

## An Old Man's Sketches

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828 – 1882), famous English poet and artist, was once approached by an elderly man. The old fellow had some sketches and drawings that he wanted Rossetti to look at and tell him if they were any good, or if they at least showed potential talent.

Rossetti looked them over carefully. After the first few, he knew that they were worthless, showing not the least sign of artistic talent. But Rossetti was a kind man, and he told the elderly man as gently as possible that the images were without much value and showed little talent. He was sorry, he said, but he could not lie to the man.

The visitor was disappointed, but seemed to expect Rossetti's judgment. He then apologized for taking up Rossetti's time, but would he just look at a few more drawings – ones done by a young art student?

Rossetti obliged, looked over the second batch of sketches, and immediately enthused over the talent they revealed. "These," he said, "oh, these are good. This young student has great talent. He should be given every help and encouragement in his career as an artist. He has a great future, if he will work hard and stick to it."

Rossetti could see that the old fellow was deeply moved. "Who is this fine young artist?" he asked. "Your son?"



"No," said the old man sadly. "It is me, 40 years ago. If only I heard your praise then! For you see, I got discouraged and gave up – too soon."

The power of encouragement is truly remarkable. Think about your own life, and people who have helped you advance your career or push you through a difficult circumstance because of their heartening words or deeds. We owe them much.

But we must also be sensitive to our calling to encourage one another – to be sensitive to those around us who need a boost in their confidence. In the work we are called to do, we have many opportunities.

– Beecher Hunter