

The Homemade Box

by Cammie Corlas Quinn

Most of my greatest treasures possess little monetary value. They are greeting cards, an Indian arrowhead, two tiny bars of soap shaped like cows, a painting of a farm, a handmade leather billfold, and a child's drawing. They were given to me by special individuals out of hearts of love.

Years ago when I worked at a savings & loan, I acquired yet another treasure. This time it came from a stranger. For an hour, I'd helped an elderly farmer transfer his funds into certificates of deposit. It was a common transaction, a common day for me. When I finished, he thanked me and left the building.



A moment later, he walked back in. I assumed he'd forgotten something, but he held out a small wooden box. It was obviously homemade. The intricate inlaid geometric pattern on the lid must've taken hours to craft. I looked at him, puzzled. "For you," he said. When I asked him why he was giving me the box, he replied, "Because you treated me with such kindness."

I never saw him again, but I still have the box. If I were to sell it at a garage sale, it might sell for \$5. But to me, it is worth far more.

Sometimes a gift from a stranger holds a particularly special kind of value. Strangers have the advantage of seeing us objectively. We are prone to believe them because we know they're not prejudiced by our faults or our virtues.

Every time I look at that box, it reminds me who I am. Even better, it reminds me to keep being kind.

The farmer who gave it to me is probably in Heaven now, but his gift is still making a difference in my life thirty years later.

And be ye kind one to another... (Ephesians 4:32a KJV)