



## - "The Builder"

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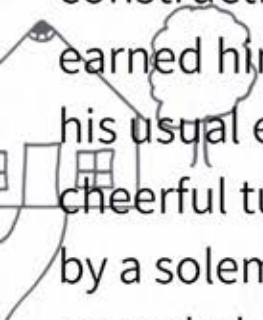
**The moral of the story: Work diligently and reap the fruits of our labor.**

Josef, the most experienced and renowned builder in the city, reached his retirement age. He shared with his boss the desire to retire and savor a more relaxed life with his dear wife and beloved family.

"I want to make up for everything I missed during the years I worked tirelessly," Josef explained. "I want to see the world, watch the sunrise on the beach every morning, and feel free to do whatever my heart desires." He wistfully admitted he would miss his monthly pay but assured his boss that his financial situation was stable, so his family would be well taken care of.

His employer was saddened by the news. He found it difficult to part ways with such a skilled and experienced employee, so he asked Josef to build just one more house as a personal favor. The veteran builder reluctantly agreed.

From the outset of the project, it was clear that Josef's heart was no longer in his work. He replaced the high-end tools and machinery he had always used with simpler alternatives, cutting corners to reduce construction costs. He was weary. The unwavering work ethic that had earned him a stellar reputation was replaced by apathy and a lack of his usual enthusiasm. The smile that once adorned his face and the cheerful tunes he always hummed while working were now replaced by a solemn expression and silence. This was a disheartening end to a remarkable career filled with years of dedication and passion.





One sunny afternoon, after a particularly grueling week, the house was completed. Josef wasn't proud of the result, but he knew he had fulfilled his obligation and could now finally embrace his long-awaited retirement with his family. His employer arrived to inspect the house and ensure it met his standards. He toured the rooms, admired the spacious balcony, and strolled up and down the stairs. Finally, he turned to Josef with a warm smile, extended his hand, and offered Josef a key. "Congratulations, my friend," he said. "This is your new home, a token of my gratitude for your years of service. May you have a happy and fulfilling retirement."

Josef was overcome with remorse and regret. "What a shame!" he thought to himself, consumed by embarrassment and anger. "Had I known this house was for me, I would have poured my heart and soul into its creation!" He chastised himself for his lackluster effort. After all the magnificent buildings and homes he had constructed throughout his great career, this unremarkable dwelling, built by his own hands, was a profound disappointment. After the employer left, Josef stood alone in his new home, grappling with the weight of his choices and wondering if he could ever find joy within its walls.

### **Food for Thought:**

**Sometimes we realize we must live in the "house we built" and face the consequences of our actions, struck by the profound understanding that, given a second chance, we would have done things differently. Like Josef in our story, we discover that once the house is built, it's too late to start over.**

**Life is a "DIY" construction project — your attitude and decisions you make today are the blueprints for the "house" you'll inhabit tomorrow.**

**Can you recall an event in your life where you felt you needed to invest more and work harder to reap greater rewards?**

**Can you share an event in your life where you felt your hard work and investment led to exceptionally successful outcomes?**