

Be Watchful

A Modern Day Parable inspired by Mark 13:33-37

Betty said farewell to her youngest daughter, Veronica, who was leaving home to begin a new career. "Be watchful! Be alert!" Betty told her. "You do not know when the time will come for you to shine in your new job as Office Manager in such a large company. When your boss is away, he will leave you in charge," Betty continued. "Things will certainly be different there. It is such a different environment and culture than you are used to. So, watch! What I say to you, I said to all your older brothers; Watch!

Veronica, or Roni as she preferred to be called, set out on the long drive cross country to the big city. She would have plenty of time to think about her Mom's advice. Roni liked to study people, and she had become keenly aware that most people put on a bit of a front for the world to see. They put forth the person they think others want to see, or the person they want others to see, or maybe even the person they really WANT to be! If you watch closely, people can be full of surprises!

That's part of the reason Veronica loved to use the name Roni. When people heard or read her name, most assumed she was a boy. When she was younger, she played on an all-boys baseball team and the opposing team was always surprised to see that Roni, their star pinch hitter, was a girl!

Roni had no trouble settling into her new city and new job. She ran the office with great proficiency, caring, and joy. No one would have guessed that she came from such a small town. The company president was at first hesitant in considering Roni for such an important position. But, she had really impressed him in the interviews so he took a chance and hired her. It was a decision that paid off greatly.

Roni had been there for six months, now, and from her office, she could see the entire sales team working at their desks. So, she watched. The calendar turned to the Season of Advent and Christmas was only four weeks away. The company president called Roni into his office. "I need you to order the employee Christmas gifts. We generally give a new necktie to each of the men, and a new necklace to each of the women. You can do the same or think of something new. Use your best judgement, but make it easy on yourself. It's just a token gift anyway.



Roni assured her boss that she could handle the task. Now was the time that her mom's advice would pay off. Now was her time to shine. She returned to her desk and looked out over the room at all the employees busily working their stations. She watched for a few minutes and made note of how diverse they all are. Their unique personalities and styles are what makes them and this company so successful. Why should they all get identical gifts? This year's gifts would be filled with the true spirit of Christmas. This team needs to know they are noticed and appreciated, so their gifts should be meaningful and a reflection of really knowing who they are as people not just worker bees.



Roni began her list. She began with Michael. He was tall, thin, and very fit. Roni had noticed that at the end of each work day, Michael would change out of his suit and tie into running gear. He had plenty of ties, so she found a new running beanie equipped with a built-in headlight for night running. That is something he would use and appreciate.



Next, Roni thought of Sandra. A sweet, natural girl who was known for growing beautiful roses and preferred potting soil and flowers to makeup and jewelry. She wondered what Sandra had done with the necklaces she had received from the company in year's past. Roni decided to give Sandra a subscription to a gardening magazine.



Andrew was a quiet guy who kept to himself and usually ate a home packed lunch at his desk. He was just a frugal guy, and his lunch was always in a plain grocery bag. So Roni gave him a new lunch box with compartments and a gift card to a great little restaurant around the corner where many on the workforce eat lunch. Now, he would be able to join the guys sometimes and build friendships.



Beverly was a working mom of three. Her family takes a lot of time and energy, and Beverly has expressed her wish to make memories with the kids. She was worried they were being pacified by electronics and wanting things all the time. Roni got her family front row seats to the Nutcracker for a most memorable Christmas outing away from screens and toys.

Roni continued down the list and made sure each person would be getting something with meaning. Something that was as unique as themselves. She couldn't wait to watch the great fun and surprise when all the gifts would be opened at the staff Christmas luncheon. This would be a Christmas to remember!

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