

**The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
than seven who can answer sensibly – Proverbs 26:16**

A Proverbial Story

By Ted Hildebrandt and Chatgpt

Once upon a time in the cheerful town of Tumbletop, there lived a boy named Leo. But everyone in Tumbletop called him *Lazy Leo*. While other kids played soccer, helped in the garden, or built amazing treehouses, Leo preferred one thing: lying in his hammock with a sandwich and a book he pretended to read.

Leo wasn't mean. In fact, he was quite friendly. But if you ever asked him to do anything, his answer was always, "Why bother? I already know how things should be done. Everyone else just makes it harder than it needs to be."

One sunny afternoon, the mayor of Tumbletop announced a contest:
"Build the best squirrel shelter in the forest, and you'll win a year's worth of strawberry ice cream!"

Everyone got to work—everyone except Leo. He yawned and said, "Huh. A squirrel shelter? Easy. Just put a box under a tree and call it a day."

His seven classmates rolled up their sleeves and started brainstorming.

"We need to make sure it's waterproof," said Maya.

"And warm!" added Raj.

"Plus, squirrels love climbing, so maybe a ramp," said Ellie.

Leo watched from his hammock, munching on a cookie. "You're all overthinking it," he said. "I already know what works. Just wait until the judges see my plan."

The seven kids worked as a team for two whole days. They built a little wooden cabin with a slanted roof, filled it with soft moss, and even added a nut storage corner. They called it "The Squirrel Suite."

Leo, meanwhile, dragged an old cardboard box into the forest and dropped some peanuts inside. He drew a smiley face on it and called it done.

On the judging day, the mayor arrived with the squirrel expert, Professor Acornstein. They examined all the entries.

When they reached Leo's cardboard box, the mayor raised an eyebrow. "Is... is this yours?"

Leo grinned proudly. "Yup! See how simple it is? No tools, no teamwork, no fuss. Clearly, just smarter."

At that very moment, a gust of wind blew the box away. The peanuts scattered, and birds swooped in to grab them.

Next, the judges visited The Squirrel Suite. A little squirrel family was already inside, snuggled up happily. The professor clapped his hands. "Brilliant design! These kids have thought of everything!"

Leo frowned. "They just got lucky. I knew my box was better. You all just can't see it."

The mayor smiled gently. "Leo, sometimes thinking you're the smartest doesn't mean you are. Listening to others, effective planning, and working hard are what bring real results."

Leo sighed and watched the squirrels happily munching on their nuts. "Maybe... next time, I'll ask for help."

The seven friends smiled and offered him some strawberry ice cream. "You're always welcome on Team Squirrel," said Maya.

And from that day on, Lazy Leo tried being a little less lazy—and a lot more wise. He had learned from the old proverb: "The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven who can answer sensibly" (Proverbs 26:16).