

Acts of Holiday Kindness

It's the holidays, how wonderful is that! We have so much to look forward to, so much to be grateful for, and so very much to get done.

This time of year means different things to different people. But for many it means that in addition to their usual routine, they have to get ready to host family and shop for gifts for those near and dear to them. It means there's extra baking to do and extra planning to execute. Maybe there's long distance travel involved.

Each of those individually should bring joy to our hearts because it means we're going to spend time with those we love, or we have the privilege of acknowledging special people with a token of our gratitude and our time. What can be more fulfilling than that?

The challenge comes when all that is happening at once, and we set high expectations for ourselves that the joy begins to elude us and anxiety takes its place.

Thoughts for the season

- Life is what happens while you're planning
- Leave room for serendipity

We all know that when you have a lot to do, you need a plan to guide you. So create the plan. Make a list of things to do. Discuss with your family who's handling what - - divide and conquer. But don't place such a laser focus on the things you have to do that you miss the moment you're currently in.

You know that pleasant elderly couple you see in your faith service each week that you know but only from the smile and hello you give them as you pass? Take a moment to pause from your thoughts and engage them in a two-minute conversation about their plans for the holiday. You're likely to learn something about them that will make the casual greeting more meaningful all year long.

You know the cashier at your local grocer who always has a smile on their face even when the line is long? Take a moment and let them know that the simple smile they always present genuinely makes a difference in your day. I guarantee the next time you walk through that line they'll remember you. Most people think many kind thoughts but don't take the 30 seconds to express them. When that happens, everyone loses.

If you make a conscious effort to allow for serendipity, for chance moments to be experienced and not passed by, you'll find a deeper joy that isn't owned by any one season. The gifts, the food, the gatherings, all wonderful in so many ways. But human kindness, experienced and shared, always wins out in our memories.

*This article is a reprint of a blog posted by
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