

Giving Up a Room

One stormy night, an elderly couple entered into the lobby of a small hotel and asked for a room. The clerk said they were filled, as were all the hotels in town.

“But I can’t send a fine couple like you out in the rain,” he said. “Would you be willing to sleep in my room?”

The couple hesitated, but the clerk insisted. The next morning, when the man paid his bill, he said, “You’re the kind of man who should be managing the best hotel in the United States. Someday, I’ll build you one.”

A few years later, the clerk received a letter from the elderly man, recalling that stormy night and asking him to come to New York. A round-trip ticket was enclosed.

When the clerk arrived, his host took him to the corner of Fifth Avenue and Thirty-Fourth Street, where stood a magnificent new building. “That,” explained the host, “is the hotel I have built for you to manage.”

The man was William Waldorf Astor, and that hotel was the original Waldorf-Astoria. The young clerk, George C. Boldt, became its first manager.

Never downplay the importance of what you are doing for other people to positively impact their lives. It has its rewards, either here or in the hereafter.

--Beecher Hunter