

Introduction

Hello to you.

This is Mary Ethel Eckard, author of *The Making of a Dragonfly*, available on Amazon. Welcome to my podcast – this is my second podcast. You can also visit me on Facebook or on my website, maryetheleckard.com

My purpose here is to share things I am learning that help me in my spiritual journey and I hope to keep things fresh and new and different every week. Keeping you on your toes, so to speak. Never knowing what to expect, dot. Dot. Dot.

This week, I'm going to read a story and challenge you, that - as you listen, let the moral of the story resonate with you. At the end of the story I'll share a personal story that will, hopefully, make you chuckle and that, truly, doesn't have a moral. This week's show is titled, *The Two Carolines and Mrs. Piggle Wiggle*. And yes, there's a greater purpose than just reading you a story.

I found the story of *The Two Carolines* in a book published in 1941. It is a book that my dad grew up listening to called *Uncle Arthur's Bedtime Stories*. When I was a child, my parents read the same stories to me that my dad grew up with. Since I was the first of their children to have children, I inherited the book from my parents to read to my children. Now that I have grandchildren --- you guessed it --- they are hearing the same stories.

One of the favorites is a story entitled, "The Two Carolines." So, take a deep breath, relax, and listen to this story about a little girl who learned the hard way that home manners and company manners should always be the same.

The Two Carolines

CAROLINE was a very nice little girl in many ways. She had pretty brown hair and big blue eyes, and when she was all dressed for school, you would have thought, to look at her, that there wasn't a nicer little girl in all the world.

But there were two Carolines. One was the home Caroline and the other was the school Caroline. The home Caroline was left on the doorstep every morning and picked back up every afternoon when the school Caroline came home.

Now the home Caroline was a cross, pouty, grumbly, growly, and disobedient Caroline, quite unlike the Caroline that everybody saw outside the house, and thought was such a nice little girl.

Mother was worried almost to tears over her two Carolines. What could she do? She thought it over and devised a plan.

Now Caroline loved her school teacher very much. Indeed, by the way she acted, it seemed she loved her teacher more than she did even her own mother. She would take her teacher flowers and other pretty things to show her affection, and of course teacher, seeing only the school Caroline, thought she must always be a very good girl indeed.

One day the school Caroline came home and changed suddenly on the doorstep, as usual, into the home Caroline. Mother called to her as she came in.

The Two Carolines and Mrs. Piggle Wiggle

“Caroline, will you please go next door and borrow a few items from the neighbor?”

“No, don’t want to, I’m tired,” snapped the home Caroline. However, she finally decided to go - under much protest.

While she was gone a visitor came to see Mother, and being shown into the living room, the visitor sat down in a corner out of sight.

Caroline returned.

“Here are your old things,” she said, throwing them on the floor. “Now I’m going out to play.”

“But mother’s tired. Wouldn’t you like to help her finish her work?” Mother asked.

“No, I don’t want to.”

Mother replied, “Well, please set the table for dinner.”

“Don’t want to.”

But Mother continued, “You must do something to help mamma. Please set the table, Caroline.”

“I do hate setting the table,” said Caroline, slamming the door, and putting on a pout that would almost frighten anyone. Pulling out the tablecloth from the drawer with many grumbings, she spread it out in a rough and tumble sort of way. Then she brought out the knives and forks, scattered them among a few necessary dishes, and she prepared to walk away.

Mother looked displeased but did not say anything until Caroline was about to go. Then she said, “Caroline, we are having a guest for dinner tonight. In fact, you might call her in now. She is in the living room.”

Caroline’s face turned pale. Looking around, she noticed that the door to the living room was open.

“But, mother dear,” her tone had suddenly changed, “The table is not set for guests.”

“No Caroline, but it is set for mother.”

“But mother, I would like to arrange it better.”

Mother answered, “It is too late now, Caroline. We must not keep our guest waiting. Please call her in.”

Very pale, and trembling a little, Caroline went into the living room.

“Mother says, will you please”

She stopped. It was her teacher!

“O teacher, have you heard all I have been saying? Oh dear, dear, dear!” Cried Caroline, bursting into tears.

Her teacher sadly expressed, “I am sorry my little Caroline is not the same at home as she is at school”.

Caroline wept, “O, I am so sorry. I won’t ever be so naughty again.”

And really, to tell the truth, she never was.

The Two Carolines and Mrs. Piggle Wiggle

Now for the moral of the story – We can never feel quite sure that there is not someone listening to everything we say, whether sweet or grumbly. And as mother later told Caroline, “Jesus is the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation.”

That’s the End of that story.

Chew on that a while and devote some head space for noodling that moral. Some children’s stories can apply to all ages and walks of life. Just because we look like adults doesn’t mean we always act like adults – so, let’s guard ourselves to make sure we are kind to others whether we are at home or work or anywhere else. Oh shoot, – I did some noodling for you. That does not let you off the hook.

So, great job sitting through the story of the 2 Carolines.

Me and Mrs. Piggle Wiggle

One of my favorite children’s storybooks centered around a colorful character named Mrs. Piggle Wiggle. She was very creative in solving the issues of disobedient children. One of my favorite Mrs. Piggle Wiggle stories centers around a child who refused to take a bath. Mrs. Piggle Wiggles cure involved using radish seeds and the dirt on the child’s skin to teach a lesson. I enjoyed her creativity – maybe too much. I’m not going to read that story to you. Rather, I’m going to share how her influence helped me solve an issue with my very own stubborn child.

One night at our dinner table, our youngest son, Patrick, didn’t want to eat his peas. He obediently put them in his mouth, but he refused to swallow them. So, there we were – the family, the son, the peas, and me – at a standstill. Patrick sat stubbornly, with his little puckered three-year-old cheeks, full of peas, unable to speak but shaking his head vehemently each time I pleaded with him to chew and swallow. Frustration set in, as all I wanted to do was clear the table and relax a little. But he was not moving, which meant neither was I.

Not wanting frustration or the three year old to win, I came up with a grand idea. I dramatically got up from the table, clomped my feet across the floor and grabbed the phone, and proceeded to pretend dial a number. With everyone watching, I began a one-way conversation with a pretend friend that sounded something like this,

“Hello? Mrs. Piggle Wiggle? We have an emergency here. Our son Patrick has a mouthful of peas and he refuses to eat them. I don’t know what to do. Can you help me?” I paused a few seconds, as if listening. Then I responded, “Thank you Mrs. Piggle Wiggle. I will tell him what you said. You have been most helpful.”

Eyes wide open and stares coming at me in disbelief, I made my way back to the dinner table and said, “Patrick, Mrs. Piggle Wiggle reminded me that you are a songbird and you love to sing. She said, why, if you do not swallow those peas, you will not be able to sing again for a very long time.” He listened. Then he closed his eyes, made a terrible facial expression as he chewed the peas, and swallowed. The family applauded. Patrick was able to leave the table, I was able to relax, and you know what? He sang himself to sleep later that night. I’m pretty sure we didn’t have peas very often from that night on – it was too much work.

He never questioned that phone call. Perhaps if he listens to this podcast, my secret will be undone and I’ll be another parent, in the long line of parents before me, who tricked a kid into eating their peas.

The Two Carolines and Mrs. Piggle Wiggle

There's really no moral to that story – it's just a fun way to end the show and reassure you, if there are children in your life, creative means of acquiring obedience is priceless and often more successful than giving in to frustration. Hats off to you, Mrs. Piggle Wiggle.

To those of you already supporting the show with a monthly subscription, thank you. It's only my second show and I have a few subscribers – go figure!

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Catch you next time. This is Mary Ethel Eckard, signing off.