman's shelter, or help out at a fund-raising run for your favorite charity. Invite your children to come along, and ask them for ways they think they can really help out and be of service.
- Make it part of your daily routine to look out for opportunities to do good for people you know and love and for people you haven't yet met. When you're shopping at the grocery store, see how many doors you can open for others, especially for senior citizens or people with extra needs.
- Try to get your child's school to initiate projects that teach kids to assist others. A child care center can collect blankets to donate to shelters. An elementary class can collect toys for other children in need. A shop class can build furniture for low-income families.



### *Things Kids Have Done to Make a Difference*

- Twelve-year-olds in Sandwich, Massachusetts, testified at their state capitol to help pass a law that would ban smoking on public school grounds. The law was passed, and several other states adopted similar laws.
- In Chelmsford, Massachusetts, a twelve-year-old started a petition and testified with friends at a town meeting to protect a wooded area from being destroyed by a condominium development project. The woods are still there.
- A Chicago community health clinic that provides services for poor, pregnant women and infants was about to be shut down for lack of funds. Fifty children organized a protest in front of the clinic, drawing the attention of the media and lawmakers. The clinic remained open.
- Fourth-grade students in Kittery, Maine, ran a canned food drive at their school and donated the food to the local food pantry. Representatives of the classes helped prepare the food for distribution to the clients of the food pantry.
- Students from the sixth grade at a private school in New York City gave up a weekend to help raise funds for World Hunger Year. Some of them were on the phone bank during the annual HUNGERTHON radio show.

## Picking Up Jesus

*How far that little candle throws his beams!  
So shines a good deed in a weary world.*

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

It was Christmas Eve 1991, and I was driving the streets of San Francisco for Yellow Cab. The cool dark night found me restless, driving people here and there. Most were happy, in search of friends and relatives.

I drove folks to and from parties in Nob Hill, carried people warm and glowing from Union Street drinks, and others sated with food from the Avenues. Picked up a middle-aged couple in Park Merced, then a bunch of doctors at UC. Back down Geary to downtown, then turned toward North Beach. The bars were crowded, and I made good money that night, more than \$200 with a lot of fares and generous tips. Unlike me, my passengers generally knew where they wanted to be that evening.

Christmas has always been a mixture of complex emotions for me. Growing up Jewish puts Christmas at odds with my upbringing and heritage, and it's difficult to ignore the pervasive holiday spirit, gift giving, commercial appeals, and Christian as well as secular frivolity that leads up to December 25. I'm always left outside looking in—to somebody else's party. The lights just aren't as bright as I sigh and make my way in the world. I try to force joy and happiness into my heart, but usually end up sad and distracted. Driving a cab is as good a way as any to beat the holiday blues.

I was antsy, wistful, and envious driving that December 24. And hungry too, since almost every late-night restaurant in the city was closed for the holiday. I did, however, find one burrito place open on Mission and 30th, packed with revelers and loners. All kinds of people were there, so I knew I wasn't the only one. I bought a smoky Christmas Eve burrito and ate it back in the cab, listening to the news on the radio. Not much happening in the world, it seemed.

I had just finished my dinner and was about to hit the streets when an old Chevy Nova came up silently behind my cab. It parked close, too close for my comfort, and blocked my exit. This is a danger signal to all cabbies; you always need an exit. A guy climbed out and approached my cab as I tensed and waited for any sign of trouble.

He raised his hands to surrender. "Yo, man, can you help me?" he asked. "I'm lost. Can you help me find Arago Street?" He slurred a little, and his voice was thick.

I looked him over. He was shorter than me but built up, like a weightlifter or an ex-con. He had a heavy Hispanic accent that I couldn't place. He could break me into little pieces if he wanted. He was drunk. This was certain.

I got out of the cab, still wary but relaxing a bit. He didn't seem violent. "What do you need?" I asked.

He said, "Hmm, can you help me find Arago Street? I have friends. . . . They are expecting me." He rolled his *r*'s on *Arago*. He played with the top button on his jacket.

I was feeling more at ease and asked, "What's your name?"

"No names, friend, no names." He smiled as he said this.

I repeated the question and wondered about this man.

He replied, "I might be Jesus." And gave me a goofy grin.

I raised my eyebrows at this statement. I might have coughed.

"Don't worry, man, I'm not crazy." He paused, then said, "I was in Airborne. Army Airborne. Let me show you." And at that he took off his bomber jacket, then his shirt to show me a huge Double A tattoo on his biceps, indicating Army Airborne.

The conversation seemed weird. A military guy? What did it mean? I knew that I didn't want to see any more of his body. I stammered, "Yeah, well, ugh, put your clothes on. What do you want?"

"Arago Street. That's all. I'm lost." He opened his arms as he said this.

I sighed, then pulled out my creased AAA city map. We studied the map on the hood of the cab. Actually I studied it. He repeated the name of the obscure street, and I finally found it deep in the Outer Mission, near City College. I explained where it was, but he didn't comprehend. I looked him in the eye and said, "I'll drive you."

"No, no. I drive." He was pointing at himself.

I laughed and shook my head. He was in no condition to drive to his friends' house or anywhere else. "I don't think that's a good idea," I said, though I realized he was serious.

He protested. "No, I'm okay. I drive. I follow you, you show me the way. I follow *you!*" He smiled and gestured for me to get in the car.

This could get dangerous; he was drunk and disoriented. Besides, it had money loser written all over it. However, I

figured it would be good to somehow safely get him off the road. I knew he was going on with or without me. I made the decision.

“All right, all right. I’m turning the meter on, and you follow me, close, but don’t hit me! And be careful.” I raised my voice. “Got it?” This could be chancy.

“Okay, yes friend, yes, thank you. I follow you.” He nodded in approval.

We got into our cars. He revved his engine way up, and I took a deep breath and hoped that this wouldn’t be a disaster. He backed up with a jerk and let me pass. I slowly took some back streets on toward Alemany. He followed wildly, far away, then coming up very close to my bumper. I tried to keep a safe distance between us as I checked the map. I made a few careful turns as we snaked our way through the deserted Mission streets. Christmas trees glowed in the windows. The night air was silent as I waved to him through my open window. I kept wanting him to slow down to avoid a wreck, and the cops. I wondered what they would say. I always try to avoid cops, even on Christmas Eve.

The meter slowly clicked away as we got closer to our destination. I heard a shout from behind. It broke the stillness of my meandering. “Over there!” He was pointing to the middle of a tiny but otherwise ordinary block: Arago Street. We turned the corner, and he remarkably found a spot across the street. He parked without hitting anything and quickly walked toward a house.

He turned to me on the dark sidewalk and said, “Here, come inside, my friend. Thank you.” He grinned broadly.

I parked in the driveway and followed him up the stairs.



Before we reached the top, a middle-aged couple flung open the door. They were smiling. I could see pink lights on their tree near the window.

“Thank God you made it, we didn’t know what happened,” cried the man as he hugged my traveler. He looked at me and said, “Come inside, please.” My cab sat silently below, very yellow in the night street light.

“This is my friend, he led me here,” said my drunken companion to his friends. “I never would have found you without his help.” He turned to me. “Gracias.” He shook my hand firmly. It was warm and rough.

“How much do we owe you?” asked the man at the door.

I didn’t know what to say. This adventure had cost me about an hour on this busy night, but now it didn’t seem so important. I was relieved that it was over, and safely too. “Well, the meter says about \$40 . . . but . . .” I shrugged.

“Oh,” said the woman as she looked at the floor. “I, I only have \$10, but please come in and we’ll feed you. Come inside.” She sounded sincere.

I thought about it for a moment. This fare was different. This ride was about more than making money, riding the pulse of the city’s, dark streets, and getting from here to there. This man really needed my help, and I rescued him from who knows what. Yet, I still felt that I should go. The woman pulled a \$10 bill out of her purse and pushed it at me.

I looked up. “It’s okay, the fare’s on me. Keep it, I really gotta get back to work.” I moved toward the stairs. “Merry Christmas.”

“Thank you, thank you sir, and Merry Christmas!” The man and the woman shook my hand and then waved to me

as I got back in the cab. Then, laughing, they all went inside and closed the door. I heard their muffled laughter bounce off the curb and dissolve into the quiet night.

I started the engine and chuckled as I turned off the meter. I made my way back to the lonely garage, driving slowly, observing the signs, the stars, the bumps, and the lights. I had seen many strange sights and met many odd and wonderful people while driving the San Francisco streets. This man was another inebriated fare out of thousands, but somehow, he made me feel better about the world, and my little role in it. Maybe I did pick up Jesus on Christmas Eve.

Lousy tipper, but a pretty good guy.

*Bob Ecker*

More than half the traffic fatalities on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are alcohol-related, with an average of one death every half-hour.



### *Learn Ways to Spot a Drunk Driver*

If you see a car doing any of the following things, there may be a drunk driver at the wheel.

- Weaving (across center lane, shoulder lane)
- Swerving
- Almost striking a vehicle or other object
- Making unusually wide turns
- Driving without headlights at night
- Driving in opposing lanes or the wrong way on a one-way street
- Showing a slow response to traffic signals (slow start, fast stop)
- Driving substantially below the speed limit
- Accelerating or varying speed for no reason
- Stopping for no apparent reason

If you think you spot a drunk driver, do not attempt to stop the vehicle. Follow from a safe distance and take down the license plate number, description of the vehicle, and the direction in which it is traveling; pull over and call area law enforcement officers.



### *What You Can You Do to Stop Drunk Driving*

- Make a decision to drive responsibly.
- Make a decision never to ride with anyone who has been drinking to the point of impairment.
- Always buckle up—a safety belt is the best protection in a crash.
- Be a responsible drinker.
- Be a responsible party host.
- Be a defensive, alert driver, and report suspected drunk drivers to law enforcement.
- Support efforts to strengthen anti-DUI laws in your state.



### *If You Are Going Out to Drink*

- Designate a driver ahead of time—a designated driver is a non-drinking driver.
- Take a cab or public transportation.
- Make a reservation and spend the night.
- Consume food, sip your drinks, and alternate with nonalcoholic beverages.
- Ask your server about a ride home if you have been drinking to the point of impairment.



### *If You Are Hosting a Party*

- Encourage your guests ahead of time to designate a driver.
- Have a key basket and collect each guest's keys upon arrival. Know the condition of your guests before returning their keys at the end of the party.
- Plan activities so that the focus isn't just on drinking.
- Serve a variety of food and include nonalcoholic beverages alongside alcoholic beverages. The National Commission Against Drunk Driving ([www.ncadd.org](http://www.ncadd.org)) can provide nonalcoholic drink recipes.
- If serving punch containing alcohol, mix with a noncarbonated base like a fruit juice; carbonated bases speed up the absorption of alcohol into the blood stream.
- Designate one person to serve as the bartender. This will help control the number of drinks and the amount of alcohol in each drink.
- Stop serving alcohol at least one hour (preferably 90 minutes) before the party is over. Bring out dessert, coffee, and other nonalcoholic drinks.
- Be prepared to arrange for a ride home for your guests if necessary or to invite them to spend the night.



*Help in the Fight against Drunk Driving*

For further information, check out:

Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD):

[www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)

Students Against Driving Drunk (SADD):

[www.saddonline.com](http://www.saddonline.com)

National Commission Against Drunk Driving

(NCADD): [www.ncadd.com](http://www.ncadd.com)