"Learning From The Old Man and The Starfish..."

The old man awoke just before sunrise, as he often did, to walk by the ocean's edge and greet the new day. As he moved through the morning dawn, he focused on a faint, far away motion.

He saw a youth, bending and reaching and flailing arms, dancing on the beach, no doubt in celebration of the perfect day soon to begin. As he approached, he realized that the youth was not dancing to the bay, but rather bending to sift through the debris left by the night's tide, stopping now and then to pick up starfish and then standing, to heave it back into the sea. He asked the youth the purpose of the effort. "The tide has washed the starfish onto the beach and they cannot return to the sea by themselves," the youth replied. "When the sun rises, they will die, unless I throw them back into the sea." As the youth explained, the old man surveyed the vast expanse of beach, stretching in both directions beyond eyesight. Starfish littered the shore in numbers beyond calculation.

The hopelessness of the youth's plan became clear and the old man countered, "But there are more starfish on this beach than you can ever save before the sun is up. Surely you cannot expect to make a difference." The youth paused briefly to consider my words, bent to pick up a starfish and threw it as far as possible. Turning to the man, he said, "I made a difference to that one."