

## A good deed



**1a LEAD IN** Look at the photograph and describe what you can see. When do you think the photo was taken? Why are the people 'camping' in this way?

**b** Now read the text below and compare with your ideas.

In 1928 President Edgar Hoover said, 'We in America today are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land.' Unfortunately, only a year later, America entered the 'Great Depression' when the American stock market, known as 'Wall Street', crashed. Five thousand banks went out of business, taking many people's life savings with them. Factory production dropped by nearly half, and, over the next few years millions of people became unemployed, and then homeless. People travelled the country, desperately looking for work.

**c** Discuss the following questions in pairs or small groups.

Is there a similar situation today in your country, or in countries that you know about?

What kind of problems are caused by economic difficulties?

What, if anything, can be done by individuals, or by governments, to improve the situation?

**2a LISTENING** Now listen to 81 year old Virginia Fairbrother telling a story from the time of the Great Depression. What was the 'good deed' she describes?



**b** Listen again and answer the following questions.

1. Why did the young man ask Virginia's father for help?
2. What help did Virginia's father give?
3. Why did the young man leave his watch behind with Virginia's father?
4. Why did the young man return twenty-five years later?





**3a GRAMMAR** Look at these pairs of actions from the story and say which action happened first.

- 1a The young man asked for help
- b The young man graduated from the University of Minnesota.
  
- 2 a The young man gave his watch to Virginia's dad.
- b The young man's father gave him a watch
  
- 3a The man went to the drug store to look for Virginia's dad.
- b Virginia's brother sent the man to the house.

**b** Now complete the verbs in the correct tense (simple past or past perfect).

- 1 The young man, who \_\_\_\_\_(graduate) from the University of Minnesota, \_\_\_\_\_(ask) Virginia's dad for help.
- 2. When he graduated, the young man's father \_\_\_\_\_(give) him a watch. The young man then (give) \_\_\_\_\_ his watch to Virginia's dad.
- 3. The man \_\_\_\_\_(go) to the drug store to look for Virginia's dad. He wasn't there, so Virginia's brother \_\_\_\_\_(send) the man to the house.

**c** Re-tell the story in as much detail as you can remember. Use past perfect if you want to show that one action happened *before* another one.

**4 SPEAKING** Discuss the following questions in pairs or small groups.

- Do you think Virginia's dad did the right thing? Why/why not?
- Why do you think he kept the watch wound up for twenty five years?
- What effect does it have on us when someone does us a good deed?
- What effect does it have on us when we do someone a good deed?

**5** Think about a time when you did a good deed, or someone did a good deed for you. Use the following questions to plan your story.

- Where were you?
- What were you doing?
- Why did you (or someone else) need a good deed?
- What was the good deed?
- What happened next?

**b** Now tell a partner your story. Try to use the past perfect when appropriate.



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## Transcript

This old car drove up in front of the house and a man got out and called Dad by name and he said "My family is hungry. Someone in town told me that you might feed my family". He was a young fellow who had just graduated from the University of Minnesota and if he could get to Fort Peck by the next day he would have a job.

Dad told him to go down to the store. He said, "I'll be down in a few minutes". Dad walked down there, gave this fellow some food that wasn't perishable and five dollars and he had a friend of his fill the car with gas and they put a new spare tire in the car. And this young man had insisted on giving dad a watch that he had gotten from his father for graduation.

Twenty-five years later my brother, who was a pharmacist also, was in the drug store and he called and said somebody had just come in there and asked to talk to Mr. Hill. So he had sent him up to our house. I opened the door and he had two tall young men with him and he said to dad, "You don't know me do you, Mr. Hill? I'm the fellow that had to get to Fort Peck".

And dad looked at my mother and he said "Florence, the watch". And my mother went and got it and he gave it back to this fellow and he said "You were supposed to use this" and Dad said, "I did. Every Sunday I wound it". This young man never expected to see it again but he wanted his kids to see this man and that was my Dad.

## Key and notes

### 1a LEAD-IN.

This is a photo from the American depression, showing families who had travelled to work picking peas.

### 2a LISTENING

The good deed is that her father gave this young man (who was a stranger) food, money and other help to get to Fort Peck, where a job was waiting for him.

### b

- 1 The young man had been told by someone in the town that Mr Hill, Virginia's father, might give him some food for his family.
2. Virginia's father gave him food, \$5, gas (petrol) and a spare tire (tyre).
3. He left his watch behind as a way of paying for the food etc.
4. He didn't come back for his watch, but to show his (grown) children the man who had helped them.

### 3a GRAMMAR

- 1a The young man asked for help (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- b The young man graduated from the University of Minnesota. (1<sup>st</sup>)
- 2 a The young man gave his watch to Virginia's dad. (2<sup>nd</sup>)
- b The young man's father gave him a watch (1<sup>st</sup>)
- 3a The man went to the drug store to look for Virginia's dad. (1<sup>st</sup>)
- b Virginia's brother sent the man to the house. (2<sup>nd</sup>)

**b**

- 1 The young man, who had graduated from the University of Minnesota, asked Virginia's dad for help.
2. When he graduated, the young man's father had given him a watch. The young man then gave his watch to Virginia's dad.
3. The man had gone to the drug store to look for Virginia's dad. He wasn't there, so Virginia's brother sent the man to the house.

Note that the story uses the past participle 'gotten' as it is in American English.

#### 4 SPEAKING

Obviously the answers are subjective, but there is evidence that doing good deeds not only makes you feel good, but can improve your physical health by reducing stress.



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