

A Hundredfold Return

By Gail Grenier Sweet ©2002

Sometimes we learn by experience that old sayings are true. That can be a good thing. For me, recently, it was a good thing... kind of.

I had certainly heard these phrases before: “What goes around comes around....” and “When you give, you get....” and “For all you give, you’ll be rewarded one hundredfold.”

Sometimes I like to test this principle of universal return, especially when the week before payday is getting long and I’m feeling temporarily impecunious (a friend’s way of saying *broke*)....

The evening began like many others. I set out to meet my sister and her family and our sister-in-law. We gather occasionally at a Waukesha McDonald’s where my sister’s children play free video games while we adults catch up on news.

I arrived first. As usual, I had already eaten dinner. But I thought I’d order a nice hot coffee to offset the frigid air conditioning inside the restaurant. I was mostly broke, but I could afford a coffee.

I approached the counter where a very young teenager with a very bit nose zit awaited orders.

I started plugging every coin I had into the Ronald McDonald House box that sat on the counter in front of him.

There, I thought, let’s see about universal return.

“I’d like a small coffee, please,” I said, holding up my fingers to indicate a small coffee cup.

“A senior coffee?” he asked.

Senior? Like Mister? I thought there might be some language barrier because the young man appeared to be Hispanic.

“A small coffee,” I said again, gesturing.

“Yes, senior coffee, 37 cents,” he said, a look of understanding on his face.

Finally I got it. He thought I was 55 years old, the age required to receive a SENIOR (not Senior) coffee!

I accepted the “senior coffee” even though I’m years away from qualifying as a senior citizen. I plugged the change from my dollar bill into the Ronald McDonald House box, awaiting still more universal return.

Maybe the ultimate return was the laughter enjoyed by my husband, who is older than I am, who has much more grey hair than I do, and who has never been mistaken for 55 years old.

The End

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