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#93 Arizona, April 2013, Change Choices, 853 Words

*Dear Arizona,
Have you ever been given the wrong change at a store?
I got too much back, and wasn't sure what to do.
Change Choices in Chatanooga*

Dear Change choices,

Yes! As a matter of fact, I did have a majorly weird wrong change thing happen to me, and I wasn't sure what to do about it either. I promise I'll get to that part in a minute but I have to start with the whole thing that led up to it in the first place. I was over at my neighbor Ollie's house when his Grandma, who we call Abuella, had an idea.

"I think this would be the perfect day for a great big garden clean-up in the backyard. I'll pay five dollars to anyone who'll help me out."

"I'll help," I said. "But you don't need to pay me."

"I'm happy to pay for your help," said Abuella. "It'll be a full day of hard work, and I could really use a few more hands."

"I don't know," Ollie grinned. "You might look kind of unusual with a few more hands."

"Ha! Very funny you silly boy!" Abuella chuckled. "You know what I mean!"

"I know, I'm just joking around," said Tex. "Where do we start?"

"Follow me!" Abuella said, marching out to her little backyard. "How about putting on these garden gloves and pulling up these big old weeds?"

"Sure!" I said.

"There's no way this'll take us all day," said Ollie.

He was kind of right, and kind of wrong. The pulling weeds part only took a couple of hours. But add on the putting the weed pile into the yard waste bin part and the digging in the hard old dirt to get it ready for planting new stuff part, and the sweeping all the mess up part, and Abuella was right. It definitely was a full day of hardwork.

"Beautiful job!" Abuella said, wiping her brow. "Here's five dollars for you, and five dollars for you!"

"Can we go to Jackson's?" Ollie asked.

“Why not?” Said Abuela. “Let’s get all cleaned up and walk on over.”

Just so you know, Jackson’s is a little store in our neighborhood that sells delicious ice cream, and pretty much anything else you can think of.

“Cool!” Said Ollie. “Yo-yos for ninety nine cents!”

“I want this one with stars,” I said, tossing it into my shopping basket. “And look, these sunglasses are ninety nine cents too!”

We tried them on, made funny faces in the mirror, and tossed them into our baskets. We figured we could afford the yo-yos, sunglasses and kiddy size ice cream cones with our earnings.

Now this is where the change trouble part comes in. For some reason our ice cream cones were extra drippy. We were so busy frantically licking our ice cream drips, and handing our yo-yos, sunglasses and money to the guy at the cash register, that we really didn’t have any idea that he was giving us back way, way, way too much change.

“Thanks for shopping at Jackson’s!” The guy smiled.

“Thank you!” We said, throwing the change in with our bags of stuff, and concentrating on our drippy cones.

When we got home and opened our bags, Ollie said, “Wait – how much change did you get back?”

“Two dollars and fifty cents,” I said.

“Me to,” said Ollie. “That’s like two dollars and twenty five cents too much – right?”

“Right,” I agreed. “What are we going to do?”

“Well,” said Ollie. “We could keep it, or we could give it back.”

“It’s not that much money,” I said. “The store probably won’t even notice it’s missing.”

“Plus it’s great to have free money,” said Ollie.

“So we should keep it?” I said.

“I guess so,” said Ollie. “Except for one thing. It’s not exactly the right thing to do. I mean that guy who helped us was really nice. What if he gets in trouble for making a mistake with our change?”

“Yeah, you have a point,” I said. “And even if that guy wasn’t so nice, we’d still

be taking something that wasn't ours.”

As much as we wanted to keep that extra change, we knew we'd feel too weird not giving it back. But we spent so long going back and forth about it, by the time we'd finally decided to do the right thing, Jackson's had already closed. So we went right after school the next day.

“You two win the Jackson's Customer of the Month prize!” The guy at the register said when we told him what happened. “What an amazing world this would be if everyone were as thoughtful and honest as you!”

Then he gave us two free ice creams. How cool is that?

So, as you can see, dear Change Choices, I can absolutely relate. It's not easy to do the right thing – especially when it's so super easy to do the wrong thing! But I kind of think that the happy, good feeling you get way down deep inside when you make the right choice – makes it all worth while.

Ciao for Now,

Arizona

