

Rabbi Moshe Wolf's March Newsletter

"AN ACT OF KINDNESS GOES A LONG WAY"

Did you ever have one of those days where you are driving along and start contemplating life? For some it is called, "a moment of reflection", for some "a moment of soul searching". And you start asking yourself, "Do I really make a difference to others, by serving the public"? Can one person really make a difference, with all that goes on around us? You go to work put in a full tour of duty and on your way home you ask yourself, does anyone really care? Is it appreciated?

The answer is, of course you can and do make a difference, sometimes you get a thank you right away, but sometimes you don't find out how much your kindness meant till a much later time. Please let me share with you a short story "Our Class Valedictorian"

One day, when my friend Jim was a freshman in high school, he saw a kid from his class walking home from school. This kid's name was Peter. It looked like Peter was carrying all of his books in his arms. Jim thought to himself, "Why would anyone bring home all their books on a Friday, weekends are made for relaxing?" Peter looked to be one of those nerdy, loner, quiet types.

Jim had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with his friends Saturday afternoon), so rather than asking Peter why he is lugging all his books, Jim just shrugged his shoulders and went on.

As Jim continued walking down the block, he saw a bunch of kids running toward Peter. They ran at Peter, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him, so that he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and landed in the grass about fifteen feet from him. The kids ran away.

Jim couldn't believe his eyes. He ran over to assist Peter as he crawled around looking for his glasses, and Jim saw the tears in Peter's eyes. As Jim handed Peter his glasses, he said, "Those guys are real jerks, they really should get lives, here let me give you a hand". Peter looked at Jim and said, "Hey thanks for being here!" There was a big smile on his face. It was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude.

Jim helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out, Peter lived near Jim, so Jim asked him why he had never seen him before. Peter said he had gone to private school before now.

Jim would have never hung out with a private school kid before. They talked all the way home, and Jim carried some of Peter's books. Peter turned out to be a pretty cool kid. Jim asked him if he wanted to play a little football with his friends. He said yes. They hung out all weekend together. The more Jim got to know Peter, the more he liked him, and so did Jim's friends.

Monday morning came, and there was Peter with the huge stack of books again. Jim stopped him and said, "Boy, you are gonna really build some serious muscles with this pile of books you carry everyday!" Peter just laughed and handed Jim half the books.

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Over the next four years, Peter and Jim became best friends. When they were seniors, they began to think about college. Peter decided on Georgetown, and Jim was going to Yale. Jim knew that they would always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. Peter was going to be a doctor, and Jim was going for business on a football scholarship.

Peter was valedictorian of his class. Jim teased him all the time about being a nerd. Peter had to prepare a speech for graduation. Jim was so glad it wasn't him having to get up there and speak. Graduation day, Jim saw Peter. He looked great. He was one of those guys that really found himself during high school. Peter filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more dates than Jim had and all the girls loved him. Boy, sometimes Jim was jealous. Today was one of those days. Jim could see that Peter was nervous about his speech. So, Jim smacked him on the back and said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!" Peter looked at Jim with one of those looks (the really grateful ones) and smiled.
"Thanks,".

As Peter started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began. "Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach...but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story."

Jim just looked at his friend with disbelief as he told the story of the first day they met. Peter had planned to kill himself and end his loneliness, over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn't have to do it later and was carrying his stuff home. He looked hard at Jim and gave him a little smile.

"Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable."
Jim heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. Jim saw Peter's Mom and Dad looking his way, tears flowing freely and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did Jim realize the depth of his simple actions of helping and lending a hand in time of need.....Remember.....

Never underestimate the power of your actions, with one small gesture you can change a person's life.

G-d puts us all in each other's lives to impact one another in some positive way. Look for G-d in others and leave them smiling by your actions of kindness.

There is no beginning or end. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift. Enjoy your present! Thanks for going out every day and giving so much of yourselves to help others.

May G-d bless you and keep you safe. And remember if your burden gets too heavy and you need a shoulder to lean on, don't hesitate to call one of your Chaplains at 312-746-8458 , here for you 24/7.

Compliments of your Police Chaplain
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