An older man walked along the beach one morning. He saw a young boy picking up and throwing things into the ocean. The older man approached the young boy and asked, "what are you doing?" The child replied, "Throwing starfish into the ocean. The sun is up, and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die." Full of frustration the older man answered, "but, young man, don't you realize there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it? You can't possibly make a difference!"

The young boy listened politely, then bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it past the breaking waves. He then turned back to the older man, and said, "it made a difference for that one".