

## **The Kitchen Gadget Incident**

Not long ago, a friend gave me a particular kitchen gadget. I'm not saying what it was in case she reads this and wants it back. Of course, seeing how I don't often receive used kitchen gadgets from friends, she'd probably recognize herself in the story anyway, in which case I'll just have to hope she doesn't read this. Thankfully that's probably a safe bet.

But I digress. My friend said she'd come across the kitchen gadget at a thrift shop and, remembering I'd said I needed one, she'd purchased it for me. I thanked her profusely. How nice to be thought of! Except that I didn't remember telling her I needed it.

Not that I didn't need it! It's just that up until that moment, with the item staring me in the face, it had not occurred to me how much I needed it. That I recalled.

At any rate, my friend seemed pretty proud of herself for being so thoughtful. She proceeded to tell me her acquisition story as bargain shoppers often do, and I pretended to listen while I racked my brain for clues. Had I made any comment that would lead her to believe I needed this object? I couldn't remember a single thing. And yet, it would come in handy. If I hadn't mentioned I needed it, I should have.

My friend was now carrying on about how often she used the item in her own kitchen, as did her mother and her sister. And then it occurred to me! What if my friend had gotten me confused with someone else and now that person would continue to live without the benefits of the handy kitchen gadget I now held in my hand. What a thing to have on my conscience!

But by now we were a good ten minutes into the conversation; a conversation in which I had enthusiastically thanked my friend for her thoughtfulness and agreed that yes I could really use this item. It seemed too late to tell her, "I don't remember telling you that I need this--not that I don't need it."

There was nothing left to do but offer to pay for the useful kitchen item that I hadn't planned on buying. I was concerned that if I paid her, she'd start bringing me all sorts of things I can use, but haven't thought of yet. But I offered anyway, and she graciously declined. It was a gift! A gift that was possibly meant for someone else. I took it and I use it often, always wondering, am I forgetful or am I a liar? Meanwhile my friend hasn't brought me any other useful kitchen items--or anything else for that matter.

I'm sure this story serves to illustrate a point, though I'm not sure what it is. Maybe just that it isn't that hard to come up with a 700 word column. But I also learned a lesson about speaking up before it's too late. The longer you wait, the harder it gets. Whether it's telling your neighbor that it was you who reported their barking dog to animal control. Or telling your parents that you're the one who burned down the garage when you were 14. These are just examples, mind you. We had a carport when I was growing up, and it's still standing.

I swear my delay was only an attempt to buy thinking time. But I waited too long, and I certainly didn't want to embarrass us both after we'd carried on like that. Plus I was afraid she'd want the gadget back.

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