

A Listening Heart

“We’ve wasted my whole Saturday,” moaned John as his father gently woke him.

The plaintive, anguished tone of his voice created an instant reaction in his father, and a flash of anger surged upward. It had been a very long day of painting and hanging wallpaper in Mom’s new office and Dad was tired.

John had worked hard earlier in the day, but as the novelty wore off, he became bored and eventually fell asleep on a couch in an adjacent office. Now his father, Richard, was waking him so that they could head home.

Before Richard could voice the quick retort that formed in his mind, something caused him to pause. In a flash, he saw the Saturday spent working in Mom’s new office from an 8-year-old’s point of view.



With newfound compassion, he responded to his son. “John, I know that Saturday is just about the most important day of the week when you’re 8. I appreciate so much your willingness to give up your Saturday to help us get Mom’s office decorated. It has been a very long day, and I bet you’re tired, too. But I would like to show you how much I appreciate your support by stopping by the video store on the way home so that we can rent a family movie of your choice. What do you say?”

In response to his father’s caring attitude, John’s anguish and despair turned to pride and he quietly said, “You’re welcome, Dad. I would like that.”

Sometimes, when we listen with our heart and not our ears, love wins and relationships flourish. That is true in our association with our residents and with our co-workers, as well as with our families.

Those who master this art become experts in encouragement. And how valuable that product is.

Because thine heart was tender (2 Kings 22:19).

– Beecher Hunter