THE AMERICAN STORYTELLER
RADIO JOURNAL
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Some of the best stories find me when I have no choice but to listen and not talk. Dr. Geisberg, my dentist, had me as a captive audience on the chair when he told me the story of the fisherman.

The fisherman lived in Key West, Florida. He was a man in his late 50s with no notion of ever retiring, simply because he loved what he did – being a fisherman. He had a small fishing boat big enough for five or six people. It was well maintained. Every morning the fisherman got out of bed, checked the weather and decided if it was a good day to go fishing or not. He was living his dream. He had the Midas' touch when it came to fishing. He was considered the best fisherman in Key West.

Every day he would bring his catch back to the market and sell it. He wasn't getting rich, but it was enough to maintain his modest, but happy lifestyle, and there was a little bit leftover to bank every week. The fisherman often took his family and a few tourists along out for the day, and charged the tourists a small fee. This also helped pay the bills. One day, an automotive corporate executive was along out on the boat and just couldn't believe what he was seeing. The fisherman was so good he was able to land fish after fish even when none of the other fishing boats were having any luck.

The corporate executive told the fisherman, *"It is definitely true what I heard about you. You really do have them Midas touch."* The executive continued, *"I think you should buy a much bigger boat, perhaps even a fleet and hire many men at least 100 and teach them your technique."*

The fisher man said, *"Well why would I want to do that?"*

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The executive replied, *"You would have as much money as you desire. You could retire. You would be able to live the life you dream of. Be with your family. You would be able to spend more time doing what you love."*

And with that, the fisherman with a big smile threw his line back in the water and realized he was already living that life.

Another great story found me in an Italian restaurant. I was busy eating spaghetti and the owner was busy telling me the story of the peasant boy. The peasant boy spent all day pumping the foot pedal of a grinding wheel. On the other side was his mother whose job it was to sharpen knives and other tools for the field workers. The landlord worked the peasants from sunup to sundown. The little boy pumping all day long at the grinding wheel often overheard the landlord complain of not getting enough work out of the peasants. The landlord often lamented, *"If I could just think of a way to make the day longer. I would have so much more money and I'd be the wealthiest landlord in all of Europe."*

Day after day, the landlord complained and lamented while he worked the peasants into the ground. *"Oh I just wish I could make the day longer. I just wish the day wouldn't disappear so quickly."*

The little boy listened as he sat there day after day, all day, pumping the pedal to make the grindstone turn.

"Oh," the landlord lamented, *"I would be happy to split my fortune with anyone who knew the secret of how to make the day longer."*

Finally, one day while sitting there pumping the grindstone, the little boy whispered to the landlord, *"Oh my dear lord,"* the little boy said, *"I know the secret to make the day longer. Will you split half your fortune with me?"*

"Why of course!" the landlord said. *"Show me boy. Show me the secret to a longer day."*

And with that, the little boy stood up and sat the landlord down on his chair behind the grind wheel. He put his foot on the pedal and instructed him to pump.

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My thanks to Dr. Wade Geisberg and restaurateur, Vincenzo Sabatino.

From somewhere behind the radio with the music of Johnny X, I'm the American Storyteller.

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