

**Fools show their annoyance at once,
but the prudent overlook an insult (Proverbs 12:16)**

A Proverbial Story

By Ted Hildebrandt and Chatgpt

Once upon a time, deep in the Willow Woods, there lived a young beaver named Benny. Benny was proud of his dam-building skills and loved showing off his latest creations to anyone who would look.

One sunny morning, Benny decided to build the biggest, strongest dam the forest had ever seen. He spent days chewing trees, dragging branches, and stacking stones. Finally, it was ready—a grand dam right across Twisty Stream!

Benny invited all the woodland creatures to see it. Rabbits, raccoons, and even the grumpy old owl came to admire his work. Benny stood tall, his chest puffed out with pride.

But just as everyone was clapping their paws and wings, a snickering voice rang out.

"Hmph! That dam looks like it was built by a squirrel with no thumbs!" It was Rocky the Raccoon, famous for his sharp tongue.

Benny's fur bristled. His tail slapped the ground with a loud thwack. "What did you say?!" he shouted, his face turning red beneath his brown fur.

Rocky shrugged and grinned. "Just calling it like I see it!"

Benny was about to charge at Rocky when Wise Old Tilda the Turtle slowly stepped forward. She looked up at Benny with her kind, wrinkled eyes and said, "Remember, young beaver: fools show their anger right away, but the prudent and wise ones... they let silly words float by like fallen leaves on the water."

Benny froze. He took a deep breath. He looked at Rocky, who was still smirking, and then at all his friends, who were waiting to see what he would do.

He thought, If I get mad, Rocky wins. If I stay calm, I win.

So, Benny forced a smile and said, "Thanks for the advice, Rocky. Maybe you can help me improve it sometime."

Rocky's mouth fell open. He had been ready for a shouting match, not a polite reply!

The other animals cheered even louder. They crowded around Benny, praising his dam and patting him on the back. Meanwhile, Rocky slunk off, embarrassed.

Later that day, Benny sat by his dam, watching the stream ripple and sparkle. Tilda paddled over and climbed onto a rock nearby.

"You did well, Benny," she said. "Sometimes the strongest dam you build isn't made of sticks and stones—it's made of self-control."

Benny smiled proudly. "Thanks, Tilda. I guess not every battle is worth fighting."

"Exactly," said Tilda. "A wise beaver knows when to let the water carry the insults away."

From that day on, Benny became known not just for his amazing dams but for his prudence and wise heart. Whenever someone tried to ruffle his fur, Benny just smiled, nodded, and let their words drift away—just like leaves on the Twisty Stream.

He had learned the wisdom of the old proverb: "Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult" (Proverbs 12:16).