

## Second thoughts on the star fish story - by Victor Defehr

Once upon a time two young men came to the ocean together at dawn. As they were throwing a Frisbee back and forth they saw an old man. At first glance it looked like he was dancing and greeting the sunrise. The old man was repeating motions as he would bend down and twirl and fling his arm out to the ocean. The young men stopped throwing their Frisbee to watch him because they didn't know what he was doing.

The curiosity of the young men spurred them to walk closer to this older man to get a better look at what he was doing. They were inspired by the old man's joyfulness as they now saw what he was doing. The old man was bending over, picking up star fish and joyfully throwing them back into the ocean. The young men approached the old man and asked "Old man, why are you doing this?" The old man stopped what he was doing and told them:

Not so many years ago I was walking along this beach and I saw a young man about the same age as both of you walking on a deserted beach just before dawn." The old man exclaimed "I asked the young man why he spent so much energy doing what seemed to be a waste of time. You see the young man was throwing starfish into the ocean and I couldn't figure out how that could make a difference." The old man had the attention of his 2 young listeners as he continued "You see that young man knew that he could not make a difference by saving every star fish but he could make a difference and save some of them."

The young men were interested in what the old man was saying and they asked him "But why do you waste your time throwing these star fish back into the ocean for all these years."

The old man calmly picked up another starfish and threw it back into the ocean as he continued "Every dawn since my encounter with that young man have I come down to this beach and many people have seen what I do every morning. " The old man smiled. "But today is a special day for me."

The two boys looked at each other and nodded in agreement with each other and then turned to the old man. One of them said "Two can make a bigger difference than one." And the other said "We will make a great difference together to all we can." The old man had a hard time lifting his head but when he did he had a beam in his eyes as he smiled at the eager young men.

Just then one of the young men threw the Frisbee up on the shore and all three of them picked up Star Fish off the beach as they danced and joyfully threw them back into the ocean.

The next dawn the 2 young men came down to the same beach but the old man was nowhere to be found. They both paused in silence for a few moments and then slowly they both picked up a star fish and together they made a great difference to all they can.