

Try, Try, and Try Again

A Modern Day Parable inspired by Matthew 15:21-28



At 8:00 that Friday evening, Stuart, the weekend manager of a favorite local hangout, withdrew to his office in the rear of the restaurant. It had been an especially busy and noisy night, as was expected with the new promotion to kick off football season. Though he was new to this location, Stuart had worked in the industry for 30 years. He rested his head in his hands and took a deep breath. He was exhausted, and closing time was still three hours away. On his second deep breath he began to relax, and behold Jimmy, the new young hire, a tall and lanky Canton boy of the neighboring school district came in and nervously blurted out, “Have you a minute for me, Mr. Stuart, boss....sir? I’m the only worker from my school, and I feel tormented by all the Warren County Demons fans!”

But, Stuart did not look up or even say a word in answer to him. A few other workers came into the office and asked the boss, “Send him back out to empty the trash. He keeps calling out after us and trying to wait on our friends.” Stuart said in reply, “I was sent only to increase revenue in this House of Burgers and Wings, not settle petty jealousies.” He dismissed the workers to finish out the night.

The next weekend, Jimmy came back to Stuart’s office and shook his hand. “Mr. Stuart, sir, I need your help. The other work staff treat me like I’m less important than they are. I work hard and have some good ideas I would like to share with you.” Stuart was in the middle of planning another huge promotion, and simply said in reply, “It is not right to take the honor from those who have earned it and toss a privilege to the less experienced.” With the wave of a hand, he dismissed the young man. Jimmy was respectful to the other workers, but he was having a hard time fitting in. He willingly took the least favorite chores on his shift, mainly cleaning and taking out trash. He did it very well and took pride in the great work he did, but no one seemed to notice.

Jimmy continued to show up and do his best work each and every day. He didn’t let the others deter him or dampen his ambition to succeed. His goal was to one day be promoted to assistant manager. He had many great ideas to bring in more customers and help the restaurant team succeed. The other guys were really only working for extra spending money, as they would be going off to college next term. But Jimmy’s family couldn’t afford to send him to college. He would have to work and save and pay his own way. In fact, he may have to forego college all together, and build a career through work experience.

At the end of the month, Jimmy got a fresh haircut and pressed his uniform. When it was time for his break on Friday night, he straightened his shoulders, said a prayer, and once again stepped into Stuart's office. He said, "Please, sir, even those who have less experience can learn quickly from their superiors. I would like to help you plan the next promotion." This time, Stuart put down his pen, took off his glasses, and leaned way back in his chair. He looked at Jimmy standing there, taking notice of his posture and appearance. Then Stuart said to him in reply, "Young man, you have great determination and work ethic! Let's give it a try. Tell me what it is you wish to do." And, Jimmy's promising future as a restaurant manager was launched at that hour.