

(1) Joey's Stop Sign

It was a hot summer day. Joey and his sister Jenny played soccer in their front yard. "Over here!" shouted Jenny. Joey kicked the ball to Jenny. It rolled into the busy street, and Jenny started to chase it.

"Watch out, Jenny!" Joey shouted. Just then, a car whizzed by. The car hit the soccer ball and popped it. "There are more cars on our street all the time!" said Jenny. "It's harder to cross the street to get to school, too," Jenny continued. "Last week, Mrs. Murphy's dog, Lucy got hit by a car. Lucy had a broken leg," said Joey.

A few nights later, Joey and Jenny talked to their parents. "We've been doing our research," said Jenny. "We think there should be stop signs at the corners. That might slow the traffic and make it safer to cross our street." "Stop signs are a great idea," said Mom. "You've been counting cars before and after school?" "Yes," said Joey. "Also, we have been taking pictures of people trying to cross." "Good work!" said Dad. "The next step is a petition."

Dad and Mom showed Jenny and Joey how to write a petition. The petition stated the reasons for adding stop signs. People could sign the petition if they agreed. "You'll need signatures from more than half of the people in the neighborhood," said Dad. Over the next week, Joey and Jenny talked to people in the neighborhood. Many people signed their petitions, but some did not.

"The city council has a meeting next week," Joey said to Mrs. Murphy. "My dad asked if our stop signs request could be put on the agenda." "We'll bring our petition, photos, and the traffic counting we did, too," said Jenny.

Friends, family, and neighbors were at the city council meeting. "I'm nervous," whispered Jenny. "Me, too," Joey agreed. When their names were called, Joey and

Jenny stood at the microphone. Joey talked about the need for the stop signs. Jenny showed their petition. “These are the photos we took of people trying to cross the street,” said Jenny. “Thank you for your hard work,” said the city council president. “We’ll discuss this and vote in two weeks.”

Joey and Jenny waited the long two weeks. One day, there was a phone call. “The city council voted YES!” yelled Jenny.

A few months later, workers put up the stop signs. There was a story and photo in the newspaper about what the kids had done. “Our street sure is safer now,” said Joey. “Woof!” Lucy agreed.

(2) Fat Noodles

Ivy loved spaghetti and chocolate. If she could, she'd eat them every day. The only spaghetti she'd eat was the regular kind: long and stringy. The only chocolate she'd eat was chocolate kisses. No other kinds would do.

One holiday, when her relatives came to visit, Mother made a big fancy meal: lasagna, salad, soup and chocolate cake. When everybody sat down to eat this tasty lunch, Ivy asked to be excused.

“Why don't you want to eat, Ivy?” her aunt asked. “I don't like that lasagna or that cake either,” Ivy answered. “But you love spaghetti and chocolate, don't you honey?” Mother asked. “Lasagna's really only FAT NOODLES and so is the cake; it's only chocolate in another form. Try it. I'm sure you'll like it.”

But Ivy wouldn't eat anything. “I HATE these things.”

“Well young lady, if you won't eat, you might as well just go to your room,” Dad said. “Come back to the family when you're ready to eat and behave yourself!”

So Ivy skipped lunch because she didn't believe what Mother told her: “Lasagna's only FAT NOODLES.”

At suppertime, after everyone left, Dad said “Ivy, tomorrow we're going to the spaghetti factory and the chocolate factory, where you'll watch them make spaghetti and chocolate. Maybe you'll believe what Mother said.” And so they went.

First to the spaghetti factory, Ivy was led through different rooms where flour was made into dough, and then pushed through the machines which made different

forms of pasta. “There’s my spaghetti; nice and long. But there are also lots of other shapes of spaghetti coming out of the same machine. They all come from the same dough, right? Now I see all lasagna really is FAT NOODLES. But what about the chocolate cake? Is that the same chocolate as in chocolate kisses?”

“Well I guess you’ll have to see that for yourself, too. Let’s go to the chocolate factory.” So off they went. Here they saw cocoa beans mashed into powder and mixed with other liquids and pumped into different shaped openings. Some turned out to be kisses, and some chocolate bars. There was also a pipe which kept the powder of the cocoa beans as a powder and pushed it into boxes for cake mixes and puddings.

“Look Daddy. All of these different kinds of chocolate things came from the same cocoa beans. I guess they’re all FAT NOODLES.”

“You understand now, Ivy. I guess you can say the same thing about people. Even though people are different colors, shapes, sizes and religions, we’re all still people.”

Ivy nodded, “We’re all FAT NOODLES!!!”

(3) The Smart Fisherman

Once upon a time, there lived a kind hardworking old fisherman by the sea. He had to fish every day to feed his wife and son. One afternoon, he went to sea as usual and threw his net into the water. When he was pulling the net, he felt the net was very heavy. The fisherman was excited, thinking that this time he had gotten a big catch for sure. He used all his might to pull up the heavy net onto the shore.

As he looked closely into the net, he saw nothing but an unopened yellow cooper bottle. Looking confused, he said, "I could sell this copper bottle for ten gold coins in the market!" He shook the bottle and felt it was heavy like it had something inside it. "What could be in it? Maybe I should take a look first before selling it."

He carefully opened the bottle, and shook it upside down to get the things out. Nothing. It was a heavy bottle, but empty inside. Just then, smoke came out of the bottle, floating in the air and slowly covering the sky. Finally, it came together and became a figure with sharp teeth. It was a fierce looking devil standing right in front of him. The devil looked at the fisherman and said, "Hello, fisherman! Thanks for saving my life, but I'm going to eat you now!"

The poor old fisherman panicked and shouted, "I saved you from the sea, but you now want to eat me?" "Yes," said the devil and laughed. "I made a promise long time ago," he said, "that whoever saved my life, I'd give great wealth by showing him a place where there's lots of treasure under the sea." Three centuries passed, no one came to help me. It made me very angry, so I made this new promise, "Whoever

comes and saves me now, I'll surely eat him. And here you are, that's just when you saved me."

Looking at the scary devil, the old fisherman suddenly had an idea. He thought even though the devil looks quite scary, he's a little dumb. "Before you eat me, can I ask you a question?" asked the fisherman. "I don't really believe that you came out from this bottle. You couldn't even fit in your hands and legs, much less your giant body?"

After hearing the question, the devil got a little angry and said, "Open your big eyes and watch!" The devil quickly changed himself back into smoke and slowly got inside the bottle. The old fisherman quickly covered the bottle. Then he smiled and threw the bottle far, far away into the deep sea again.

(4) The Power of Silence

Joe was an old man aged 75 years. He lived happily and had a beautiful family. His children grew up and moved to different cities for better career and future. He lived in a small village carrying the memories of his deceased wife. Joe had 4 grandchildren and they used to visit him on holidays.

It was Christmas Eve and Joe was eagerly waiting for his grandchildren. He was cleaning the house, mowing the garden, rearranging the household items, buying foods and clothes for his grandchildren. In the busy arrangements, he lost his favorite watch. The watch was a gift from his wife when their first child was born. Joe cherished the watch and it became his sole companion after his wife's death. He forgot the watch was missing and was happily greeting his kids. The next day he remembered that the watch was missing when he was about to take a bath. The last time he saw the watch was in the barn. He was very upset.

His grandchildren noticed he was sad and asked him what was bothering him. Joe answered, "I lost my most precious watch. It was gifted by your grandma and I lost it while cleaning the house! I feel like I'm missing my heart." Joe was crying and the grandchildren promised him that they would find the watch for him. One granddaughter asked "Grandpa, do you remember when you saw the watch last before it was missing?" "I guess when I was cleaning the barn!" Joe replied. The grandchildren decided to search the barn.

After the grandchildren searched for more than 2 hours, they still could not find it. Joe was very depressed and asked his grandchildren to stop searching for the

watch. The kids were also sad, and consoled the grandfather. However, one grandson wasn't ready to give up and he requested others to remain silent. While the others were little surprised, they still followed him.

He sat there for about 15 minutes and then rushed to his grandfather. Yes, he found the watch and happily gave it to Joe. Joe was surprised and asked how he managed to find it. The little boy replied, "I sat in silence and the surrounding was so quiet that after a few minutes I heard the 'tick tack' sound and I found the watch." Joe hugged him and thanked the little boy. This is the power of silence. If we stay calm, we can find the best solution!