Eduardo

by

*Eyes Right*

**Saratoga, VA –** The old saw, “I’d rather be lucky than good,” is often attributed to Lefty Gomez, a pitcher for the NY Yankees during the 1940’s. Gomez had several other memorable quotes: “The secret of my success was clean living and a fast outfield” and my favorite, “I’ve got a new invention. It’s a revolving bowl for tired goldfish.”

Lefty’s “lucky vs good” quote came to mind as I headed home recently in my 2010 Subaru Forester. It had been an interesting two days. On the previous morning the car was in my driveway but would not start. I heard a clicking sound as I turned the ignition key, but no engine turnover. From experience, I assumed that the battery and solenoid were good, but that the starter motor needed replacement.

I called my Korean mechanic and made an appointment for his shop to do the repair before calling AAA to tow the Subaru there. An hour later the AAA truck arrived, and upon checking out the car, the AAA fellow obtained a long metal pole from the truck to hammer the starter which was located behind the engine. After many bangs, the car obliged by starting. This is a known technique to use on old starters because the banging slightly changes the position of the commutator inside allowing it to overcome a “bad spot.”

So…I kept the engine running and drove straight to the Korean’s shop. When I came back later in the day, the Korean told me that they could not replicate the starter failing. I paid him $25 and left believing that the problem was an old battery. I stopped at an Advance Auto parts store about a mile away to get a new battery. Long story, but the fellow at Advance Auto kept insisting that they did not have the battery I wanted in stock, although I could see it on his computer screen. Basically, he was trying to sell me a far more expensive battery. I gave him a few choice words and left. The Subaru started nicely, so I drove to another Advance Auto store about 5 miles away.

At this store, a young Black employee offered to come out to check my battery. He removed it, and soon returned with the news that my battery was fine. As I tried to start the Subaru, nada….just that clicking sound. The young man obtained a piece of metal and proceeded to bang away on the starter, but this time, no joy. I told him thanks and started to phone AAA again to tow me back to the Korean. Just as I was starting to dial, the young man suggested that I call Eduardo.

Eduardo, he explained, owned a repair shop less than a half mile away and often did work for Advance Auto customers. It was now 5 PM and getting dark and cold. Eduardo answered in very broken English when I called the number given to me. He asked me to text him with my problem. I did so and he texted back, “OK…will come.”

Fifteen minutes later Eduardo arrived. He was a 30-something Hispanic with limited English, but we were able to communicate somewhat. He “looked at it” and indicated with his arms that he would be back. In less than 10 minutes Eduardo returned with a large bag of tools and a headlamp to work in the dark. He hung over the front of the Subaru working to remove the starter motor and then crawled underneath (without a jack) to complete the removal. While he had been gone, I had purchased a replacement starter at the Advance Auto; they gave me “Eduardo’s discount” taking the price from $180 to $120.

Within 30 minutes, it was now totally dark, but I had a new working starter and Eduardo had $150. Actually, he had $160 and told him to keep the change. As I headed home, I realized how lucky I had been. What are the odds of having the very helpful young Black fellow being at work when I entered the store; he told me that he was supposed to be off 30 minutes earlier. And then him mentioning Eduardo, and Eduardo being willing to change a starter motor in a strip mall parking lot – in the dark!!!!!

I probably saved at least $300 and a day going back and forth to the Korean’s. It also made me extremely grateful for immigrants, legal or illegal, whose work ethic and willingness to assist make life so much better for many of us. And I had been “Lefty Lucky!”

I thought you might like to know.

E-R