

Sometimes it is difficult to let things go, even though it is long gone. Naturally our children leave us to make a living on their own. However, we wonder about them. How are they getting up out of bed on time to make it to their work place? How are their grades in the school of their choice? Sometimes we wonder how our parents feel after we leave THEM on their own. How do they get out of bed in the mornings without having us to rouse them so that they can take us to school, to a game, to a friend's home? How do they manage to smile after we leave to make a living of our own? What do they do after we leave them following a visit home? How do they manage to make breakfast, to climb the stairs to their bedroom? How do they manage without us?

They just do. Our parents manage just fine. Our children thrive just fine. But, what about all those quilts we made and have given away? Are they just fine, too? What about the "Thank You" quilts presented to soldiers? Are they doing the job? Do the soldiers use them, do the families of the soldiers use them. Do the quilts feel honored and are they standing up to the task?

"When you give a quilt," says a quilter, "you give it. You break the strings." There are no ties, no restrictions when you donate a quilt, she suggests. When a gift is given it is given with no obligation of letting the giver know that it is doing its job. The job of a gift could be to make a person happy, to make a person warm, to make a person feel loved, thanked. We give quilts to comfort, to see smiles, to say "You are loved."

"I visited my sister," says a quilter, and what did I find but the quilt I gave her was a bed for their dog. When she wasn't looking I took that quilt right up and put it in my car. I took it home and washed it and then folded it with care. I use it once in a while to cover myself while taking a nap." She didn't realize that the dog was their loved one. The quilt bed was a way of thanking him for loving them. How did her sister feel when she discovered the "dog bed" missing? And what is the dog now turning around in three times before settling down to comfort?

Checking on our gift quilts is not a quilters' task. We quilters always hope that a gift is appreciated. "The quilt that you gave to my husband is perfect for him," she told me. He sits in his chair now that he is home from the hospital and wraps himself in the quilt while he watches his TV shows." Good, I thought. And the quilt has a chair to lay back in when it is left on its own.

"We can't really use the elephant quilt yet," says my daughter during a visit to our home. It is too warm, yet to use on our bed. The quilt is flannel sandwiched with a wool batting. What was I thinking? They do not live in Siberia where it would cover a tiny cold spot. No, they live in Oregon, the land of the green green grass of the Willamette Valley.

Quilt gifts are like children, they sometimes find their way back home. "We thought that you would like the quilt back," says another daughter. He grew out of it and the kites on the quilt are so cute you may want it to hang on your wall." She knows her mom, well. I hang that quilt every March when the winds blow and then blow some more. Sometimes it is difficult to let things go however it is nice receive them back. A true quilt gift!

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