

A Jack Handey Fable

by Rev. Joe Dirt - Friday, October 31, 2008

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I remember I was hammering on a fence in the backyard when Dad approached. He was carrying a letter or something in his hand, and he looked worried. I continued to hammer as he came toward me.

“Son,” he said, “why are you hammering on that fence? It already has plenty of nails in it.”

“Oh, I’m not using nails,” I replied. “I’m just hammering.” With that, I returned to my hammering.

Dad asked me to stop hammering, as he had some news. I did stop hammering, but first I got a couple more hammers in, and this seemed to make Dad mad. “I said, stop hammering!” he yelled. I think he felt bad for yelling at me, especially since it looked like he had bad news. “Look,” he said, “you can hammer later, but first-”

Well, I didn’t even wait to hear the rest. As soon as I heard “You can hammer,” that’s what I started doing. Hammering away, happy as an old hammer dog. Dad tried to physically stop me from hammering by inserting a small log of some sort between my hammer and the fence. But I just kept on hammering, ’cause that’s the way I am when I get that hammer going. Then, he just grabbed my arm and made me stop.

“I’m afraid I have some news for you,” he said.

I swear, what I did next was not hammering. I was just letting the hammer swing lazily at arm’s length, and maybe it tapped the fence once or twice, but that’s all. That apparently didn’t make any difference whatsoever to Dad, because he just grabbed my hammer out of my hand and flung it across the field. And when I saw my hammer flying helplessly through the air like that, I just couldn’t take it. I burst out crying, I admit it. And I ran to the house, as fast as my legs could take me.

“Son, come back!” yelled Dad. “What about your hammer?!”

But I could not have cared less about hammering at that point. I ran into the house and flung myself onto my bed, pounding the bed with my fists. I pounded and pounded, until finally, behind me, I heard a voice. “As long as you’re pounding, why not use this?”

I turned, and it was Dad, holding a brand-new solid-gold hammer. I quickly wiped the tears from my eyes and ran to Dad’s outstretched arms. But suddenly, he jumped out of the way, and I went sailing through the second-story window behind him.

Whenever I hear about a kid getting in trouble with drugs, I like to tell him this story.

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