Don’t Throw in the Towel
From The Worship Drama Library, Volume 9
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Generational Healing

Characters: Two: two women
DANA: a woman in her 20s or 30s
GRAMS: a woman in her 60s

Tone: Humorous

Running Time: Five minutes

Synopsis: While folding laundry, a grandmother and her granddaughter discover the differences between them are not so great. This scene teaches that the “right way” may only be “my way.” And in realizing this, there’s room to enjoy the diversity found in age.

Setting/Props: A laundry room or front room. Props: basket of laundry, 4 bath towels, 1 pair of socks, T-shirt, table (optional), two chairs or a sofa.

(DANA and GRAMS have just done the wash together. Now they’re sitting folding a pile of laundry. DANA finishes folding a towel. She sets it aside. She grabs another towel. GRAMS is watching her, closely.)

DANA: Thanks for helping me with the wash, Grams. Phil wasn’t able to get to it yesterday, and I’ve gotta be at work in a half hour. (As DANA folds another towel, GRAMS makes a “tsk, tsk, tsk” clicking noise of disapproval. Dana doesn’t hear it. GRAMS makes the noise again. Then again, louder. DANA stops and looks at her.) Something wrong?

GRAMS: The towel.

DANA (grabs the folded towel): Is it torn? (GRAMS shakes her head.) Is there a stain on it? (GRAMS shakes her head.) What? You don’t like the color?

GRAMS: It’s all wrong.

DANA: The color?

GRAMS: The color’s fine, Dana. It’s the fold.

DANA (looking it over): The fold?
GRAMS: You folded it wrong.

DANA: I fold it like I always fold it.

GRAMS: Then you’ve always been doing it wrong.

DANA (laughs): Wow. Déjà vu. I suddenly feel like that old Cheer commercial, remember? Where the newlywed is doing her laundry, and her old aunt comes in and tells her she’s . . . (Sees Grams staring at her, not amused) I meant her older aunt.

GRAMS: I don’t watch much TV. Never have.

(DANA smiles. She grabs a towel and starts folding.)

DANA: I fold it in half shortways, see. Then in half shortways again. Then I fold it longways over twice, so it’s in thirds. (She holds up the folded towel.) Voilà!

GRAMS: That’s the problem. Right there.

DANA: What’s the problem? The towel is folded, and I just stick it in the cupboard.

(GRAMS grabs a towel and smooths it out.)

GRAMS: Don’t you see? You should fold in half longways, down the middle like this. Then meet the ends in another fold. Then meet the ends again. (She holds up the folded towel.) That’s how a folded towel should look. Now you’re ready to put it in the closet.

DANA: Why is that better?

GRAMS: Well, see, when you grab the end here and pick it up, the whole towel falls open lengthwise and you’re ready to dry yourself off. (She lets the towel fall open.) Then you don’t have to mess with unfolding the chinese puzzle you’ve got there while you’re standing there dripping wet, shivering cold, and about to catch pneumonia.

DANA (gets the point): Uh-huh . . .

GRAMS: But I started doing it because it looks nicer, see. It’s more pleasing, geometrically. It’s a flat square. Not a bulgy rectangle. And it always looked so nice sitting on my linen closet shelf.

DANA: Linen closet shelf.

GRAMS: Yes. The one downstairs. By the wall heater.
DANA: Grams, I don’t have a linen closet.

GRAMS: You don’t?

DANA: No, I have a little cupboard. Little, teeny-tiny cupboard with little teeny-tiny shelves. This rectangle is the only way it will fit, or the doors won’t close.

GRAMS: Oh.

DANA: So, that’s the way I fold ’em. It works for me. (GRAMS grabs a T-shirt and begins folding it. Suddenly she laughs.) OK, what so funny? The way I fold my T-shirts?

GRAMS: No. You fold them just fine, honey. I . . . I just remembered something.

DANA: What?

GRAMS: Well, I . . . it just hit me. Just now. I remember why I started folding my towels like this.

DANA: Why?

GRAMS: When Frank and I got married, we must have gotten a hundred towels as wedding gifts. There were only two of us, for goodness sakes, but here we were with all these towels, and I didn’t have the heart to get rid of any of them. So I started folding them really square and flat so that I could stack them all on the second shelf. (She looks at DANA and smiles.) It worked for me. (DANA grins and nods.) Well, now Frank and I have got six towels and it’s plenty.

DANA (checks her watch): I better hurry. I’ve only got ten minutes. (She grabs a pair of socks and starts to fold them.)

GRAMS: So, how are you going to fold those socks?

DANA: I fold the tops over each other a little bit, then I fold them in thirds. (She drops the socks in Grams’s hand.) Just like you taught me, Grams. (GRAMS smiles and nods, as the lights go to black.)