

Gratitude

Sometimes it is easy to overlook the obvious. When someone goes out of their way to do something nice for us it is easy to dismiss their kindness as an expectation. We pass over kind actions that seem so simple. Allowing us to change into their lane when driving, opening a door for us when our arms are full, holding an elevator for us, or letting us go ahead of them at a check out lane when they have many items and we have just one are acts of kindness we simply gloss over without much thought. The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, founded in 1995, is a wonderful organization but it is unfortunate that such an organization needs to exist. Why should we have to be reminded to “be nice” to everyone and practice random acts of kindness? Logic says that as fellow human beings, why wouldn’t acts of kindness just be part of our everyday living experience?

In the very first line of Rick Warren’s best selling book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, we are reminded that “It is not about you.” And we are reminded because for our present day society, it has become very much an “it is all about me” world. So, practicing random acts of kindness has become an activity we have to be reminded to do, because kind acts are no longer part of our normal pattern for life and living. Aren’t you a bit surprised when someone holds the elevator for you and waits for you even if it is only 5 seconds?? Or, if you are moving something heavy and a stranger comes over to lend a hand? There was a time that you could anticipate that individuals would come to your aid, but those individuals today are the exception, not the norm. Politeness has become a rarity of behavior in our society.

Because of the rarity of this behavior, I was moved to write this article. Gratitude according to Webster’s New World College Dictionary, simply means: the state of being grateful, thankfulness, appreciation. When I entered the



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career transition business, it never entered my mind that 25 years later the flame of passion for working with and helping people find their way in their careers and lives would still burn as bright and strong as it does today. Where better is there a place

to find caring, compassionate people than the healthcare field? For 25 years, I have experienced the acceptance and kindness of healthcare professionals from over 450 clients throughout the United States.

Truly, this was unexpected. My previous longest tenure in an industry was 5 years. But early on, there was something different about this industry. The conversations were deeper and the relationship building through the interactions with client organizations and career transition participants helped me to formulate a personal mission statement and a challenge to all I meet –Whoever dies with the most friends wins!

No, there isn’t a score keeping system or comparisons of Rolodexes or address books, it is simply a statement about what is important in life; the relationships that we have with our friends and colleagues. So, for 25 years I give thanks and express my gratitude to all that I have met along the way. The ride has been great and the future is bright. There is a French proverb that says “Gratitude is the memory of the heart.” But, perhaps it was said even better by John F. Kennedy, “As we express gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”



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