

Kindness Stories



I am only one;
but still I am
one. I cannot do
everything, but
still I can do
something. I will
not refuse to do
the something
I can do.

– Hellen Keller

November 5, 2006
Kapadia Baby Shower

Father and Son Getting Home, by Wes

A few months ago, while driving home from work, I was thinking about my long tiring day at work and worrying about my other half, and would he be OK when I got home. My partner of 6 years, was lying in bed at home, sick and facing a long illness and possibly death.

That day several clients had paid for their jobs and one of them even paid extra, since he was very pleased with our graphics & photography work.

On the way, I stopped at a gas station (slightly out of my way) to gas up my car before heading home. When I went in to pre-pay for my gas, I saw a man with his son ahead of me in the line. They were a little dirty from working & painting at a local job site. The clerk behind the counter seemed annoyed and not interested in talking to them.

From their conversation, it seems the man had lost his wallet, was almost out of gas and still had 1.5 hours drive to get himself and his son home. He was wanting to write the clerk a check and post date it for 2 days later.

The man was obviously tired, worried and frustrated. He knew the money in his account wasn't available yet and without cash, he and his son would not be able to sleep in their own beds that night.

The clerk asked them to move aside and let me up to the register. I gave the clerk two 20 dollar bills and told him to put \$20 on my pump and to pre-pay \$20 on their pump also. When I went back out to fill my gas tank, the teenage son approached me at the car to express his gratitude. His father was too emotional, so he stayed inside the store til I was gone.

They asked if I would accept a check from them for the money, but I declined. I told the teenager to keep the check and to "pay it forward". Help someone in a bind when you see them.

They were so thankful, I had a feeling that the weight of what I'd done to help was much more than what it appeared.

I cried half the way home, not sad tears, but tears of relief and joy for them. Getting home after work can mean much more than just having a beer and watching TV. It can mean being there for someone who needs you.

"Make it a rule. Never to lie down at night without being able to say - 'I have made one human being at least a little wiser, a little happier or a little better this day.'"

--Charles Kingsley

Do I Have Enough? By Sharon

I was doing some last-minute shopping in a toy store and decided to look at Barbie dolls for my nieces.

A nicely dressed little girl was excitedly looking through the Barbie dolls as well, with a roll of money clamped tightly in her little hand. When she came upon a Barbie she liked, she would turn and ask her father if she had enough money to buy it. He usually said "yes," but she would keep looking and keep going through their ritual of "do I have enough?"

As she was looking, a little boy wandered in across the aisle and started sorting through the Pokemon toys.

He was dressed neatly, but in clothes that were obviously rather worn, and wearing a jacket that was probably a couple of sizes too small. He too had money in his hand, but it looked to be no more than five dollars or so at the most.

He was with his father as well, and kept picking up the Pokemon video toys. Each time he picked one up and looked at his father, his father shook his head, "No."

The little girl had apparently chosen her Barbie, a beautifully dressed, glamorous doll that would have been the envy of every little girl on the block.

However, she had stopped and was watching the interchange between the little boy and his father. Rather dejectedly, the boy had given up on the video games and had chosen what looked like a book of stickers instead. He and his father then started walking through another aisle of the store.

The little girl put her Barbie back on the shelf, and ran over to the Pokemon games. She excitedly picked up one that was lying on top of the other toys, and raced toward the check-out, after speaking with her father. I picked up my purchases and got in line behind them. Then, much to the little girl's obvious delight, the little boy and his father got in line behind me.

After the toy was paid for and bagged, the little girl handed it back to the cashier and whispered something in her ear. The cashier smiled and put the package under the counter.

I paid for my purchases and was rearranging things in my purse when the little boy came up to the cashier. The cashier rang up his purchases and then said, "Congratulations, you are my hundredth customer today, and you win a prize!"

With that, she handed the little boy the Pokemon game, and he could only stare in disbelief.

It was, he said, exactly what he had wanted!

The little girl and her father had been standing at the doorway during all of this, and I saw the biggest, prettiest, toothless grin on that little girl that I have ever seen in my life. Then they walked out the door, and I followed close behind them.

As I walked back to my car in amazement over what I had just witnessed, I heard the father ask his daughter why she had done that. I'll never forget what she said to him.

"Daddy, didn't Nana and PawPaw want me to buy something that would make me happy?" He said, "Of course they did, honey."

To which the little girl replied, "Well, I just did!"

With that, she giggled and started skipping toward their car.

Apparently, she had decided on the answer to her own question of, "Do I have enough?"

"Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference. They bless the one who receives them, and they bless you, the giver." --Barbara De Angelis

Looking For Josephs, by Della

She stood looking at every tag on the tree for over an hour. Ten years old and a heart of gold, she decided that she would give up one of her Christmas gifts to the boy named Joseph who needed clothes but wanted a skateboard.

Money was tight in our household but her argument was "Mom, I have a lot to be thankful for; maybe he doesn't have that much." That year when she unwrapped her empty gift box, she read the word Joseph in it. My daughter smiled her beautiful smile and we cried.

Ten years later, I lost that daughter in a car accident.

It's been 9 years and each Christmas I stand in front of the tree of angels at the store for an hour, searching for the "Josephs" who will get her gifts.

One year, a 15 year old girl wrote, "My baby brother needs clothes more than I need a photo album and film." So I got her box of scrapbook and photo supplies and I hope they had as much fun with it as I had shopping for her.

I know my Angel girl was watching over me that year. The girl's name was Johanna ... the same as my daughter.

Parle-G Biscuits and Grains, by Raghu

We live in a small flat in in India. While all the families in the society live in flats, many families economic prosperity is not much better than many living in slum. One such family lives behind us. A couple lives with their son and the husbands brother and mother in a small inherited two room flat, that is 8 feet by 15 feet in size. The entire household subsists on the daily wages of the daily wages the male earns from doing labor work (20 to 50 rupees/day).

During Diwali, like all the other families, the wife was cleaning the home. Since they did not own a table, she stood on a tin box to clean the fan. Losing her balance, the tin slipped from underneath her and she fell on the back of head and had a brain hemorrhage. She was admitted to Civil Hospital, a government hospital, where she was treated at minimal cost. Once she returned home, the household was in turmoil. With only one income-generator and that too 20-50 rupees a day, daily earnings were all used for medicines and food for the woman. The rest of the family went hungry.

Hearing of their plight, I could not sit and do nothing. I immediately went to my mother with my desire to do something. My mother works as a peon at a school and since it was Diwali, many people give her grains and food to mark the occasion. She immediately agreed with my decision to help and suggested that we give the food she had just received.

We can buy our own food. If we give this food to the family, then those who gave it to me will get even better karma for their actions. With these words, she gave me the food (still in its original packaging) and 10 rupees to buy Parle-G biscuits for the son.

The family could not believe their eyes when they saw me at their door. Their happiness knew no bounds. The son had been eating 4 parle-g biscuits a day as it was all these could afford. Now they was adequate food for the entire family.



After that, I went to Manav Sadhna and collected some money. For the next week, even though I fell sick, I went out and bought the family fruits each day.

Today whenever I see the man, even though he has little or no money, he always asks me if I want coffee or tea. Our interactions have made an imprint on both of our hearts.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that has. --Margaret Mead

Bystander No More, by Michelle

I was with my oldest son and we were on the lookout for an open parking space in our jam-packed shopping center. We spotted a perfect one in the next row of spaces, and I maneuvered our van around the turn, all the while hoping no one else would spot it and grab it before I could. And, as luck would have it, a lady was wheeling her shopping cart right in front of us, and it looked like it was getting away from her - crammed with bags and cartons of soda underneath. She herself was carrying three extra bags in her hands while trying to push the cart against a strong spring wind, and looked frazzled. She noticed us and I could tell she was trying to move over to the side so we could pass.

At that moment, some of the lighter packages blew off the top of her cart, and she moved to catch them. I rolled down my window and asked if she was alright. "Yes", she said, "I'll be out of your way in just a second." She picked up the two straggling packages and hadn't gone but a few steps when one of the soda cartons on the bottom rack had fallen off and then broken open.

At that point I felt something snap in me. I pulled the van into an unloading zone and told my son to wait for a moment. I rushed over to her and the first thing she did was to apologize several times. I helped her gather everything up, took the extra bags firmly from her hands, and walked her to her car.

She told me she was trying to hurry home to her son's thirteenth birthday party and her whole day had been "just one of those days". I helped her load the groceries, and she stopped and looked at me and just said, "Thank you so much". I smiled and said, "I am a mother of three and do you think no one has ever helped me out? I am just returning the favor." She smiled and said, "God bless you" and got in her car.

I walked the row over to my van where my son was waiting and had been watching. "Who was that, Mom?" he asked me. "She was a mom too, trying to get home for her son's birthday party. She needed our help," I said. And I just knew he understood with that clarity children all seem to have.

We found a good spot and walked together towards the store. As we were walking, my son took my hand. It was the most touching gesture of all, and I realized more than ever that our children are always watching.

Kindness can become its own motive. We are made kind by being kind. --Eric Hoffer

Chocolate Insanity, by keymaker

It was a routine trip. We, my wife and I, are walking back home from the grocery store when we spontaneously decide to walk into a coffee shop. As my wife orders a small cup of coffee at the counter, I huddle our grocery bags under our table and get ready to share some hot coffee on this unusually cold day.

Just then, my eyes catch glimpse of a young woman in her thirties escorting a rather frail Mexican woman into the shop. Maybe it was the gentleness of their encounter or a vague familiarity with the circumstances, but something about them grabs my full attention. I immediately feel an impulse to do something for them. Anything. Unfortunately, before I can gather my wits, they leave the coffee shop without ordering anything!

When my wife returns, I tell her of my silent encounter. "But I missed the chance to do something for them," I say with the angst of a window shopper reading a "closed" sign on the front door.

Strangely enough, though, they come back into the same coffee shop five minutes later. Unbelievable! "This is my chance," I think out loud as my wife shares some creative possibilities. The two women order, take their table placard, and disappear out of our visual range.

After quickly finishing up the coffee, we walk up to the counter and ask the smiling cashier -- "What is your most popular dessert?" Chocolate Insanity Cake it is. With a childlike glee, my wife makes an unusual order. "Can I buy a piece for the two women that were just here before us? But don't tell 'em it was from us. Just give 'em this card," she says while taking out a smile card.

The cashier, a young girl in her early twenties, can't believe it. "Wow. Yes, of course." "Table number 38, wasn't it?" "Yeah, those two ladies that were just here." "Yeah, that's right."

She peeks at the smile card just enough to read the "smile" in big font, and attracts the attention of her co-worker. "Do you guys do this all the time?" she asks, rather lost for words. "Not all the time. Just whenever the heart calls for it," I respond with a natural smile. And I make an offer they simply can't refuse -- "I think we might have an extra smile card or two. Would you like one?" "Oh yeah, heck ya. We'll do something kind too."



And to think they hadn't even delivered the Chocolate Insanity Cake yet.

We, my wife and I, are people of modest means. Tonight, we were planning on doing our once-in-a-while dinner at a restaurant. But walking out from that coffee shop, both of us stand upright with our brown grocery bags in tow and say, "Let's eat at home today."

It's more filling to give a chocolate cake than it is to eat it.

"Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect." --Chief Seattle

Three Homeless Man, by mike

Talking about beautiful ... yesterday I was witness to such a heartwarming random act of kindness. It will forever be imprinted in my mind. I had to run downtown to help Bonnie out for a few hours (it was not part of my original plans for Monday).

On my bus ride back to the train station, we were in gridlock traffic right by the opera house. As I stare out my window a handsome young man (25ish to 30ish) walks out of the side door of the Opera House. It's cold and windy outside. He has on a heavy army-issued jacket and a scarf wrapped around his neck. As he's walking towards the bridge there are three homeless men with their cups, each sitting maybe 15 feet from one other. The young man goes to the first begger, digs into his pocket and pulls out some money - he says a few words to the first homeless man and puts the money in his cup.

The young man starts walking and now sees the second homeless begger. He pauses for a minute, digs into his pocket, says a few words and then gives this second man a candy bar. After it is accepted and acknowledged the young man moves on. Now he sees the third homeless man.

The third man is shivering and cold. The young man now stops by him, pauses for a brief second and removes his scarf and wraps it around the beggers neck in a very loving way and with a huge smile says a few words and moves on.

Well I must say I don't know who was smiling more ... me who witnessed this beautiful moment, the young man who gave so willingly from his heart, or the toothless begger who was grinning ear to ear and for a brief moment was feeling that someone genuinely cared and that he mattered. And just like any old crazy lady, my eyes filled with tears and I sent all those men a prayer filled with love and blessings.

"The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit."

~~ Nelson Henderson

An Unforgettable Birthday Gift, by Lakshmi

My daughter's birthday is May 29. She was 6 by then. As it was Monday, we preferred to celebrate it earlier, i.e. on Saturday 27 May. This was easier for me as I'm free on Saturdays. On Thursday the entire family was busy packing the presents and putting funny pins on them. I promised my little princess that I would wake her up early in the morning and distribute the presents to her classmates.

I woke up at 05:30. After I took a bath, I planned to wake her up ... but.... as I came out from the bathroom, I realized that an earthquake struck. I screamed to wake my husband up and asked him to carry my daughter; and ran out of our house. We were watching our house swaying from outside. It happened for just 3 minutes, but... the piano thumbed down, tiles came down, some cracks appeared on the wall.

Nevertheless, as we had planned, I went to my daughter's school at 08:00 but no one was there except the teacher who warned us to get back to our house as tsunami might come soon. I was stunned, and drove my car home. On the way home I heard a police cried out loud: "Stay calm, no tsunami, it's only issue!!"

Arrived at my house, I was wondering about the presents: to whom we should deliver?

After some discussion, we decided to give them to the children in hospital. Entering the hospital, I was really stunned. There were thousands of people bleeding and lying outside the rooms.

A boy came up with a bandage on his head. He stared at me with his questioning eyes as if he wanted to say: "Could I have one?" quickly I handed over one present to him. He received it then ran to his mom, shouted: "Mommy...there's a turtle pin on it!!" His eyes glittered. God, I can't ever forget his glittering eyes!!!

what a PRECIOUS PRESENT You've given me, my Lord! I cried silently while continuing to distribute the presents to other children.

An act of goodness is of itself an act of happiness. No reward coming after the event can compare with the sweet reward that went with it. ~~ Maurice Maeterlinck

Lessons From My Daddy, by millie

well, im millie, im 15 years old, and im going to tell you about my daddy =>

i dont see him much anymore, but i learnt so much when i was with him.

i remember one time, dad, my little brother and i were on our way back to sydney on a plane...we were stuck inside the plane for an hour and a half after we landed because some trailer wouldn't work. anyway, a little girl and her brother were sitting in front of us, they were about 4 or 5, and they were afraid of being stuck in the plane... the little girl was crying. So my dad started to do "magic" tricks, he had a yo-yo and was making it "dissappear" and making funny faces, in no time at all, my dad, me, and my little brother had a small audience, the people next to us and the people behind and in front.

the parents of the kids thanked us, and we haven't seen them since, but i learnt from my dad that day...Laughter is the best medicine.

"How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world." ~~ Shakespeare

Sandals at Train Station, by MS

Many people spend their New Years Eve, getting dressed up and dancing their way to midnight. We decided to do things a bit differently. Filling a backpack with clothes, shoes and other goodies, we headed to the railway station.

The first person we spotted was a 15-16 year old boy picking up discarded plastic bottles on the platform. We called him and started up a conversation, while discretely taking a look at his hands. Noticing his long fingernails, two of us began cutting them and telling why it was important to keep short nails (studies have shown that disease occurrence in the poor can be reduced by 30% by keeping short fingernails). We then gave him a chocolate bar, which made him look at us suspiciously. (In India, there is a fear that people cast spells on food and then lure children away). Finally after talking to him and eating some of the chocolate ourselves, he took the bar and began telling us his story.

After Ra ju's mother passed away, his father remarried. His stepmother did not treat Ra ju well. Among other things, as punishment, she would tie up Ra ju's arms and legs, pour melted jaggery on him and put him outside in the sand, where red ants would feast on the jaggery and subsequently bite Ra ju, covering his body with red marks. Unable to deal with the maltreatment, Ra ju ran away from home and has been living on the streets for 3 years, collecting and selling discarded plastic bottles.

When we met Ra ju, his clothes were torn and he wasn't wearing any shoes. One

quick look into our backpacks and we found what we were looking for. When we dressed him in a pair of Nike sandals, Rajus eyes and face completely lit up and his happiness was knew no words. Touched by our actions, he too wanted to do some service work. He joined us as we walked around and identified those who were truly in need in and around the station.

While doing service with us, a train came into the station. Promising to be back in a few minutes, he ran towards the train to collect plastic bottles from the compartments. When he came back to join us, somehow his smile was even bigger than before.

These sandals are so awesome. When I run, nothing hurts my feet. I can run so fast, that Im the first one in the compartments and I can quickly pick up all the bottles. Thank you so much!

"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself." --Ralph Waldo Emerson

10th Birthday, Car Washes, and \$62.82, *by JZ*

It was Neil's 10th birthday party. After a dozen close friends super-soaked each other with water and stuffed themselves with food and cake, this sunny August morning party would be about a different kind of fun -- fun of giving.

Today, we decided to "tag" people with free car washes. First up were the signs. Taking all the art supplies and glitter and fancy colored pens, the kids sprawled all over the ground to create couple of large "Free Car Wash" signs; no matter how hard they tried to color inside the lines, these signs had "we are kids" written all over it.



Soon enough, we gathered up the sponges, towels and soap and headed to the driveway.

"Free Car Wash," we practiced our cheer on practically every car that drove by. To get our act together, though, we rolled in one of our own cars on the driveway. "Ok -- who is the pre-rinse team?" It was a silly question because the kids were busy pre-rinsing each other; everyone is the rinsing team! Eventually, we split up into pre-rinse, soap, rinse, drying and glass-cleaning teams. "I wanna to do the tires," Art proclaims with a sponge that was three times the size of his right hand. "Ok, fine, Art, you do the tires." We hadn't thought of detailing, but why not?

"Wait, don't waste all that water," one of the adults said with a smile that knew that if he repeated that sentence he would be doused with water. Yet another adult professed the virtue of quality control to no avail. Adults really didn't know how to play with water. Couple of kids went to a nearby street intersection to dance and sing their newly copyrighted "car-wash is good for the soul" jingle.

Just as we were about to finish with our trial car, a Toyota Four Runner shows up with a 60-something-year-old driver named Arthur. We were all so excited for our "first customer" that Arthur was all smiles before he even rolled up his windows.

As all the kids scrubbed and cleaned and sprayed the car, Arthur asked, "So why are you doing free car washes?" "Oh, it's one of their birthdays and they thought of doing something kind for someone else. Here take a smile card and remember to pay-it-forward." "Jee, that's really nice." With a big glee, he watched his car turn clean; you just knew that he was going to reach home and say, "Son, guess what happened today?" By the time it was time for him to go, we were almost friends. Kindness has a funny way of turning strangers into friends. "Would you mind taking a photo with the kids?" "Oh, sure. Why not?" He flashed his smile card in the left hand, a big smile on his face and the kids huddled all around him with foamy sponges, dirty towels, and acrobatic poses!

Dave was waiting in line. Same drill. His 1991 Nissan Maxima, we all concluded, looked like a 1992 Maxima by the time we were done with it. And Dave also became our friend. With a smile-card, he took a photo with the kids.

And so on it went.

We washed about 6 cars in the hour we were out there. Throughout the hour, we yelled at each car with "Free" "free" "free" -- even at the postman's van, we flashed the banners in ways that would make Vanna White look wimpy. Parents took photos, kids made up songs, and neighbors came outside to cheer on the charade, and everyone was either drenched or would "accidentally" get drenched. :

Such car washes do cleanse your soul. We cleaned up quickly and got ready for round 2 of fun -- ice cream!



The plan was not only treat all the kids to ice-cream but have them treat random strangers to some ice-cream. So we all drove down to a nearby Baskin-Robbins and tried to explain the concept to the two high-school girls behind the counter. Understandably, they were confused. "You mean, you are going to pay for all the customers that come in?" "Yeah, just keep the tab running. See this guy, here ... it's his birthday and instead of giving him gifts, he and his friends are learning about generosity today." Neil was smiling, silently proud of doing this on his 10th birthday.

"Ok, so you want us to take orders from customers, give the ice-cream to the kids who will then give it to the customers and explain why it's free?" "Yup." The two girls, Annie and Rianna were happily elated to partake in a "never seen anyone do this before" adventure. Even their boss came outside to see what was going on. :

First up, a young, Russian couple who didn't speak fluent English. One of the kids went up to him and tried to explain it -- "It's my friends birthday and we want to make others smile, so this ice-cream is for you and this," he says by handing him a smile card. Happily, the buffed-up guy looks to the board and orders the most-expensive item -- a banana split. :

Two middle-school Chinese boys show up next with their allowance money in their hands. They try to refuse our offer but when you have kids saying, "We are trying to learn about generosity by treating you to ice-cream", even shy customers succumb. Not only that, they flashed their newly earned smile card and took a group photo with everyone.

Customers kept coming in, and each of the kids would take turns in coming up to them and trying to explain the pay-it-forward concept and just give these strangers ice-cream. It was absolutely the cutest thing. One woman said she couldn't accept it because she was getting a 35-dollar birthday cake for her son's 13th birthday but she was going to go home and share the story with them. Some customers, who were probably parents themselves, would take the time to interact with the kids, ask counter questions and tell them things like, "You know, I don't think anyone unknown to me has ever bought me anything. Thank you."

Annie and Rianna, the two girls behind the counter, were totally floored. They kept a whole stack of smile-cards themselves; "We're gonna give this to all our friends. I have never ever seen anyone do this ... or in fact, I have never even heard of anyone doing this. This is so cool." Both Annie and Rianna became our best buddies too. They said our total was \$62.82 but quite honestly, I felt like they must've given us some kind of a employee discount or something because Baskin-Robbins ice-cream never felt this affordable. :

Before we dispersed, we talked about small things that all kids could do. The kids chipped in their lofty, imaginative ideas : and with that energy, we went back to our cars. On the way back, Art -- the kid who was detailing the tires during the car wash -- tells me that it's the most fun he's had at a birthday party.

Me too, Art. I saved the \$62.82 receipt as Neil's 20th birthday gift. I'm sure he'll remember.

"I expect to pass through life but once. If, therefore, there be any kindness I can show, Or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, Let me do it now, as I shall not pass this way again." --Steven Grellet

Encouraging a Pirate, by Roger

My wife and I were at Disneyland taking the shuttle back to the hotel, when this boy - - I guess he must've been 4 or 5 years old - - gets on the shuttle bus with his pirate sword and eye patch.

He was looking real tough in his gear so I decided to yell out to every one on the bus, "Stand back! There is a pirate on the bus."

As fast as the words came out of my mouth the boy pulls off his eye patch, drops his swords, and yells back, "No, no, no. It's just me. I am a little kid, not a real pirate." Everyone on the bus had a great laugh.

The next day his mother saw me in the hotel lobby and stopped me to thank me. She told me that I had made her son's day and that he talked about scaring the big guy on the bus all that night.

P.S. I am 6'3" 280 lbs.

"We can do no great things; only small things with great love." --Mother Teresa

Twenty Bucks And A Smile, by Karen

I was shopping and next to me in the meat aisle, was a woman in a too-thin winter coat. Her little boy sat in the cart seat, quietly. I noticed his thin legs, older clothes that were too small for him and his shy smile. That cart was painfully empty. A small bottle of milk and a loaf of the cheapest bread was all that I could see.

As I mulled over my selection, I watched the woman out of the corner of my eye. She picked up -- and put down -- the same wrapped pot roast three times. Finally, she turned away, without any meat for her cart. Without thinking, I put my hand in my pocket to see if I had any change. To my astonishment, I pulled out a \$20 bill I didn't know I had.

I walked up to the woman, tapped her on the shoulder and said, "Excuse me, ma'am, but this just fell out of your coat pocket." She stared at the \$20 like it was a thousand dollar bill. Then we looked at each other. She knew that bill had not dropped out of her coat but I just said, "Have a nice day," smiled at her little boy and walked away.

At the next aisle, I peaked back and watched her walk over, pick up the roast and place it in her cart.

Since that day, I have joined Feed the Children and feel nothing but joy each time I write my check. I just ordered Smile cards and intend to use them to spread the joy around! After reading several more kindness stories, I decided that each payday, a fresh, crisp \$20 bill will be in my pocket and I will be on the lookout for my next 'victim.'

"The everyday kindness of the back roads more than makes up for the acts of greed in the headlines." --Charles Kuralt

A Rose, Not Lost in Translation -- by singlestep

A woman on a pavement with an armful of roses-to-sell and a tired expression in her eyes. She is surrounded by people who are very not buying roses tonight. We walk past her, and then walk back. I love flowers, but roses are far from being my favorite flowers. They are too-written about. Too poeticized. Too perfect. But this was not about the roses. We buy ten buds, some tightly wrapped up in themselves, others just starting to open. Give her one, he says, just loud enough so I can hear and she can't. I pull one-long stemmed beauty out of the bunch and give it to her for the pricelessness of a sudden smile.

We walk on newly-burdened, one down, nine roses to go. Do we hand them out to random strangers? Or wait to stumble across someone sad-faced and in-need-of-exactly-ten-minus-one roses? No- we decide instead to let the rest of the evening decide for us.



Walking along a brightly-lit street, lined with shop windows full of very nice and very unnecessary things, we turn impulsively onto a sidestreet. No more shop windows, only mostly darkened office buildings, except for one lighted door through

which we see an older woman with a duster in her hand and no idea that she is being watched as she works. She is cleaning up after a long day. Tomorrow people will walk through that door, perhaps they will notice the spotlessness, perhaps not.

The evening has made its decision. I cross the street and knock on the locked door. She opens it with a puzzled expression that deepens when I tell her that I just wanted to give her these flowers.' For you,' I say, 'because we were walking by and saw you working so hard and thought you might like to take these home with you.' Her face eases into a smile, she is looking at the roses in a way that makes them seem more beautiful than I'd thought them a mere minute ago. 'Thank You,' she says in her lilting, accented English.

And then we walk on. Unsure that she will be able to understand the little card hidden among the buds, but knowing without doubt that the spirit behind it was not lost in translation.

"We make a living by what we get, a life by what we give." □ Churchill

My First Anonymous Act of Kindness, by Motamasi

Per your invitation card instructions, I decided to do my first truly anonymous act of kindness as my baby-shower offering.

For Junior, I wanted to crochet a receiving blanket and I just learned Crocheting. Then I realized what both of you had asked for was an anonymous act of kindness. I decided to do it for someone unknown. I got white yarn and started crocheting with as much good wishes and blessings as possible for an unknown baby. It came out beautiful with a center area of shaded blue. And I myself felt a little bit attached to it by the time it was completed! But I remembered what you had asked for.

So I asked a friend to accompany me. She had no experience of this sort either. First we decided to go to a remote hospital in Oakland on a Saturday. But my car broke down and had to be in the shop over the weekend and my friend does not like to drive much and so we changed the plan to a community hospital in Santa Clara. Saturday morning she called to change the day to Sunday and Sunday morning she was still not comfortable to drive within Santa Clara. But she gracefully showed up on Sunday morning and handed me her car key. I don't adapt well to other cars and would normally avoid it. But today, THAT WAS IT.

My daughter-in-law wrote a nice note and we put it in the bag along with a Smile card. First we reached the reception area and asked for the volunteer desk. But I thought I should explain to the receptionist. She first told me that the volunteer area is closed on Sundays. Then I told her, "I have a niece who is pregnant. For her Baby Shower she does not want any gifts other than an anonymous act of kindness. I have crocheted this receiving blanket and wanted to offer it to a new born." She looked at it and asked, "You made it? Why don't you sell it?" I told her, "No, no, this is not for sale. This is for my niece. And she will be starting a new generation in our family. So I want to give it to a baby anonymously." She was touched and gave us all the information to PICU as well as Pediatric.

Both of us ended up at a door which required a key access only. The door opened up for us and a staff member asked us if we wanted to go in. So we went in, and went to PICU. Hospitals make me nervous, and I was aware of that -- so it was nice to have my friend with me.

We reached the nurse station. And approached a nurse. I repeated the same words. She was clearly blown away. She said "Oh my goodness! You made something with your hands that you want to give away? And this is absolutely beautiful ... I will have to decide which baby to give it to ... I don't have words ... This is not even mine ... And do you want to leave your name?" I told her, "No. It has to be anonymous."

She asked me when my niece was due, and I told her January. She gave her blessing: "May God bless her and her baby. I feel so good about this and the blanket is not even mine ... May God bless you and the mother and baby."

So your idea of having people gift you with an anonymous act of kindness has really affected so many people, including me. Thank you for asking for such a gift -- our blessings are with you, as are many others' who you may not even be aware of!

More kindness stories and ideas:
www.helpothers.org