

## Let's All Become 'Daymakers'

Does the state of our modern world fill you with despair? Are you more or less permanently worried or depressed about all the endless conflicts all around the globe? It is so easy to slip into a state of helplessness whenever we watch, read, or listen to the world news, isn't it? So this month, I am going to suggest an antidote to our natural tendency - as we get a little older - to sit around and moan about modern life without taking any action of any kind to make our world a better place.

The following uplifting story is lifted lock stock and barrel from Alan Cohen's uplifting book *A Daily Dose of Sanity*. (Thank You Alan!) In his piece for April 29, Alan Cohen tells the true story of a hairdresser who was incredibly shocked to receive a letter from a regular client telling him that she had been planning to kill herself, but decided to get her hair done so that her body would look nice when her family found it. However, her hairdresser, David Wagner was so kind and complimentary about her during her appointment with him that she decided to live after all.

After receiving this letter, David Wagner decided to train all his staff not just to become good hairdressers, but to become 'Daymakers' who would always strive to make each of their client's day by saying something encouraging or complimentary to them as they did their hair, or by interacting with them in a warm, caring and compassionate way.

Reading this true story made a big impact on me. It got me thinking about how easy it would be for all of us to take on the role of being a 'Daymaker' in our own daily lives. We would hardly have to put ourselves out at all to do this. We would maybe just spend an extra minute or two asking those who served us in shops or cafes if their day was going well or when they were going to get a holiday. We could also decide to compliment at least one person each day on their hair, their smile, or on something they were wearing. Finally, we could make just a little more effort in our own homes to cherish and nurture our family members, rather than taking them for granted or speaking to them in an irritated or offhand way.

Of course, from time to time – maybe once a week might be about right – we might choose to go that extra mile for someone. For example, since reflecting

on Alan Cohen's uplifting story, I have made some fruit scones for an elderly widow whom I sit next to in church on Sundays, and only yesterday, I sent a bunch of flowers (via M&S, but other suppliers of flowers by post are available) to a dear friend whom I have not seen for a while just to let her know how much her friendship still meant to me.

Now what I love about the idea of adopting the role of 'Daymaker' is that it is basically cost free. Yet committing to becoming a 'Daymaker' seems to cheer me up no end. This is hardly surprising because way back in the 1970s, Allan Luks coined the term 'Helper's High' to describe the lovely feeling we get when we do something kind for others. Since then, researchers have even found that spending a small amount of money on others once a week for three weeks significantly lowered individuals' blood pressure. (For more information on this see David Hamilton's brand new book, *The Joyful Art of Actually Giving a F\*ck*)

The way I see it, becoming a Daymaker is great fun and fulfilling, even though it really does not take up too much time or cost us much in monetary terms. If you are more of an introvert than an extrovert and do not feel confident about making a stranger's day by engaging with them in a warm kind way, please do not worry. You can become a 'Daymaker' simply by meditating for a short while and then sending a friend or loved one a wave of supportive love energy at the end of your meditation.

I definitely do not see becoming a Daymaker as any kind of sacrificial path. I am no longer prepared to sacrifice too much of my own time and resources caring for others, especially when the thought of doing so just does not sit right with me. So, I think in order to keep up this Daymaker role in the longer-term, we definitely need to adopt an attitude of making what we do as fun and effortless as possible. We need to remind ourselves that the smallest acts of kindness can have a big impact on our world and that what goes around definitely comes around.

As we get older, we do have to make an effort not to let our horizons shrink too much. We really do not want to become someone who only talks about their latest health worries or constantly complains about the world not being what it used to be. (Whoops, I now hear myself doing that far too often!!) Becoming a Daymaker is just one approach to keeping our horizons more open. As we go about our daily life, we can simply keep our eyes open for little

opportunities to perform really small acts of kindness for friends and strangers alike. Doing this will then keep our horizons nice and wide as well as giving us a warm, fuzzy feeling in the centre of our chest.

What this world needs now is not more angry demonstrations and protests against all the terrible wars and injustices that never seem to cease. What the world needs now is a billion little acts of kindness to counterbalance so much anger and aggression all around the planet. We may not be big in number, but a huge wave of kindness that soothes and blesses the whole world has to start somewhere. Why not with us?

Peggy Foster

June 2024