

Honorable Mention

The Big Red Tool Box

*by
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As a little boy, I used to go to my grandparents' house. Each visit, I'd look forward to my trips out to my grandfather's workshop where I'd get to see his "pride and joy," his big red tool box. He told me how he had started with a little hand-held container. He explained how over the course of several years he had added to his collection of tools and increased the size of his tool box to what now stands over five feet tall. It was big, red, and shiny.

"It's not the size of the box that matters," Grandpa would say, "It's the tools inside that get the job done. It's how you use them."

Grandpa taught me a lot about tools and how to use them. As I list some of the tools and what they are used for, I think of how God has given me tools to use in my everyday life. Here is my list:

- 1) Wood - a hard substance used for building. Wood represents my faith, my belief in God. My faith is the foundation on which I build my life.
- 2) Nails - slender pieces of metal having a point and a head, used for fastening pieces together. Nails represent the small pieces of knowledge and intellect I acquire from all walks of life. It is all these different thoughts and ideas that give me my individuality.
- 3) Hammer - a hand implement used for driving nails, striking, or pounding. The hammer represents in me a strength, a strong inner strength that allows me to form my own opinions and stand my ground.
- 4) Saw - a cutting instrument with pointed teeth used to cut or divide. The saw has an angry look. Its sharp teeth compare to the evils of the world. There are many temptations awaiting me. I must use common sense and make good, smart decisions to divide myself from these evils.
- 5) Chisel - a cutting tool with a beveled edge used for cutting, engraving, or chipping away at wood or metal. I have set goals for myself. I must use the chisel to chip away at any obstacles that may get in my way. I will use the chisel to engrave my name and leave my mark on the world.
- 6) Screwdriver - a tool used to turn or change. Like the screwdriver, I too can turn. I can change. I must always keep an open mind and be open to change.
- 7) Level - A device for adjusting something to a horizontal line by noting the position of a bubble contained in a sealed tube. I, like the level, must maintain a balance in my life. I realize I am created equal to all others, none of us being more important than another. While I believe each of us is put on this Earth for a reason, it is my desire to find my purpose in life and to play my role to the best of my ability.
- 8) Flashlight - a small portable light used for seeing in the dark. My flashlight-my eyes-my windows to the world. May I wake up each morning eager to learn. May I always hunger to make new friends, and may I enjoy the smiles of others I bestow acts of kindness on.

Individually, each of these tools can serve a purpose, they can get the job done. Together, however, they can build a mansion, perhaps even a city.

These characteristics, individually, can bring someone great joy. But all of these characteristics, these laws of life, together can bring a lifetime of peace, love, and happiness.

You know, looking back on all those trips to Grandpa's workshop. I realized he wasn't just teaching me about tool boxes and tools, he was teaching lessons far more valuable. I hope the next time he tells his story his "pride and joy" will be over six feet tall, and I won't be red and shiny.