

# The Swing Set

the story of a man who *didn't* cry for help.



Mr. Jones wanted to build his son a swing set.

He needed help, but didn't want to bother anyone.

Then he realized something that left him speechless...

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short story.

Mr. Jones wanted to build his son a swing set. He slaved away each evening and grew tired and irritable causing concern for his wife.

"You're working so hard," she said. "Wasn't our neighbor, Mr. Williams, a carpenter when he was young? Couldn't you ask him for help?"

"But Mr. Williams has done enough work in his life. I wouldn't want to *bother* him."

So Mr. Jones kept working, until finally the swing set was finished, and he set it up in the backyard.


A few days later, Mr. Jones went outside and found Mr. Williams gazing at the swing set.

"Hi, Mr. Williams. How do you like the new swing set?"

"Oh, it's wonderful. I built something like that for my son many years ago." His eyes looked sad, and Mr. Jones remembered that Mr. Williams' son had moved far away for a job.

"I wish you had told me you were building it," Mr. Williams said. "Your son is a good boy. I would have loved to help you do something nice for him."

They chatted for another minute, and Mr. Jones went inside, realizing for the first time that Mr. Williams was *lonely*.



**MORAL:** Don't be afraid to ask the people around you for help – an act of kindness is a joy to both the giver and the receiver.

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## personal reflection.

### **What a story!**

Doesn't it just make you stop in your place and realize the importance of relationships and working together?

In times of need, we think we have to suffer alone and "deal" all by ourselves... but it doesn't have to be that way.

For one reason or another, many of us dislike asking for help, even when we need it. Perhaps we don't want to be a burden or we have a hard time leaving ourselves vulnerable. But more often than not, when we ask for help, we can actually give others a sense of worth and value.

In the case of Mr. Williams, being asked to participate would have been a fulfilling experience for him. Are there people in your life that would love to lend a helping hand?

There are *plenty* of people who are willing to help you in whatever way they can – your partner, brother, sister,

parent, friend, colleague, or even a personal coach.

Everyone can offer something of value, whether it is an expertise, experience, or an ear.



In fact, if only you choose to allow others into your life, there may be a loved one who joyfully carries your burden with you, lightening your load, and offering you comfort.

Good ol' Mr. Williams was ready and willing to offer his expertise as a carpenter, but Mr. Jones didn't ask. He was afraid to!

Mr. Jones didn't want to bother him, but he didn't realize that Mr. Williams would have been more than happy to help. In fact, it meant more to Mr. Williams than Mr. Jones ever imagined.

Make the conscious effort to think of those around you whenever you participate in an activity. By involving others, you just may be giving them a deeper meaning and self-worth. After all, the joy you bring to others will be returned to you!

### **Self-Reflection Questions:**

- Do I like being asked for help?
- How many people in my life, right now, would love to support me, if only they knew I needed help?
- Why is it important for me to bring joy to others?
- How might I involve others more in my life?