

The Starfish Story: one step towards changing the world

You may have heard this one, but we find that it doesn't hurt to be reminded of it every once in a while.



Once upon a time, there was an old man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach every morning before he began his work. Early one morning, he was walking along the shore after a big storm had passed and found the vast beach littered with starfish as far as the eye could see, stretching in both directions.

Off in the distance, the old man noticed a small boy approaching. As the boy walked, he paused every so often and as he grew closer, the man could see that he was occasionally bending down to pick up an object and throw it into the sea. The boy came closer still and the man called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young boy paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean. The tide has washed them up onto the beach and they can't return to the sea by themselves," the youth replied. "When the sun gets high, they will die, unless I throw them back into the water."

The old man replied, "But there must be tens of thousands of starfish on this beach. I'm afraid you won't really be able to make much of a difference."

The boy bent down, picked up yet another starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. Then he turned, smiled and said, "It made a difference to that one!"



adapted from [The Star Thrower](#), by Loren Eiseley (1907 – 1977)

As Worldwide Marriage Encounter couples, we can help create positive change in the lives of married couples in our area and beyond. But if you're like us, you feel frustrated with inviting couples to a WWME Experience with little or no results. We find ourselves thinking, "We invite all the time, but no one signs up!" When you catch yourself thinking this way, it might help you to remember this story. You might not be able to sign-up large numbers of couples for a WWME Experience, but you might make contact with one couple who does sign-up and attends an Experience and you'll "make a difference to that one" relationship that will last them a lifetime.

They say that one of the most common reasons we procrastinate is because we see the challenge before us as overwhelming, and that a good way to counter that is to break the big challenge down into smaller pieces and then take those one at a time—like one couple at a time. And to that one couple, a WWME Experience can make a world of difference.



So – Do you know a ‘starfish’ couple you can invite to a WWME Experience?

“A single, ordinary person still can make a difference – and single, ordinary people are doing precisely that every day.”

— [Chris Bohjalian](#), Vermont-based author and speaker

Adapted from a posting by Peter Straube, dated June 5, 2011