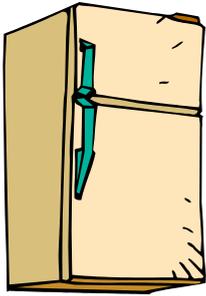


Refrigerator Quote*
Number 6.



The Trouble Tree¹



The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tyre made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit, and now his old truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

After opening the door, he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward, he walked me back to my car. We passed the tree, and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

“Oh, that’s the trouble tree,” he replied. “I know I can’t help having troubles on the job, but one thing is for sure, troubles don’t belong in the house with my wife and kids. So, I just hang them up on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning, I pick them up again.”

“Funny thing is”, he smiled, “when I come out in the morning to pick them up, there aren’t nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before.”

* From a book about grieving# “I call these “refrigerator quotes” and ask griever to put the quotation on a refrigerator door so they and members of the family, or friends, will see it. Some participants photocopy the quotes and pass them on. Others carry the quotes in a purse, notebook, or wallet for further reflection. The more they read and ponder a refrigerator quote, the more meaning it offers.” (p.11.)

#Borrowed Narratives: Using Biographical and Historical Grief Narratives With the Bereaving by Harold Ivan Smith, published by Routledge Mental Health.



¹ Original source unknown.