

# THE PARABLE OF THE TEDDY BEAR



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*“Miracles can only happen when you get rid of the concept of  
‘impossible’ and allow yourself to experience  
the magic of knowing”.*

*Wayne Dyer*

## The Power of Present Day Parables

It was a typical Sunday morning. My mother was driving me to Wellington High School where New Community Church held their services. I was fifteen and only had a driver's permit so this chauffeuring happened to be the normal scenario. Of course, my mother and I went through the regular routine: I invited her to come to church with me, she responded as usual with "work this" or "busy that." I didn't actually wait for a reply as I was already thinking of my next question: when would she pick me up? This Sunday wasn't much different. She was showing property to someone and would try to come back for me around noon. We left it at that.

We were both caught up in our own thoughts when her phone rang for the millionth time that morning and she gave me that apologetic smile as she dug in her bag for the ringing priority. I shifted my gaze out of the right hand window and casually listened in on her conversation. The radio station was on a commercial break anyway.

"Heeeelllloo! This is Jackie Nairnsey. How may I help you?" Her English accent is always strongest at the beginning of her conversations, and this one was no exception.

She listened intently and then the smile in her voice dropped and her tone dampened. The unexpected had happened as her clients had canceled their appointment. As I overheard this change of events, a triumphant smile spread across my face. I looked at my mother at the exact moment she looked at me as she realized she now had no excuse for skipping the church service.

Now, you must understand something. Growing up, my family was never what you would call "church going." Actually I never attended a single service until my 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, and as my mother has since told me, she hadn't been to church for over thirty-five years. So this opening in my mother's busy schedule was a rather convenient snatch of serendipity for me, and a rather disturbing inconvenience for her. There was no getting out of this predicament!

I didn't need to say a word, my satisfied smile said it all and I just directed my mother to a parking spot. We got out and headed towards the entrance of the high school. There were the usual greeters and friendly faces and I still wore that wall-to-wall smile as I lead my entrapped mother into the "little theater" where the service took place.

When we arrived at the theater doors, being the loving and comforting daughter that I'm NOT, I decided to join my friends sitting to the right of the theater. I left my poor mother standing at the entrance by herself! It seemed like the best thing for me to do at the time. Looking back, of course, I see that such a move was cruel and unusual punishment for a new visitor to a new church. My deserted mother, however, happened to see a familiar face in the crowd. Wanda Smith, fellow real-estate agent and a charter member of our friendly congregation, invited my mother to sit with her during the service.

The lights were dimmed and the service started promptly. This particular service started with what we called a "Focus Speaker." Beth Blackwood had been asked to speak on how God had touched her life that past week. Having a Focus Speaker was not a new thing at all. Typically, a member of the church spoke every couple of weeks or so. It was a great way to see God working in our everyday lives and situations.

Well, Beth began by telling us how she had been reading a parenting guide that emphasized how to reward and discipline children by using a consistent and immediate "strict mental mommy process." She then described a typical day in her hectic life – and specifically one that had occurred the week before. On this particular day, the infant was sick with a violent flu and she and two of her four children, an infant and a toddler, were at the pharmacy picking up a prescription to fight the infection. Needless to say, the situation at the pharmacy was hectic. As Beth was at the register trying to find her wallet in her bag, holding on to the sick baby, and keeping an eye on her wondering toddler, the infant threw up into her bag and all over the counter causing a distressful scene.

## The Power of Present Day Parables

In the midst of the clean up process, the toddler had found a little teddy bear on display at the front of the store and had asked her preoccupied mother if she could have it. Beth, “parenting guide mental procedure” at the top of her thoughts, went through the suggested process of weighing the toddler’s good deeds with her bad deeds of the day combined with the reactions of what the other children would think and feel. After running all of these thoughts through her mommy computer, she came up with the simple answer of, “No.”

Being caught up with the present clean-up situation, Beth didn’t expound on the answer anymore than this two-letter response. And the toddler, probably sensing her mother’s deep distress, just replaced the small toy without a word of complaint or protest. After the mess was taken care of and the prescription paid for, it was on to the rest of her busy itinerary.

While approaching the door at the front of the pharmacy, Beth was approached by a friendly stranger who was carrying a little paper bag. The stranger introduced herself and explained that she had witnessed the whole drama at the pharmacy and had been very impressed with the little toddler’s self discipline and obedience to her mother. The stranger gave the bag to Beth and said that it was for the toddler, “because sometimes you need to reward a little girl, just for being a little girl.” Inside the bag was the little teddy bear that the toddler had found in the display at the front of the store.

This whole situation had stunned Beth and as she concluded her Focus that morning in church, she told us that this gift from a complete stranger reminded her that this is how God loves all of us. He loves us for just being us and he doesn’t compute our good deeds and our bad deeds and what others will think in order to reward us.

As Beth walked off the stage, I looked around the theater and saw that we were all, even my mother, touched by her story. As the service continued and we listened to the message I kept an eye on my mother to see her reaction. She seemed distracted and

upset and I didn't understand what was wrong. Actually, I started to feel guilty about not sitting with her and wondered who was beside her.

At the end of the service, we filed out. Now truly upset, I searched for my mother to apologize for leaving her, and wanting desperately to introduce her to my friends. When I finally found her, she was a wreck. "What's wrong, Mom? What Can I do?" Tears streamed down her face as she raised her head and sobbed:

"I am the teddy bear lady."

It took me a couple of seconds to comprehend what she had just said. The enormity of the situation had to sink in, and I was still struggling to understand it. My mother hadn't been to church for over thirty years and my immediate realization was that without dozens of circumstances falling into the pattern at the right time, she would not have been at church this day either. There were far too many factors in the "mix" to be considered mere coincidences. Being an ardent follower of left brain thinking and attitude, I know I'd have had a hard time believing this story if it hadn't happened in front of my very eyes.

I feel my mother was the perfect recipient of such a miracle, but the particular way it happened is mind boggling to those of us who witnessed it. With such an introduction, who could possibly doubt that God had had His hand in her life? So it is not surprising, that my mother continued to attend New Community Church from that remarkable day on, and that she soon started to understand that a relationship with Jesus is the only way to live one's life. Mother rapidly became a sheep in Jesus' flock and she continues to follow the light of His Path each day.

And this, my friends, was the beginning of Jackie Sayle's walk with God.

*Abigail Nairnsey*

***"Many are the plans in a man's heart,  
But it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."***

***Proverbs 19:22 NIV***