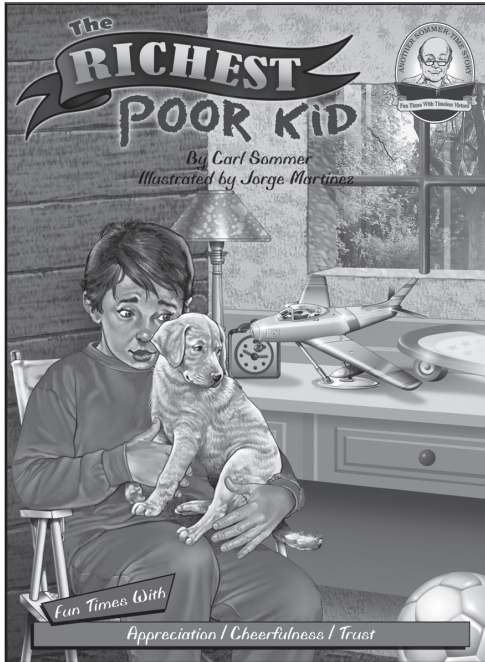


Character Education Lessons

Carl Sommer

16. The Richest Poor Kid



about the book

Randy was a young boy with an old problem. Everything he had was old. Mike his neighbor had a new bike and new toys, and he constantly teased Randy. Randy desperately wished he was rich so he could buy everything new. He was warned by those around him that riches alone don't bring happiness, but Randy never listened.

To Randy's great delight, his wish came true! Everything he touched turned into gold—even his beloved dog. As he held his lifeless gold dog, he realized he was now the most miserable kid in the whole world. He had one more wish, and he used it to have things return as before. His wish came true, and it became the happiest day of his life. Now when Randy went to school, he held his head high. When he rode his old bike, he often said, "I'm sure glad my bike isn't made of gold!"

Main Virtues

Appreciation/Cheerfulness/Trust

Other Virtues

Compassion, Cooperation, Friendship, Obedience to Parents, Positive Mental Attitude, Self-Control, and Self-Esteem

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Teasing

Randy had an old bicycle and a few old toys; but his neighbor Mike had a new bike and many new toys. Whenever Mike saw Randy riding his old bike, he yelled, “Get your piece of junk off the road!” Then he laughed at Randy riding his old bike.

What is being done when someone is being teased? The person doing the teasing is trying to have fun by annoying someone else. It is the opposite of love. Love tries to help others, teasing tries to annoy others.

Contentment

Yes, everything Randy had was old because his family was poor. His dad had died when he was three years old, and his mom had to work to support the family. Mom made barely enough money to pay for rent and food, so there was no money left for new things. But there was one thing mom always gave her children—lots and lots of love.

In the evenings, Mom read to her children from the library. When they were finished reading, they sat around and talked. Mom often remarked, “As long as we have food and clothing, we should be happy and content.”

But Randy always mumbled to himself, “Not me! Look at my friends. They have new things and they’re always happy. I have old things, and I’m always miserable!”

Learning to Work

There was another thing that made Randy mad—real mad. His mom believed that teaching children how to work would help them when they became older.

Randy and his brother and sister had to do chores around the house. They cleaned the dishes, vacuumed the floors, dusted the furniture, took out the garbage, helped with the laundry, weeded the garden, mowed the lawn, and did whatever else was needed. But his neighbor, Mike, never had to do any work inside or outside the house.

Whenever Mike saw Randy weeding the garden, he teased, “Look at the poor servant boy.” Then he let out a loud laugh and say, “Make sure you’re pulling out all the weeds.”

Randy, his face red with anger, groaned, “Ohhhh!!!! If only I were rich! Then I’d get someone to do all my work. Then no one would ever laugh at me again!”

Listening to Correction

Randy hated to be corrected. He got mad whenever his teacher, Mrs. Decker, said in class, “To become successful you’d must learn how to work.”

He became furious whenever Mrs. Decker told the class what his mom tried to teach him. “Remember, things don’t bring happiness. If you have a loving home, clothes to wear, and food to eat, you have what you need to be happy.”

“No way!” Randy always mumbled. “Happiness comes by having new things. I wish my pockets were filled with gold so I could buy anything I want. If this happens, I’d throw away all my old junk and buy everything new. Then no one could ever tease me again. Oh, how I wish I were rich! I’d be the happiest kid in the whole world!”

Wise are those children who learn to listen to correction.

Hasty Decisions

After doing his chores one night, Randy threw himself on his bed and groaned, “Ohhhhh!!!! If only I were rich! I’d be so happy. I’d never have a sad day in my life again!”

Randy had not done anything unusual that day—nothing that would explain what was about to happen.

Suddenly the floor shook, a flash of lightning lit up the room, and there was a deafening blast of thunder!

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It seemed as if the sun itself had burst into his room.

Randy sat up straight in his bed. His eyes nearly bolted out of their sockets. By his window was a cloud with a man's face!

The voice spoke slowly, "Randy, you can wish for anything you want."

Then the voice warned, "But don't forget! You get only two wishes, so be extremely careful for what you wish."

Randy did not waste a second. He knew exactly what he wanted. He blurted out, "I wish everything I touch turns to gold!"

Randy made a hasty decision. It is always wise to think before you act. Hasty decision can get you into all sorts of trouble.

Pursuing Only Riches

Then he looked at all the gold around him. "Why am I getting sad?" he asked. "I'm rich!"

Randy gathered some of the gold objects and placed them on his desk. He sat down in his gold chair and exclaimed, "Look at all my gold! Now I can buy anything I want!"

Sandy, his beloved dog, entered the room. Randy bent down, stretched out his arms, and called, "Come, Sandy! Come!"

Sandy raced across the room and jumped on his lap. "Good girl," said Randy as he patted Sandy's head.

Then Randy screamed, "OH NOOOOO!!!!!"

Sandy turned to gold!

Randy plopped into his gold chair and wept. "Ohhhhh!!!!!" he cried over and over again. "How I wish I could have my Sandy back! Why does everything I touch turn to gold? This is the worst day of my life! I'm the richest kid in the whole world, but I'm also the most miserable kid in the whole world!"

Many people think that having riches will solve all their problems, but it's a false dream. There's nothing wrong with riches, but life consists more than just having lots of money.

Being Thankful for What You Have

Then he remembered what his mom and teacher had tried to tell him. "Things don't bring happiness. If you have a loving home, clothes to wear, and food to eat, you have all you need to be happy."

"They're right," said Randy shaking his head. "Look at me, I can turn everything to gold, but I'm the most miserable kid in the whole world. All I want is to have my dog back and to be able to drink a glass of water!"

Randy jumped up and exclaimed, "I get one more wish! I could wish to have my dog back!"

Suddenly, fear gripped Randy, and sweat began pouring down his face. "What if nothing happens and everything stays this way forever? Did I really get two wishes?"

Randy plopped into his gold chair and began to envision everything in his house turned to gold. "I may never to use my hands again to hug my mom," he cried, "hold an ice cream cone, play soccer, or hold Sandy. Oh how I hate that everything I touch turns to gold. What a terrible, miserable life!"

Many times it takes tragedy to learn to appreciate the things we have. Think of some foreign countries where children are starving and would appreciate just a slice of bread. Be thankful for the things you have.

Learning Never to be Ashamed of Who You Are

Then he reached out and gave his mom a giant hug. "I love you, Mom! Now I know that even though we don't have much money, I'm the richest poor kid having a mom like you."

"Thank you," said Mom as she kissed Randy and wiped tears from her eyes.

The next day when Mike laughed at him for working so hard, he said to himself, "You can laugh all you want. It doesn't bother me anymore."

When Randy went to school, he held his head high. No longer did he care what anyone thought about his old clothes or his family's old car. And whenever he rode his old bike, he said, "I'm sure glad my bike isn't

made of gold!”

If what you are doing is right, never be ashamed of what you are. Don't let what others think destroy you.

Questions

1. What was Randy's problem?

Randy's problem was that everything he had was old.

2. What would Mike yell when Randy rode his old bike?

Randy would yell, "Get your piece of junk off the road!"

3. What would Mike do after yelling at Randy, "Get your piece of junk off the road!"?

Mike would laugh at Randy for riding his old bike.

Mike is teasing Randy. What is being done when someone is being teased? The person doing the teasing is trying to have fun by annoying someone else. It is the opposite of love. Love tries to help others; teasing tries to annoy others.

4. A. Why was Randy's family poor?

Randy's family was poor because his dad had died when he was three years old, and his mom had to work to support the family. Mom made barely enough money to pay for rent and food, so there was no money left for new things.

B. Why are people around us poor?

Some reasons are: sickness, lack of job skills, drop out of school, single parents needing to support a family, drug addiction, getting into debt, etc.

C. What can people do to get out of poverty?

Some solutions are: seek welfare, go back to school, learn a profitable skill or trade, get out of debt, learn how to save money, etc.

5. What did Randy's mom give her children lots of?

Randy's mom gave her children lots of love.

6. What would Randy's mom do in the evenings?

In the evenings Randy's mom read books from the library to her children.

7. What would Randy's mom often say about food and clothing?

Randy's mom often said, "As long as we have food and clothing, we should be happy and content."

8. What did Randy always mumble to himself when his mom said, "As long as we have food and clothing, we should be happy and content"?

Randy always mumbled to himself, "Not me! Look at my friends. They have new things and they're always happy. I have old things, and I'm always miserable!"

9. A. What did his mom believe about work that made Randy really mad?

What made Randy really mad was his mom believed that teaching children how to work would help them when they became older.

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B. How does teaching children how to work help them when they become older?

Children taught early how to work learn skills that will greatly benefit them when they enter the workforce. Employees are always looking for workers who have a good work ethic. When parents teach their children this important trait of being diligent, these trained children are often given the better paying jobs.

10. What kind of chores did the children have to do in Randy's house?

The children cleaned the dishes, vacuumed the floors, dusted the furniture, took out the garbage, helped with the laundry, weeded the garden, mowed the lawn, and did whatever else was needed.

11. What would Mike say to Randy when he saw him weeding the garden?

Whenever Mike saw Randy weeding the garden he teased him saying, "Look at the poor servant boy."

12. What was Randy's reaction when he was corrected?

Randy hated to be corrected.

13. What would Randy always mumble when his teacher said, "Remember, things don't bring happiness. If you have a loving home, clothes to wear, and food to eat, you have all you need to be happy"?

Randy always mumbled, "No way!" Randy always mumbled. "Happiness comes by having new things. I wish my pockets were filled with gold so I could buy anything I want. If this happens, I'd throw away all my old junk and buy everything new. Then no one could ever tease me again. Oh, how I wish I were rich! I'd be the happiest kid in the whole world!"

14. What did the man's voice tell Randy?

The man's voice said, "Randy, you can wish for anything you want."

15. What did the man's voice warn Randy?

The man's voice warned, "But don't forget! You get only two wishes, so be extremely careful for what you wish."

16. What did Randy immediately say after he heard, "You can wish for anything you want"?

Randy immediately said, "I wish everything I touch turns to gold!"

Randy made a hasty decision. It is always wise to think before you act. Hasty decision can get you into all sorts of trouble.

17. What happened when Randy touched a lamp which was the closest thing in the room?

When Randy touched the lamp, it turned into gold.

18. What did Randy shout as he held the gold lamp?

Randy shouted, "I'm rich! I'm really rich! Now I can buy everything new! This is the happiest day of my life!"

19. What happened to everything Randy touched in his room?

Whatever Randy touched in his room turned into gold.

20. What happened when Randy bit down hard on the apple?

When Randy bit down hard on the apple, he yelled, "Ouchhh!!!" The apple had turned to gold!

21. How did Randy finally manage to get a drink of water?

Randy finally got a drink of water by putting his head on the faucet and pushing it.

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22. What happened to Randy as he was drinking the water from the faucet?

While Randy was drinking the water from the faucet, he began feeling more and more miserable. He grumbled, "All this gold isn't making me happy anymore."

23. What did Randy do and say when he saw his dog Sandy, the dog he so greatly loved?

When Randy saw Sandy, the dog he so greatly loved, he bent down, stretched out his arms, and called, "Come, Sandy! Come!"

24. What happened to Sandy when the dog jumped on Randy's lap?

Sandy turned into gold.

25. How did Randy react when Sandy turned into gold?

Randy sat down on his gold chair with his gold dog and wept bitterly.

26. What did Randy say as he held his gold dog?

As Randy held his gold dog, he said, "Why does everything I touch turn to gold? This is the worst day of my life! I'm the richest kid in the whole world, but I'm also the most miserable kid in the whole world!"

Many people think that having riches will solve all their problems, but it's a false dream. There's nothing wrong with riches, but life consists of more than just having lots of money.

27. What did Randy say as he held his gold dog when his mother and teacher said to him, "Things don't bring happiness. If you have a loving home, clothes to wear, and food to eat, you have all you need to be happy"?

When Randy thought about what his mother and teacher taught, he said, "They're right. Look at me. I can turn everything to gold, but I'm the most miserable kid in the whole world. All I want is to have my dog back and to be able to drink a glass of water!"

28. What did Randy say then about having new things and how he wanted to live now?

Randy said, "I don't care if I ever get anything new again for the rest of my life. I just want to live the way I used to."

Many times it takes tragedy to learn to appreciate the things we have. Think of poor people around you and some foreign countries where children are starving and would appreciate just a slice of bread. Be thankful for the things you have.

29. What did Randy say as he thought about having another wish?

As Randy thought about having another wish he said, "I got be very, very careful for what I wish. I have only one wish left."

Thinking before you act is an important trait to learn.

30. What did Randy say after turning everything to gold?

After turning everything to gold, Randy said, "Oh how I hate that everything I touch turns to gold. What a terrible, miserable life!"

31. What did Randy say after his second wish that everything would be like it was before came true?

When Randy's second wish came true, he said, "This is the happiest day of my life!"

32. What did Randy say to his mom after his dream?

When Randy saw his mom after the dream he said, "I love you, Mom! Now I know that even though we don't

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have much money, I'm the richest poor kid having a mom like you."

Now Randy appreciated what his mom taught him.

33. What did Randy say to himself when the next day when Mike laughed at him for working so hard?

When Mike laughed at him for working so hard, Randy said to himself, "You can laugh all you want. It doesn't bother me anymore."

34. How did Randy feel about what anyone thought about his old clothes and his old bike?

Randy did not care what anyone thought about his old clothes. And whenever he rode his old bike, he rode it as if it were the best bike in the whole world.

If what you are doing is right, never be ashamed of what you are. Don't let what others think destroy you.

35. What did Randy often say as he rode his old bike?

As Randy rode his old bike, he often said, "I'm sure glad my bike isn't made of gold!"

36. Randy's life before and after the dream were exactly the same. What caused this radical change in Randy?

The radical change in Randy occurred because of his new understanding. Randy's physical world did not change, but his attitude was completely changed.

Many people live a miserable life because they fail to appreciate the things that they do have. Learn to appreciate what you have and you will lead a much happier life.