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All Because a Stranger
Extended His Kindness

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All Because a Stranger
Extended His Kindness

For busy professional women and small business owners wanting more success and fulfillment in their careers and more time, balance, and joy in their personal lives.

All Because a Stranger Extended His Kindness

This holiday season, most of us will run around trying to find the perfect gifts for our loved ones. But what if the most treasured gift isn't found at the nearest mall or Internet site? What if the most precious gift we can give is ourselves?

That must-have CD eventually becomes a dust collector and that cashmere sweater may no longer be in style or even fit in two years. Yet, a gift from the heart has rippling effects beyond our wildest dreams. As my present to you this holiday season, I'd like to share a beautiful story about a man who gave a gift from his heart.

In the 1940s, Bob Silvia was a troubled teen who was very busy getting into mischief. He and his "gang" became adept at stealing cars and once stole fourteen cars in single night. Bob's motto was *"If it isn't bolted to the ground, then it's fair game."*

One day when Bob and his friends were walking down the street, the owner of a vacuum cleaner shop approached him and asked him if he wanted a job. Bob was surprised since he didn't know the man, but he accepted the offer. The owner promptly handed Bob the keys to the shop and told him that his responsibilities would include opening and closing the shop everyday. Bob was flabbergasted. This man was willing to trust **him**, *someone who was in the business of stealing cars*, with his business.

It was at that moment that Bob's life began to change. Bob opened and closed that shop for eight years and then went on to become a very successful automobile salesman.

When Bob was 30 years old, he learned that every member of the gang he hung around with as a teen, was either in prison or

dead. Bob realized that his fate would have probably been the same if it hadn't been for that shop owner and the trust he placed in him that day.

Bob never forgot about the man who saved his life and showed him a different way to live. The man who became his mentor and surrogate father. The man who told people that his shop was a "father and son operation."

Bob always told his friends and family that if he ever won the lottery, he would donate all the money to programs that help at-risk youth. Every week Bob drove across the state line to buy tickets, but never won.

Bob passed away before he could see his wish come true. But the love of his family fulfilled his dream. They've set up a memorial fund in his honor to benefit at-risk youth.

Today, Bob's dream is making an impact on countless at-risk youth... all because some stranger in the 1940s extended his kindness to a young man who desperately needed it. *Sixty years later*, the youth of Henderson County, NC, are feeling the rippling effects of a stranger giving his heart to another.

This holiday season I encourage you to look within your heart and offer your inner gifts to your loved ones... your time, your laughter, your ear, your touch, or your smile. These are the gifts that change the world.

All my love,
Denise

Special thanks to Elaine Silvia for sharing her story, to Christy Bridges and the Dispute Settlement Center for their contribution to this article and to the youth of Henderson County.

Subscription Information

This free publication is produced monthly and features inspiration and strategies for building your career or business while creating more time, balance, and joy in your personal life. Your feedback is always welcome.

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