

Story 1 Halfway

Long ago, a man was married to a beautiful and smart woman. They loved each other very much.

While walking home one day, the man saw some money on the road. He picked it up. He thought about buying his wife a present.

At home, he gave the money to his wife. She wasn't happy. She asked, "Why did you take that? Does a good man take something that's not his?"

The man listened and thought for a moment. She was right. He went outside and put the money on the road just where he found it.

A few months later, he decided to attend school. He wanted to study with a great teacher. However, the school was far away. He couldn't see his wife for a long time. One day, he decided to go home for a visit.

When he got home, he saw his wife. She was making a shirt. She looked at him and asked, "Why did you come home?"

The man said he missed her.

She wasn't pleased. She got some scissors, held up the shirt and cut it in half.

She explained, "If something is stopped before it's finished, you'll never do anything good. Look at this shirt. It was almost done. Now it's of no use. That's like you leaving school. You must finish what you start."

The man listened and thought for a moment. The following day, he went back to school and didn't leave until he had finished many great things.

Story 2 Potato Chips

People love potato chips. They're one of the world's favorite snacks. How did this sliced vegetable become so popular?

The history of the potato chip involves three main individuals.

The first was an American named George Crum. In 1853, he was a chef in a New York resort restaurant. The resort was famous for French fries. One day, a customer came in, scanned the menu and asked for fries. George made the fries, but the customer was dissatisfied. The fries were too thick he said. George quietly returned to the kitchen and cooked it again. This time he cut them a little thinner.

The customer glanced at the food on his plate and was not pleased. George went back to the kitchen. He sliced the potatoes as thin as possible. He added lots of salt. The customer loved them. Surprisingly, the hotel became famous for salty potato chips.

Over the next two decades, potato chips became popular across America. But, there were two challenges.

First, peeling the potatoes. At this time, the skin was removed by hand. That was a time consuming task. In the 1920s, an unknown person invented a machine to remove skins. We do not know who that was, but he or she changed the food business. Now it was possible to make chips fast.

Second, keeping chips fresh and ready for sale. In the 1920s, chips were sold from a glass box or large can. The chips regularly broke into small pieces. After a few days, they became soft. These chips could not be sold.

In 1926, Laura Scudder solved that problem. She made a bag that prevented air from going in or out. She took two pieces of wax paper and melted them together with an iron. That sealed the bag and blocked air from going in or out. The food stayed fresh for a long time.

The story of potato chips teaches us a lesson. Starting up a business does not always require an original product. Sometimes, we can create a new product by putting existing ideas together in a new way.

Story 3 Coffee

Here's a story about money, power and love. This is the story of coffee.

Nobody knows when coffee was first made. We do know that the coffee business started in the Middle East in the 1300s. By the 1600s, coffee was popular in Europe.

Some people in Europe wanted their own coffee trees. That was a problem. Coffee trees only grew in the Middle East. The people who controlled these trees didn't want to sell them.

In the late 1600s, a Dutch company took some coffee seeds and planted them on some warm islands in Indonesia. Today, that country is the world's fourth largest coffee grower.

Some French people played an important role in spreading coffee around the world. In 1712, a French officer visited the French King. The King showed the officer a coffee tree. The officer asked for some seeds. The King said no. Later that night, the officer went to the garden, took some seeds and planted them on a small island called Martinique.

Coffee trees in Martinique grew well. Over the next 100 years, seeds from these trees were planted in South and Central America. Today, 90% of all coffee in the world comes from Martinique trees.

The French helped Brazil start its coffee business, in a strange way. In 1727, Brazil sent a handsome man to a small country. After completing his work, he asked the French government for some coffee seeds. The French said no.

The young man made a plan. He had a secret love affair with the wife of the French leader. When he left the country, she gave him flowers. There were coffee seeds in the flowers. A gift from a secret girlfriend is how Brazil's coffee industry started.

Coffee is a great drink. It also has a wonderful history filled with interesting stories.

Story 4 The Horse

This is an old story from China. It's a story about how people respond to good or bad events.

Long ago, a boy and his father lived on a tiny farm. They had one horse. One day, the horse ran away.

An old woman said to the father, "I feel terrible about this bad news."

The father listened, thought for a moment and replied, "How do you know this isn't good news?"

One month later, the horse returned to the farm with another horse. The new horse was big and powerful. Villagers stopped by to have a look. The old woman said, "You have two animals. You must be so glad."

The father listened carefully and asked, "Can you be sure this isn't a bad thing?"

Later that week, the son was riding the new horse. He fell off and broke his leg. The boy recovered, but his leg was not strong.

People stopped by the farm with gifts and good wishes, but the father wasn't sad. He said, "Are you sure this isn't good news?"

Some people thought the father was strange.

One year later, there was a war in China. Young men from every village were forced to become soldiers. The father's son didn't join the army because of his bad leg.

The war ended eventually. Many men from the village were killed. The son lived for a long time with his two horses.

This story teaches us a lesson. When good or bad things occur, we shouldn't feel overly happy or unhappy. We should accept the things we cannot change and live the best life we can.