

the
STAR THROWER
story

TRAINING GUIDE

CHOOSE YOUR POINT OF VIEW

At first glance, the wise man in The Star Thrower Story thought the young man was wasting his time by throwing individual star fish back into the ocean. When the young man explained to the wise man what he was doing, the wise man replied: “But young man, don’t you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You can’t possibly make a difference.”

Initially, the wise man chose to have a closed point of view. He was not receptive to the young man’s ambition or his choice to be an actor in the world as opposed to an observer. While the wise man ultimately changes his mind, his immediate reaction has a pessimistic point of view.

1. If you were in the same position as the wise man watching the young man through starfish into the sea, what might your reaction be?

2. When faced with something unusual or out of the ordinary, do you typically have an optimistic or pessimistic point of view? Please explain.

3. What are some ways you can work on making your point of view more optimistic and hopeful?

4. How can being open to new ideas help you in your work? Please discuss.

BE AUTHENTIC

Being authentic means being the same person at work and at home. Being authentic means being true to your values and honoring your character and integrity.

It is also important to find balance within authenticity. For example, going against an established workplace norm can undermine your relationship with others in the organization and deter communication. The balance is found when you are true to your values without compromising others, as authenticity is neither passive nor aggressive. As long as you are honest with yourself and are conscientious about what needs to happen for successful communication and growth within an organization, you are well on your way to incorporating authenticity in everyday life.

1. How are the young man and the wise man authentic in the Star Thrower story? Please discuss.

2. As a group, come up with some examples of how authenticity can help as well as hinder a project.

3. Does authenticity counteract finding compromises? How can you reach compromises while still being authentic?

4. What are some ways you can bring more authenticity into your everyday life?

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

“The young man listened politely. Then bent down, picked up another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves. ‘It made a difference for that one.’”

Making a difference. It does not need to be a grandiose gesture or an extensive movement. Making a difference can be as simple as holding the door open for someone who needs help or smiling at a stranger. While wanting to make a positive difference to a department or a community – or even an entire country or organization – is certainly a wonderful ambition, it is also important to think on an individual scale as well.

Although he cannot save every star fish along the beach, in the Star Thrower Story, the young man makes a difference to numerous star fish by throwing them back in the water. Everyone has an opportunity to make a difference – we just have to find it.

1. As a group, come up with some ways you can make a difference to your colleagues and coworkers at your organization.

2. Is there a differentiation between people who try to make a difference “just because” and people who try to make a difference for recognition? Please discuss.

3. Have you ever unsuccessfully tried to make a difference within your community or organization? What happened?

4. What is your star fish? How can you, personally, make a difference in the lives of others?
