

James A. Blatt
PSYCH-103
May 4, 2018

Three Acts of Human Kindness And Their [] Impact

- 1.) While in a Subway Sandwich Shop about a week ago I was ordering my sub behind a kindly sounding elderly man. When he reached the point of sale this man realized he had forgotten his wallet at home, and therefore could not pay. He instead offered to return for his sub, wallet in hand later. Having myself been gifted a \$500 gift card for Subway at Christmas, I recognized the opportunity to pay for this gentleman's Subway Meal for him. I offered to pay, and he graciously accepted. He thanked me profusely and wished me a great day.

I felt better about myself and I believe the man was genuinely grateful, even though the Subway Shop owner (Tracy) offered to remake the man's sub in the event it became soggy or otherwise not to his liking during the interval where he would retrieve his wallet. Therefore, Tracy was also happy because I saved her shop inventory by a man who had made an honest mistake: forgetting his wallet at home (and ordering a perishable food item unwittingly without immediate ability to pay).

- 2.) In my Statistics class there is a blind student named Michael Brown. I take every opportunity to converse with Michael because of twofold: 1) (by all appearances) he has few friends presumably because he doesn't or can't get out much and 2) his conception and perception of the world most of us enjoy with all 5 primary senses is completely different from anything I experience given he's blind.

Michael is an assiduous student who is always in attendance. He related to me he always does his best to achieve what I found out to (my shock) is his goal: to become a special education teacher. I sympathize with his inability to navigate the world with the gift of sight, which I found out Michael lost due to a brain tumor that pushed into, and destroyed, his optic nerve. I related to Michael that modern medicine holds promise and there is hope. It is my knowledge that big pharmaceutical and bio-medical engineering companies are working hard to cure and restore the previously incurable and irreversible, and they are making great strides to these ends. I

discovered about Michael that he copes with the world with a sharpened repartee, a sardonic wit, which I believe he developed upon becoming blind in his early adulthood. I have a strong hunch his becoming blind destroyed whatever naïve optimism he previously harbored about the world at large.

Michael embodies hard work and industry (despite his handicap) to achieve his goals no matter what. I feel good about engaging him in conversation and imparting upon him the collection of eclectic and worldly knowledge I have accumulated, some quite useful, some quite useless, and I look forward to hearing his perspective in conversation. In other words, before the 2018 semester is out I'll have made at a minimum a new Facebook friend (if he uses FB) in someone I have noticed most others "reject" (at worst, "ostracize") because of the limits of his handicap.

- 3.) While doing time in Lehigh County Prison I made a few friends who I keep loose tabs on today, generally through Facebook. One particular inmate, Jesse Stahler, has a history which includes popping positive for opiates 11 (yes, eleven) times while on parole before being incarcerated and punished for his severe drug addiction. It was his 12th time that did him in, which is when I met him and he was identified as a severely addicted individual. Like most addicts who start young, including me, he is defined as a lesser skilled worker despite having certain aptitudes and vocational inclinations in which he's got talent. More importantly to me, Jesse developed an interest in 12 step recovery the AA and NA way, as is pushed onto jailed addicts in Lehigh County Prison who choose to participate in the Drug and Alcohol Resistance Education (DARE) program of the prison.

I first wrote Jesse as part of my carrying the message of Narcotics Anonymous and then when in Allentown sometime last month I stopped in and showed up to visit him randomly. I learned from my first "bid" with Jesse that his ex-girlfriend refuses to bring his daughter to the prison and she has full custody, so generally Jesse gets no visits. His parents have also written him off. Knowing this I stopped in and leafed through the custody index and had a friendly visit with Jesse for about 45 minutes, which if anything got Jesse movement off the block and resulted in a lively discussion about our plans to stay clean (from all mind-changing, mood-altering substances) and become acceptable, responsible, productive citizens in society.

This was particularly useful to me because it is part of my twelfth-step work of carrying the message of 12-Step Based Recovery, thus helping me myself stay clean another day.