

Quotes From a Servants Heart
Quotes and Stories on Serving Others
(and other thoughts on faith – expanded edition)
by Daniel Roth

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Chapter 1 - Quotes on Serving Others

I am often asked to speak or write on my experiences. I started "collecting" quotes to use in those speaking engagements and writings and thought it would be great to share those with others. If you have any favorite quotes on serving (or have any corrections to the ones below) please e-mail to me at rothdanielf@gmail.com and I will include in a later edition.

Abigail Van Buren

alias for Pauline Esther Phillips (1918 – 2013), was an American advice columnist and radio show host who began the “Dear Abby” column in 1956.

- The best index to a person’s character is how he treats people who can’t do him any good, and how he treats people who can’t fight back.

Abraham Lincoln

(1809 – 1865) was the 16th President of the United States serving from March 1861 until his assassination in April 1865.

- To ease another's heartache is to forget one's own.
- The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just.
- You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.
- You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.
- I am not bound to win, but I am bound to be true. I am not bound to succeed, but I am bound to live up to what light I have.

African Proverb

- Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped.

Al Anon Daily Devotional

a worldwide fellowship that offers a program of recovery for the families and friends of alcoholics.

- There is nothing so frustrating as expecting something from someone who has nothing to give.

Albert Einstein

(1879 – 1955) was a German-born theoretical physicist who developed the general theory of relativity.

- Setting an example is not the main means of influencing others; it is the only means.
- The world is a dangerous place to live, not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it.
- The value of a man resides in what he gives and not in what he is capable of receiving

- There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a mirade. The other is as though everything is a mirade.
- Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted.
- When the solution is simple, God is answering.
- Try not to become a man of success but rather try to become a man of value.
- Great spirits have always found violent opposition from mediocrities. The latter cannot understand it when a man does not thoughtlessly submit to hereditary prejudices but honestly and courageously uses his intelligence.
- The search for truth is more precious than its possession.
- Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds.
- The ideals that have lighted my way and time after time have given me new courage to face life cheerfully, have been Kindness, Beauty and Truth.
- Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving.
- Few are those who see with their own eyes and feel with their own hearts.
- Few people are capable of expressing with equanimity opinions which differ from the prejudices of their social environment. Most people are even incapable of forming such opinions.
- Everybody is a genius but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.

Albert Schweitzer

(1875 – 1965) German—and later French—theologian, organist, philosopher, physician, and medical missionary in Africa, also known for his interpretive life of Jesus.

- I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will really be happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.

Alexandra Stoddard – Contemporary Philosopher, Author, Interior Designer and Speaker.

- What we do today, right now, will have an accumulated effect on all our tomorrows.

Alice Duer Miller

(1874 – 1942) was an American writer and poet.

- If it's very painful for you to criticize your friends – you're safe doing it. But if you take the slightest pleasure in it, that's the time to hold your tongue.

Alice M. Swaim

(1911- 1996) American poet, born in Scotland.

- Courage is not the towering oak that sees storms come and go; it is the fragile blossom that opens in the snow.

Alice Walker

Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist and poet.

- The most important question in the world is "Why is the child crying?"

Andrew Jackson

(1767 – 1845) Seventh President of the United States.

- One man with courage makes a majority.

Anne Frank

(1929 – 1945) Jewish victim of the holocaust. Her wartime diary “The Diary of a Young Girl” is one of the most read books ever.

- How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.
- Everyone has inside of him a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!

Annette Funicello

(1942-2013) American actress and singer. One of the original Mousketeers. Died from complications of multiple sclerosis.

- Life does not have to be perfect to be wonderful.

Anonymous

if you know the source please e-mail me at rothdanielf@gmail.com.

- We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors but they all have to learn to live in the same box.

- Our kids are worth whatever it takes.
- Sometimes I want to ask God why he allows injustice in the world when He could do something about it. But I'm afraid He might just ask me the same question.
- The kids who need the most love will ask for it in the most unloving of ways.
- Your life is your message to the world. Make sure it's inspiring.
- Children are wired for hands-on, full-contact, self-selected interaction with the world --- we call this PLAY.
- Your job is not to judge. Your job is not to figure out if someone deserves something. Your job is to lift the fallen, to restore the broken, and to heal the hurting.
- Live your life in such a way that the Westboro Baptist Church will want to picket your funeral.
- You are confined only by the walls you build yourself.
- Today is full of possible.
- Speak in such a way that others love to listen to you. Listen in such a way that others love to speak to you.
- Be the reason someone smiles today.
- I am so lucky to work with children. No matter how bad I look or feel, whenever I walk into work my kids shower me with hugs, tell me I look pretty, and say "I love you!" The best part: they really mean it.
- We talk so much about wanting to leave a better planet to our kids, that we forget about leaving better kids to this planet. Educate your children! Say NO to them every once in a while.
- If we are going to err, let's err on the side of unconditional love and grace.
- The world doesn't want to be saved. It wants to be loved. (That's how you save it.)
- Compassion is not compassion without action – it's just feeling sorry for someone.
- Every child you encounter is a divine appointment.
- Each week, millions and millions of upper middle class American citizens put on expensive dress clothes, and load themselves into SUV's and drive past homeless shelters, orphanages, prisons, missions, and halfway houses on their way to a very expensive and nice church, where somebody tell them to how to be more like Jesus.
- The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.
- Your smile may be the only one a child sees today. Smile a lot.

- When we do things out of great love, rather than great expectation, more comes back to us that we could have ever imagined.
 - Don't refuse to go on an occasional wild goose chase. That's what wild geese are for.
 - It takes a big heart to help shape little minds.
 - I will let them be little, fill their hearts with laughter, help them grow wings, nurture their sense of wonder, inspire them to believe and love them like there is no tomorrow.
 - I'm going to succeed because I'm crazy enough to think I can.
 - The life you lead is the lesson you teach.
 - My friend, If I could give you one thing, I would wish for you the ability to see yourself as others see you. They you would realize what a truly special person you are.
 - A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
 - Do you really want Jesus to say: For I was jobless and you told me to "get a job"; I was homeless, and you called me a dirty hippie; I was destitute and you said unto me, "Helping you would only encourage a big government nanny state. Be patient for surely my riches will trickle down to you.'?
 - Your beliefs don't make you a better person, your behavior does.
 - Speak the truth even if your voice shakes.
 - Courage does not always roar. Sometimes it's the quiet voice at the end of the day saying. I will try again tomorrow.
 - Let your smile change the world but don't let the world change your smile.
 - Sometimes it is better to be kind than to be right. We do not need an intelligent mind that speaks, but a patient heart that listens.
 - If your theology doesn't lead you to love people more, you should question your theology.
 - Sometimes people don't want to hear the truth because they don't want their illusions destroyed.
 - I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that, then I realized I am somebody.
- A.A. Milne (1882-1956) English author best known for his books about Winnie-the-Pooh.
- You can't stay in your corner of the forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes.

Alvin Price

Contemporary author specializing in child development.

- Parents need to fill a child's bucket of self-esteem so high that the rest of the world can't poke enough holes to drain it dry.

Antonio Smith

Pastor, Church Planter, Published Author & Poet, Award Winning Songwriter, Leader Grower, and Motivational Speaker.

- Enjoy the little things in life, for one day you may look back and realize they were the big things.

Aristotle

(384 – 322 BC) Greek Philosopher.

- We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.

Audre Lorde

(1934 – 1992) Caribbean-American writer, feminist and civil rights activist.

- When I dare to be powerful - to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.

Balthasar Gracian

(1601 – 1658) Spanish Jesuit and prose writer and philosopher.

- Be content to act, and leave the talking to others.

Barbara Colorose

Author of the international best seller "Kids Are Worth It!".

- If kids come to us from strong, healthy functioning families, it makes our job easier. If they do not come to us from strong, healthy, functioning families, it makes our job more important.

Ben Sweetland

Author of "Grow Rich While You Sleep".

- We cannot hold a torch to light another's path without brightening our own.

Benjamin Disraeli

(1804 – 1881) British Conservative politician, writer and aristocrat who was twice elected Prime Minister.

- Action may not always bring happiness; but there is not happiness without action.

Benjamin Franklin

(1706 – 1790) One of the founding fathers of the United States. Leading author, printer, political theorist, politician, postmaster, scientist, inventor, civic activist, statesman and diplomat.

- Well done is better than well said.

Bill Cosby

(1937 -) American comedian, actor, author and activist.

- I don't know the key to success, but the key to failure is trying to please everybody.

Billy Graham

(1918 -) American evangelical Christian evangelist.

- Courage is contagious. When a brave man takes a stand, the spines of others are stiffened.

Bob Marley

(1945 – 1981) Jamaican reggae singer-songwriter.

- Some people feel the rain. Other just get wet.

Bob Talbert

(1936 – 1999) American Newspaper Columnist.

- Teaching kids to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is best.

Booker T. Washington

(1856 -1915) African-American educator, author, orator and presidential advisor. Born into slavery.

- You can't hold a man down without staying down with him.

Brian Koslow

Author and Inspirational Speaker.

- To increase your effectiveness, make your emotions subordinate to your commitments.

C.S. Lewis

(1898 – 1963) novelist, poet, academic, lay theologian and Christian apologist.

- If you do one good deed your reward usually is to be set to do another and harder and better one.

Carl Jung

(1875 – 1961) Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist.

- One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the child.

Carl W. Buechner

(1926 -) Presbyterian minister.

- They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.

Charles Darwin.

- If the misery of the poor be caused not by the laws of nature, but by our institutions, great is our sin.

Charles Dickens

(1812 – 1870) was an English writer and social critic.

- No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of another.

Chinese Proverb

- Be not afraid of growing slowly. Be afraid only of standing still.
- The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.

Cory Booker

(1971-) Mayor of Newark, NJ.

- Before you speak to me about your religion, first show it to me in how you treat other people; Before you tell me how much you love your God, show me how much you love all his children; Before you preach to me of your passion for your faith, teach me about it through your compassion for your

neighbors. In the end, I'm not as interested in what you have to tell or sell as in how you chose to live and give.

Chuck Brodsky

(1960 -) American musician and singer-songwriter.

- We are each other's angels, we meet when it is time.

Confucius

(551 – 479 BC) Chinese teacher, editor, politician and philosopher.

- Our greatest glory is not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.
- To know what is right and not do it is the worst cowardice.

Dag Hjalmar Agné Carl Hammarskjöld

Swedish diplomat economist and author. The second Secretary-General of the United Nations.

- It was when Lucifer first congratulated himself upon his angelic behavior that he became the tool of evil.

Daniel J. Boorstin

(1914 – 2004) American historian, professor, attorney and writer.

- The greatest obstacle to discovery is not ignorance - it is the illusion of knowledge.

Daniel Roth

(1964 -)

- You are perfectly made and perfectly prepared for whatever God has planned for you.
- It's easy to be nice to the popular, beautiful people. Everyone wants to wear a rose in their lapel. Everyone wants to be part of the "in" crowd. But Jesus didn't hang out with the roses and carnations; he hung out with the dandelions.
- The child who never cries is more troubling than the one that always does. At least the one crying has some expectation of their needs being met.
- We aren't perfect but we are present. Sometimes showing up is enough.
- It's hard to hate up close.

Doc Childre

American human development specialist.

- An aware person loves all children he or she meets and interacts with for you are a caretaker for those moments in time.

Don Francisco

(1946 -) American Christian singer, songwriter and musician.

- In the hand that is moved by the spirit is the proof of a God who is there.

Dr. Suess

(1904 – 1991) Theodor Seuss Geisel was an American writer, poet, and cartoonist most widely known for his rhyming children's books.

- Until someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.
- I meant what I said and I said what I meant an elephants loyal 100%.
- Today you are you that is truer than true. There is no one alive youer than you.
- Don't cry because it's over, smile because it happened.
- A person's a person, no matter how small.
- It's a troublesome world. All the people who're in it are troubled with troubles almost every minute. You ought to be thankful. A whole heaping lot. For the places and people you're lucky you're not.
- Today was good. Today was fun. Tomorrow is another one.
- Kid, you'll move mountains! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So..... get on your way!
- Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.

E. H. Chapin

(1814 – 1880) American preacher and editor of the Christian Leader.

- Never does the human soul appear so strong as when it foregoes revenge, and dares forgive an injury.
- Every action of our lives touches on some chord that will vibrate in eternity.

Ellen DeGeneres

Comedian, actor, talk show host.

- I stand for honesty, equality, kindness, compassion, treating people the way you want to be treated, and helping those in need. To me, those are traditional values.

Edmund Burke

(1729 – 1777) Irish statesman, author, orator, political theorist and philosopher.

- Nobody makes a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could do only a little.
- The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

Elbert Hubbard

(1856 – 1915) American writer, publisher, artist and philosopher.

- God will not look you over for medal, degrees or diplomas, but for scars .
- One machine can do the work of fifty ordinary men. No machine can do the work of one extraordinary man.
- Many a man's reputation would not know his character if they met on the street.

Eleanor Powell

(1912 – 1982) American film actress and dancer of the 1930s and 1940s.

- What we are is God's gift to us. What we become is our gift to God.

Eleanor Roosevelt

(1884 – 1962) First Lady and human rights activist.

- The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.

Elie Wiesel

(1928-) Romanian born Jewish-American and political activist and holocaust survivor.

- Take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim.

Elizabeth Kenny

(1880 – 1952) Australian nurse who promoted new methods of rehabilitation that later became the foundation of physical therapy.

- He who angers you, conquers you.

Epictetus

(55 -135) Great sage and Stoic philosopher.

- Difficulties are things that show what men are.

Erica Jong

(1942-) American author and teacher.

- Everyone has talent. What is rare is the courage to follow that talent to the dark place where it leads.

Ernest Fitzgerald

(1925 – 2001) American Methodist Bishop.

- Happiness is a deep sense of inner peace that comes when they believe their lives have meaning and that they are making a difference for good in the world.

Ernest Hemingway

(1899 – 1961) American author and journalist.

- Never mistake motion for action.

Fr. Jerome Cummings

- Love is shown in your deeds, not in your words.

Frank A. Clark

(1860 – 1936) American lawyer and politician.

- There's nothing that can help you understand your beliefs more than trying to explain them to an inquisitive child.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

(1882 – 1945) 32nd President of the United States.

- The test of our progress is not whether we add more to those who have much; it is whether we provide for those who have too little.

Fred "Mr" Rogers

(1928 – 2003) American educator, minister, songwriter, author and television host; most famous for creating and hosting Mister Rogers Neighborhood.

- We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say "It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem." Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.

Fred Reed

(1945 -) Writer for The Washington Times, The American Conservative and LewRockwell.com.

- If you want to respect yourself, do something you will respect yourself for doing.

Frederick Collins

(1869 – 1952) Early experimenter in wireless telephony.

- There are two types of people - those who come into a room and say, "Well, here I am," and those who come into a room and say, "Ah, there you are."

G. K. Chesterton

(1874 – 1936) English writer, lay theologian, poet and dramatist.

- Love means to love that which is unlovable; or it is no virtue at all.

Garrison Keillor

(1942 -) American author, humorist and storyteller.

- Nothing you do for children is ever wasted. They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks, but what we do for them is never wasted.

General Norman Schwarzkopf Jr

(1934 – 2012) United States Army General who led the coalition forces in the Persian Gulf War.

- The truth of the matter is that you always know the right thing to do; the hard part is doing it

George Bernard Shaw

(1856 – 1960) Irish Playwright.

- The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them; that's the essence of inhumanity.

George Carlin

(1937 – 2008) American comedian, writer and social critic.

- Those who dance are considered insane by those who can't hear the music.

George Washington Carver

(1864 – 1963) American scientist, educator and inventor who was born into slavery.

- How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in like you will have been all of these

Gordon Neufeld

developmental psychologist and author.

- Children learn best when they like their teacher and they think their teacher likes them.

Harper Lee

(1926 -) American novelist best known for "To Kill a Mockingbird".

- People generally see what they look for, and hear what they listen for.

Harry Chapin

(1942 – 1981) American Folk Singer-Songwriter and Humanitarian.

- I know when a child is hurting that silence can be wrong, I know that when old folks are helpless I can't just pass along and I know when someone's hurting I can't just sing this song and when I hear someone crying I can't just wonder who that it could be.
- I am a greedy, selfish bastard. I want the fact that I existed to mean something.
- When in doubt, do something
- Good dreams don't come cheap, you've got to pay for them and if you just dream when your asleep there is no way for them to come alive... to survive.
- He sang from his heart and he sang from his soul. He did not know how well he sang it just made him whole.

Harry S Truman

(1884 – 1972) 33rd President of the United States of America

- I studied the lives of great men and famous women, and I found that the men and the women who got to the top were those who did the jobs they had in hand, with everything they had of energy and enthusiasm and hard work.

Harvey Mackay

(1932 -) American businessman and columnist.

- Failure is an attitude, not an outcome.

Helen Keller

(1880 – 1968) American author, activist and lecturer. She was the first deaf blind person to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree.

- I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something.
- No pessimist ever discovered the secret of the stars, or sailed to an uncharted land, or opened a new doorway for the human spirit.
- The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen, nor touched but are felt in the heart.
- True happiness...is not attained through self-gratification, but through fidelity to a worthy purpose.
- The most pathetic person in the world is someone who has sight but has no vision.
- To keep our faces toward change, and behave like free spirits in the presence of fate, is strength undefeatable.
- Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadows.
- Although the world is very full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.
- Faith is the strength by which a shattered world shall emerge into the light.

Henry Drummond

(1786 – 1860) English banker, politician and writer.

- You will find as you look back upon your life that the moments when you have really lived are the moments when you have done things in the spirit of love.

Henry Ford

(1863 – 1947) American Industrialist and founder of the Ford Motor Company.

- Whether you think you can, or that you can't, you're usually right.

Henry VanDyke

(1852 – 1933) American author, educator and clergyman.

- There is a loftier ambition than merely to stand high in the world. It is to stoop down and lift mankind a little higher.

Hugh Mulligan

Associated Press reporter.

- What I do today is important because I am exchanging a day of my life for it.

J.D. Salinger

(1919 – 2010) American author most famous for “The Catcher in the Rye”.

- The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one.

James Garfield

(1831 – 1881) 20th President of the United States.

- Be fit for more than the thing you are now doing. Let everyone know that you have a reserve in yourself; that you have more power than you are now using. If you are not too large for the place you occupy, you are too small for it.

James Ramsey Ullman

(1907 – 1971) American author and mountaineer.

- To know a little less and to understand a little more: that, it seems to me, is our greatest need.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

(1749 – 1832) German writer and politician.

- Treat people as if they were what they ought to be, and you help them to become what they are capable of being

Jane Goodall

Primatologist, Anthropologist

- What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make

John Dewey

(1859 – 1952) American philosopher who was influential in educational and social reform.

- What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children. Any other Idea for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon it destroys our democracy

John F. Kennedy

(1917 – 1963) 35th President of the United States.

- If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.

John Harrigan

British film director, producer, screenwriter, actor and occultist

- People need loving the most when they deserve it the least

John Lennon

(1940 – 1980) English musician and one of the Beatles.

- When I was five years old, my mother told me that happiness was the key to life. When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down 'happy'. They told me I didn't understand the assignment, and I told them they didn't understand life.

John Wesley

(1703 – 1791) Anglican cleric and found of the United Methodist Church

- Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, as long as you can

Kathy Davis

(1956 -) American politician and entrepreneur

- A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove . . . but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child.

Krishnamurti

In the image of Krishna

- It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society.

Lenore Skenazy

(1959 -) American columnist and reality show host.

- Play turns out to be so stunningly essential to childhood, it's like love, sunshine, and broccoli all juiced together.

Leo Rosten

(1908 – 1997) Teacher, academic and humorist.

- I've learned that it is the weak who are cruel, and that gentleness is to be expected only from the strong

Loretta Gierzatis

American educator and writer.

- If someone listens, or stretches out a hand, or whispers a kind word of encouragement, or attempts to understand a lonely person, extraordinary things begin to happen.

L. R. Knost

Child development researcher.

- It's not our job to toughen our children to face a cruel and heartless world. It's our job to raise children who will make the world a little less cruel and heartless.

Mahatma Gandhi

(1869 – 1948)

- There are people in the world so hungry, that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread
- You must be the change you wish to see in the world.

Margery Williams

(1884 – 1944) English-American author most famous for The Velveteen Rabbit.

- “Real isn’t how you are made” said the Skin Horse. “It’s a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become real.

Marianne Williamson

(1952 -) Spiritual teacher, author and lecturer.

- Children are happy because they don’t have a file in their minds called “All the Things That Could Go Wrong”

Martin Luther King Jr.

(1929 – 1968) American pastor, activist, humanitarian and leader of the civil rights movement

- Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter
- I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear.
- An individual has not started living until he/she can rise above the narrow confines of his/her individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity
- Anybody can serve. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.
- Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.
- True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it is not haphazard and superficial. It comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring.
- A religion true to its nature must also be concerned about man’s social conditions... Any religion that professes to be concerned with the souls of men and is not concerned with the slums that damn them, the economic conditions that strangle them, and the social conditions that cripple them is a dry-as-dust religion.
- Nonviolence means avoiding not only external physical violence but also internal violence of spirit. You not only refuse to shoot a man, but you refuse to hate him.

Miguel O Flynn

- If you want to be happy for an hour, take a nap. If you want to be happy for a day, go fishing If you want to be happy for a year, inherit a fortune If you want to be happy for a lifetime, help others

Mother Teresa

(1910 – 1997) Founder of the Missionaries of Charity serving the poorest of the poor all over the globe.

- It is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing. It is not how much we give, but how much love we put in the giving
- We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean. But if that drop was not in the ocean, I think the ocean would be less because of that missing drop. I do not agree with the big way of doing things.
- Do not wait for leaders. Do it alone, person to person
- If you can't feed a hundred people then feed just one
- At the end of our lives, we will not be judged by how many diplomas we have received, how much money we have made or how many great things we have done. We will be judged by "I was hungry and you gave me to eat. I was naked and you clothed me. I was homeless and you took me in."
- In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love.

Nelson Henderson

(1864 – 1943)

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

Norman MacEwan

(1881 – 1953) Senior Commander of the Royal Air Force.

- We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.

Old Indian saying.

- When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice

Pam Lee

- You can't teach children to behave better by making them feel worse. When children feel better, they behave better.

Pope Francis

(1936 -) 266th Pope of the Catholic Church.

- Today we also have to say “thou shalt not” to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills.... I bet the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor.
- In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, its incomprehensible how there can be so many hungry children, so many children without an education, so many poor.
- I prefer a church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.

Ratatouille

(2007 Disney Movie)

- You must be imaginative, strong hearted. You must try things that may not work, and you must not let anyone define your limits because of where you came from. Your only limit is your soul.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

(1803 – 1882) American essayist, lecturer and poet.

- To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment.

Ralph W. Stockman

(1889 – 1970) Senior Pastor of Christ Church in New York City

- The test of courage is when we are in the minority; the test of tolerance is when we are in the majority.

Rebecca Falls

- One of the most valuable things we can do to heal one another is listen to each other's stories

Richelle E. Goodrich

American poet and author.

- Don't ever give up. Don't ever give in. Don't ever stop trying. Don't ever sell out. And if you find yourself succumbing to one of the above for a brief moment, pick yourself up, brush yourself off, whisper a prayer, and start where you left off. But never, ever, ever give up
- There are many who don't wish to sleep for fear of nightmares. Sadly, there are many who don't wish to wake for the same fear.

- There are far too many silent sufferers. Not because they don't yearn to reach out, but because they've tried and found no one who cares.
- Nothing in this world compares to the comfort and security of having someone just hold your hand.
- Service is a smile. It is an acknowledging wave, a reaching handshake, a friendly wink, and a warm hug. It's these simple acts that matter most, because the greatest service to a human soul has always been the kindness of recognition.

Robert Brault

American freelance writer.

- If you haven't time to respond to a tug at your pants leg, your schedule is too crowded.

Robert F. Kennedy

(1925 – 1968) American politician.

- It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope

Robert Fulghum

(1937 -) American author

- I don't want your sympathy for the needs of humanity, I want your muscle

Ronald Reagan

(1911 – 2004) 40th President of the United States

- I'm convinced more than ever that man finds liberation only when he binds himself to God and commits himself to his fellow man

Rumi

(1207 – 1273) Persian poet, theologian and Sufi mystic.

- Raise your Words, not your Voice. It is the Rain that grows Flowers, not Thunder.

Sai Baba

(1838? – 1918) Indian guru, yogi and fakir

- Before you speak ask yourself, is it kind, is it necessary, is it true, does it improve on the silence?

Saint Matthew

one of the twelve apostles of Jesus and one of the four Evangelists

- Whatever you did not do for one of the least among you, you did not do for me.

Shel Silverstien

(1930 – 1999) American poet, cartoonist, and author of children's books

- Listen to the mustn'ts child. Listen to the don'ts. Listen to the shouldn't haves, the impossibles, the wont's. Listen to the never have's, then listen close to me. Anything can happen child. Anything can be

Stephen Colbert

(1964 -) American political satirist, writer, comedian and television host.

- If this is going to be a Christian nation that doesn't help the poor, either we have to pretend that Jesus was just as selfish as we are, or we've got to acknowledge that He commanded us to love the poor and serve the needy without condition and then admit that we just don't want to do it

Theodore Roosevelt

(1858 – 1919) 26th President of the United States

- Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

Toni Schutta

Parenting coach

- When you compliment your children, praise them for inner qualities such as kindness, honesty, and perseverance so they will strive to contribute to the world in meaningful ways.

Walt Disney

(1901 – 1966) American business magnate, animator, cartoonist, producer, director, screenwriter and philanthropist

- You may not realize it when it happens, but a kick in the teeth may be the best thing in the world for you.
- All the world is made up faith, and trust, and pixie dust.

- Laughter is timeless, imagination has no age, and dreams are forever.

Whitney Houston

(1963 – 2012) Actress, Singer

- I believe the children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside
- Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be.

William Blum

(1933-) American author, historian and critic of U.S. foreign policy.

- The "trickle-down" theory: The principle that the poor, who must subsist on table scraps dropped by the rich, can best be served by giving the rich bigger meals.

Chapter 2 - Introduction

"Until someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not." - Theodore Giesel (Dr. Suess)

We live in a dangerous, scary world. Most kids are lucky enough to be sheltered from the worst of it. Unfortunately, for far too many the world is a confusing and scary place. This book is dedicated to the kids of the world who are marginalized and hurting, for any reason, and to the ordinary people who give their own time and energy to try to serve them. If we want to change the direction of society, we all need to step in and do our part. It can not be acceptable for one child to fall through the cracks.

"I don't want your sympathy for the needs of humanity, I want your muscle." - Robert Folghum (author of Everything I Need to Know I learnt in Kindergarten)

The statistics can't be ignored. According to DoSomething.org (www.dosomething.org/tipsandtools/1-facts-about-child-abuse) 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys will be sexually abused before age 17.

Child Help (www.childhelp.org) reports these further disturbing statistics:

- A report of child abuse is made every 10 seconds
- Almost five children die every day as a result of child abuse

- It is estimated that 60-85% of child fatalities due to maltreatment are not recorded as such on the death certificates
- Over 60% of people in drug rehabilitation centers reported being abused or neglected as a child
- About 30% of abused and neglected children will later abuse their own children, continuing the horrible cycle of abuse.
- About 80% of 21 year olds that were abused as children met criteria for at least one psychological disorder.
- Abused children are 25% more likely to experience teen pregnancy.
- Abused teens are 3 times less likely to practice safe sex, putting them at greater risk for STDs.

The statistics clearly tell us that you don't need to work in a crisis shelter to encounter kids in need. If you are a Sunday school teacher, day care worker, camp counselor, scout leader or active in any community group where children are present you, most likely, encounter children in crisis. While there is no magic solution to all the issues we can do our best to serve the kids God puts in our path for the times they are with us.

"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say 'It's not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes." - Fred "Mr." Rogers

We need to want for every child what we want for our own children. All our success' and failures are interrelated. When we fail any child we fail society and we fail our own children's future. John Dewey put it clearly when he said "What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all it's children. Any other Idea for our schools is narrow and unlovely; acted upon it destroys our democracy."

This book is a collection of stories and lessons learned in over 20 years of dealing with God's children; many of them broken and hurting. These stories have grown out of the time I spent as a counselor at a camp for children with special needs, a Sunday School teacher and, most recently, helping at a crisis shelter, providing temporary respite for preschool children.

This book is not for the professional psychologist but for the everyday person trying to serve God's children they best they can. Hopefully it will give some ideas and perspective when dealing with kids that don't react, for whatever reason, in ways we are familiar with.

Dandelions are my favorite flower. Whenever I see a lawn chemical truck, or have to mow over new dandelion flowers I feel a little sad. They remind me of Trisha.

I am a counselor at a camp for children with special needs and one of my goals is to talk to each of the campers every day. It has always been a policy of our camp to take any campers that would have trouble adapting to another camp. This means when you approach a new camper you are never sure what kind of response you will receive. We have had children who are deaf, blind, mute, and all different levels of physical, mental, and emotional handicaps. But no matter what challenges each camper has brought we have always adapted enough to make it a week of growth for everyone.

This year I noticed a new camper sitting with the group, but not interacting. I walked up and said "Hi, I'm Dan, what's your name?". She didn't answer but proudly showed me her name tag. I responded "Hi Trisha, I'm glad you're here!"

Well, I must have been the first one to talk to her because from that moment on whenever Trisha saw me she was right by my side. She ate with us, went on hikes with us, and when we sat down for a rest she was always right there.

Trisha was a cute little girl who happens to have Cerebral Palsy. She could walk, with a severe limp, and she could not talk. She had trouble with her muscle control and sometimes ate sloppily. But she could communicate with her smile and her attitude. Every time you saw her there was a huge smile on her face. She was determined not to let the cerebral palsy hold her back.

She wanted to do everything. We had a 3/4 mile walk to the dining hall and she insisted that she walk it. She did not want to take the bus we used to transport those who had trouble with that distance. She insisted on walking, even when she was in severe pain.

On the first day of camp I saw Trisha struggle to bend over and pick up a yellow dandelion flower. My initial reaction was, we are in the woods, its spring, there are all kinds of beautiful wild flowers blooming.

Why would she want a dandelion?

She took the yellow weed and put it in her coat pocket. After the week was over and parents were coming to pick the children up, I saw Trisha crying. I walked over to her, I was going to tell her that we would see her next year. But what she did when I approached her was more powerful than any words I could have used. She reached into her pocket, removed her prized, and by now slightly mutilated, dandelion, and gave it to me.

Even if I had wanted to I could not have responded, I was choked up with tears. I took the dandelion stuck it in my shirt pocket with the flower sticking out.

To me it was more beautiful than any rose or carnation could have been.

Why do I love dandelions? Because they remind me of Trisha and of all the other dandelions of the world. We all know them, and at times we have probably been one. They are the people who, when you see them, it is easy to turn your head and walk away. They are used to being ignored, and don't expect attention. They are the handicapped, the old, the unpopular, the hurting.

It's easy to be nice to the popular, beautiful people. Everyone wants to wear a rose in their lapel. Everyone wants to be part of the "in" crowd. But Jesus didn't hang out with the roses and carnations, he hung out with the dandelions.

Let's see if today we can put dandelions in our lapels.

How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in like you will have been all of these. - George Washington Carver

Chapter 4 - My New Favorite Place

I have new favorite place. It's a row house in York city that also serves as a crisis shelter for kids up to age six. It is a safe place for kids that don't always come from safe places. My time there has been (and continues to be) an incredible experience and I thank God that he lets me be part of the team serving these kids. Many preconceived notions I had of the families served (97% of the families live below the poverty level), have been stretched and altered. Because of the center I am much less judgmental of other's situations.

I remember one of my first weekends working; I was playing with a group of 3 and 4 year olds. I jokingly scooped one of the kids up in my arms, expecting him to laugh and try roll out of my arms. Instead he stopped laughing and snuggled in close. I held him a little tighter. The room grew quiet. I looked down and the other kids had stopped playing and were lined up waiting their turn. At that moment I realized that, more than anything, these kids wanted safe arms to hold them; someone to say "your special and safe with me". I also realized that the line of kids in front of me represented a long line of kids; a line that would run down the steps, out the door and around the corner. In a larger sense they represent all of God's kids marginalized by society, all the kids that only want a safe place to sleep and calm arms to hold them. I am grateful to God that He occasionally lets me be those arms.

My time serving these kids has made me more aware of their situations. One morning I was serving the children breakfast. I brought out the plates of eggs, toast and bacon and sat them in front of the kids. As I got to the last child I, jokingly, sat down and put her food in front of myself and pretended like I was

going to eat it. She folded her arms and put her head down. She was prepared to sit through breakfast and not eat. I was hoping she was going to laugh but her silent acceptance was more heartbreaking than if she would have cried. I quickly gave her the food and tried to convince her I was joking. The child who never cries is more troubling than the one that always does. At least the one crying has some expectation of their needs being met.

Another conversation went like this:

Little girl: "Mr. Dan, I'm sad my Daddy is in jail (again)".

Me: "I'm sorry"

Little girl "At least I can still see you"

I was speechless. I just picked her up and held her close for while. At nap time the same little girl said "Mr. Dan, you will be here when I wake up and you will love me." She also slept holding my hat, so I couldn't leave while she was asleep. My shift ended while she was sleeping but, of course, I stayed until after she woke up.

Sometimes it bothers me that I can only protect and nurture these kids for the time they are with me. When I question if I am really making a difference I think of the words of Doc Childre when he said "An aware person loves all children he or she meets and interacts with for you are a caretaker for those moments in time." Knowing these kids caretakers, for many reasons, often let them down makes me more aware of my influence during the "moments in time" they are with me. When they leave the center I want them to leave knowing that someone thinks they are special and loves them unconditionally

Occasionally, God lets us get a glimpse that we do make a difference. I was meeting with the mother of a child that had just spent a few days with us. The girl had spent time with us before. The mother said that the girl talked about me at home and then shared this conversation:

Girl: "Mr. Dan is at the center crying"

Mom: "Why is Mr. Dan crying"

Girl: "Because he misses me"

While I don't want kids to think I'm sitting around crying, what I try to do is leave each child with this feeling -- that someone cares about them and misses them when they aren't there.

From the first day he came into our Sunday school class it seemed like he would follow me around. At story time he would always want to sit beside me. At craft time he always wanted me to help him. Once when I was helping someone else he tugged on my shirt sleeve and said "Mr. Dan aren't you supposed to be helping me?" I tried to be patient with him, while not ignoring the rest of the class.

After class one day his mother was a little late. He was, of course, standing right beside me. He looked up at me and said "Mr. Dan, its o.k. if my mom doesn't pick me up because I know that you will take me home and then I will have a Dad".

I had a similar experience helping in a room for three year olds. There was a little girl who would cling to me. She always wanted me to be the one to help her and to sit with her. One day we were "having tea" at play time when she looked at me and said "Let's play pretend and I'll call you Daddy".

I know that I did not replace a Father in their lives, but I also know that they were starting to form opinions about what a Father should be like and what a Fathers love looked like. For a couple hours on Sunday morning they were looking at me, in their own ways they told me so. We should never underestimate our influences. Little eyes are watching what you do. We all have a responsibility to every child that crosses our paths. We have a duty to each of them to protect and nurture them for the times they are with us.

Chapter 6 - The Stable

In 1989 at the age of 48 my father died of cancer. It was only years later that I realized the impact that he had on my life. He was a quiet man who avoided any attention, recognition or glory. He was always willing to do a favor. He was the first one to volunteer if the church needed painting or other odd jobs and every fall he would patch up the worse spots on the roof of the trailer owned by the old man down the street; hoping to get him through one more winter. When Theodore Roosevelt said "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are." I think he was talking about my Dad.

But the one thing that I most remember is the nativity stables. One year my mother painted a ceramic nativity scene. My father then built a wooden stable for it. When people came to visit they would comment on the stable and ask where they purchased it. My father ended up building many more stables. People would bring some of their figurines to him and he would build one to scale for them. They were all shocked when they attempted to pay and he would never accept payment, no matter how much they insisted.

We weren't rich. My father worked in a factory and, because it was important to them, my parents struggled to put five kids through Catholic School. I couldn't understand what it would have hurt to accept money for a job well done. Dad was a man of few words, but I'll never forget when he looked at me and said "If I took money then it would be work". I realized that he wouldn't enjoy making them anymore if he did it for money. The thought of giving something, that someone really wanted, at no cost made the creating worthwhile.

I really believe that we all have stables in us somewhere. Maybe we can't work with wood, but maybe we are teachers, counselors, artists or just ears to listen or shoulders to cry on. We all have something to give, expecting nothing in return.

As we travel through life, if we are lucky, we will meet a few people to hold up as examples. I was lucky to have one as my father. If you're lucky enough to still have your father around let him know how much you cherish him. Thank him for all the stables he's given you.

We also need to be aware of how our actions impact others. It is often what we do that people remember, not what we say. My Father passed lessons on to me about the importance of being a humble servant, about not always needing to be thanked. It is these attitudes that let us truly be useful. The service is reward enough.

Chapter 7 - My Week with Hunter

In 2002 my camper at our camp for children with special needs was Hunter. Hunter was 9 years old, but physically he was the size of a four or five year old. His vocabulary consisted of short sentences that were sometimes difficult to understand. Hunter also had an incredible amount of energy and curiosity. He was constantly on the run and into everything.

Hunter and his sister Sydney have a disease called Sanfilippo syndrome. According to BensDream.Org: "Children afflicted with Sanfilippo Syndrome are missing an essential enzyme that breaks down strings of a complex body sugar called heparan sulfate. The partially broken-down sugar, or mucopolysaccharide, accumulates in the brain and the body's cells and tissue causing progressive damage. The storage process affects children's appearances, bodily functions and development. Sanfilippo children tend to look alike and have similar health problems.

A Sanfilippo child appears normal at birth and develops within the range of normal for the first year or two, but as more and more cells become damaged symptoms begin to appear. Eventually, the build-up of mucopolysaccharides will cause hyperactivity, sleep disorders, loss of speech, mental retardation,

dementia and finally death. Life expectancy for a child with Sanfilippo Syndrome is between 12 to 20 years. There is currently no treatment or cure."

Hunter's sister Sydney also came along to camp. After they arrived their mother went with Sydney and her counselor. Their Father and I took Hunter and his stuff to our room. Hunter was not content to sit as his Dad offered advice on dealing with him. So his Father tried to shout out as much advice as he could as we both chased Hunter around the camp.

After his parents left I let Hunter explore around the camp. He was fascinated with the creek and the fire ring. He was convinced that the creek was full of "ow-ye-gators" and crocodiles.

After an hour of exploring the camp area it was time to walk to lunch. Walk may not be the best way to describe our journey to lunch, Hunter loved to run. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way to the dining hall there is a small man-made frog pond. You could almost always see a few frogs sitting on the rocks or lily pads. Hunter loved the frog pond. He would run up to the frog pond saying "Touch it, touch it" or "Catch one". A few times Hunter did manage to touch a frog that was sitting in the grass or on a rock close to the edge. Before and after every meal we would stop at the frog pond. As the week wore on I became more and more appreciative of the break we took at the frog pond. It provided a little rest before we finished our run to the dining hall.

Once at the dining hall Hunter would head over to a stuffed Bear and Deer displayed in the corner. Depending on his mood Hunter either wanted to hug them, take them home or shoot them. We would then wander through the tables until it was closer to the time to eat. Usually he would sit through the meal but there was an occasional piece of flying silverware and once a "spilled" glass of milk.

As it got closer to bedtime I made the bed up furthest from the door for Hunter and the bed closest to the door for myself. Around 8:15 Hunter said he was going to bed, climbed up the stairs, climbed in my bed and fell asleep. If he was going to sleep I was going to let him sleep where ever he wanted.

I was worried about him getting up at night so I took the mattress off of what was to be his bed and put it on the floor next to the bed he was now sleeping in. I slept there. If Hunter got up I would know. Around 2:00 am I heard Hunter sit up in bed. I sat up and leaned in close so he could see I was there. He kissed me on the cheek, went back to sleep, and slept the rest of the night.

Hunter was very concerned toward all the campers in wheelchairs. Whenever he saw them he would go over to them and hug and kiss them. We would gather everyday as a group for worship. Because of Hunter's attention span I wouldn't join the group until the last minute. All the other campers would already be there. The wheelchairs usually gathered together in the widest area. Hunter would move from wheel chair to wheelchair giving each camper a hug.

The second morning Hunter woke up before me (or anyone else). Once Hunter was awake he was awake! So I quickly got dressed, got him dressed and took Hunter to the bathroom to get ready for the day. The bathroom was large with 2 showers and a few sinks. I got Hunter started brushing his teeth. As I was trying to put my contacts in Hunter became bored and headed for the door. He opened the door

and was heading for the hallway. I stopped him and moved my stuff to the sink closer to the door. I finished putting my contacts and brushing my teeth with my foot holding the door shut. By 6:15am we were out at the basketball hoop shooting the baskets.

Hunter was funny to watch when he was shooting a basketball. For someone his size he could make a large number of baskets. After he made a basket he would either say "Michael Jordan" or "Good job, Thank-you your welcome".

Sydney, Hunter's sister, was a big help to me. Often times Sydney would help me understand what Hunter was trying to say. Hunter would often go through periods of high energy where he would run from place to place getting into everything. Right before one of these episodes he would start giggling. Sydney told me that was his "bad laugh".

One day Hunter and I were down by the creek. Hunter was searching around the trees for stones and pinecones. I saw him pick something up and say "Hug it" and move it toward his face to kiss it. I got his hand before it reach his face and saw he was holding a crayfish head. It was just the shell, left over from a Raccoons lunch. I took the shell and threw it into creek. He was very angry at me and wanted me to jump in the creek to go get it back. When I wouldn't give in he kicked me in shins. I sat Hunter on a nearby chair until he calmed down. After a few minutes he got up, walked over to me, put his hands on my cheeks, said "Sar-wee" and kissed my cheek.

As the week wore on I found the things that would keep Hunter still for a while. Someone that Don knew had donated a whole box of stickers. There were literally thousands of stickers in the box. Every once in a while Hunter would go into the craft room where the stickers were and look through the box. He would carefully look through all of the stickers. Pick three or four and put them on his shirt.

Sometimes when Hunter got angry he would kick or push something. Usually I could anticipate these and prevent any damage. One day we were at the cafeteria. After meals Hunter liked to carry the dirty dishes to the kitchen area to be washed, so I assumed that he may also like carrying the milk over to our table. I got a cup of coffee, picked up the water pitcher and tried to hand Hunter the milk. In the mean time Hunter saw a loaf of bread and decided he wanted a piece. I told him that we couldn't eat yet. He not only didn't take the milk but he started kicking the trash can. I was standing there holding coffee, a water pitcher, and a carton of milk. I spilled my coffee trying to put them down, and I still didn't get to him in time to prevent the can from being kicked over. Luckily it was before the meal started and there was not much in it.

Hunter loved baseball. He was constantly searching for anything to use as a bat and ball. Sometimes he would sit on the ground and pick up a little stick and a small pinecone and hit the pinecone with the stick.

Someone from Camp Dean Don's church created a miniature golf course for us. They built portable castles and windmills for us to hit the ball through. A local miniature golf course donated some old putters and we used tennis balls for golf balls. Hunter loved the game ! He was pretty good at hitting the

ball through the targets, but he would pull back the club and hit the ball really hard. Then he would yell "Home Run" and chase after the ball.

We had some rain on Thursday so as we were walking to the dining hall for our last dinner of the year there were puddles on the road. Hunter managed to find every puddle. Initially I tried to stop him but then I realized that we were at camp and Hunter wouldn't have been Hunter if he would have walked by the puddles.

Before the beginning of this week I thought that Hunter would be hyper-active, stubborn, and prone to tantrums. I wasn't wrong. But these are symptoms of his disease not who he is. Hunter is the little boy who loves baseball so much that even a small twig and a tiny pinecone become a bat and ball. He is the little hands on my face and the little voice saying "Sar-wee" after getting angry. Hunter is running to the dining hall and running back, stopping only to chase frogs or hug the kids in wheel chairs. Hunter is jumping in every mud puddle on the way to lunch. On the first night at camp, after chasing him around all day, Hunter woke up in the middle of the night. I immediately thought about the note from his mother on his health form stating that Hunter got home sick and cried for his parents. I went over to let him know someone was there. He leaned over, put his hands on either side of my face, gave me a kiss on the cheek, laid down and went back to sleep. At that moment my apprehension left and I knew everything would be o.k.. At that moment Hunter left a permanent mark on my heart.

Chapter 8 - Loving the Unlovable

Mother Teresa was once giving a radio interview. The interviewer waited for a commercial break and then, check book in hand, asked Mother Teresa how he could help. She looked at him and said "Find someone no one else loves and love them." That is the real test of love. How do we treat people who seem ungrateful or undeserving. What if someone appears to be doing nothing to help themselves? How do we treat them? These are the hard questions. Anyone can be nice to people like themselves it's hard to reach out to those that are different. How do we love those that seem unlovable?

How should we react to those who appear undeserving or unappreciative of our help? The parent who has given up getting ahead and sees "playing the system" as their only option. The man who's addictions have him held so tightly that he can't make good decisions. The child so used to being tossed around, ignored and abused that the only responses he knows are bad ones. I believe these are the people Mother Teresa was talking about and, more importantly, I am convinced these are the people Jesus calls us to love.

I'm not talking about "enabling", I'm talking about treating all people with a level of dignity. Listening to their stories and reaching out our hands in a non-judgmental way. John Harrigan said "People need loving the most when they deserve it the least."

"Treat people as if they are what they ought to be, and you help them become what they are capable of being" - Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

In my dealings I've encountered many people that, from a distance, it would be easy to judge and condemn. People who have made many, and sometimes continue to make, bad choices. When we put away our judgements and really listen to their stories we can start to see the layers of hurt and hopelessness that led them to where they are. Many times they don't see a way out or the way out seems to hard so they slip into all the bad habits they were raised with. Slip into the only reality they really know.

How do we love them? By treating them with dignity and listening to their stories. It is hard to hate up close. We need to view them as broken and hurting people, even if they are putting up a defense that looks like anger or bitterness. Dealing with some parents at the center, I've come to accept that what often comes across as anger is often fear of being judged. When they realize I am there to help, not condemn, most come around. I now have a good relationship with some parents that would hardly talk to me the first time we met.

Chapter 9 - I Thought You Were a Man

One afternoon at the shelter I was playing with a 4 year old boy. We were joking around and he kicked at me. I looked at him and said that we don't kick each other at the center. He looked back and said "I thought you were a man."

A baby woke up and was crying. I got up to go back to the bedroom to get him when another child asked if I was going to go back and "beat his ass".

A little girl was playing with dolls and came over and said "Pop pop the kids just won't listen and I want you to go in and beat them".

A family with 4 kids under six came in because their mother was in the hospital after their father beat her while they were home. The oldest girl told me that she doesn't like "old men".

As the only man working at the center, I take seriously the messages my actions and words send. I make sure the kids clearly understand that, no matter what they do, I would never hit them. I also realize how

important it is that I react in a calm, gentle way. I try to show them that discipline does not have to include yelling and hitting. Am I making a difference? Will they remember these lessons? I'm not sure, but I am sure when they are with me I will always try to show them a better way.

Because of my experiences I have a hard line opinion of corporal punishment. I believe that we should never touch a child in anger. I also believe that we, as humans, can not be trusted to never touch a child in anger if we have already given ourselves permission to hit. There are other, better, ways to discipline. Spanking is the easy way to enforce our power over a child, but all it really teaches is that the biggest, strongest one wins.

Chapter 10 – Sheraton Inn Spring 1990

We decided we wanted to supplement our week of camp with an early spring weekend retreat. Because one of our Camp Deans is not an outdoors type he chose the local Sheraton Inn. We stayed in the motel rooms and used their pool and a large general-purpose room. The retreat started Friday night and ended Sunday afternoon.

On Saturday when we were at the pool, my eyes were opened to what these kids, and their parents, must be faced with everyday. We would use the hotel's public pool. There were some other children in the pool, splashing and playing around. We entered limps, wheel chairs, and all. The Mother of the children stood up and hovered over the edge of the pool. She loudly complained about every move our kids made. I wouldn't have been bothered by her concern if our campers were bothering her children or if they were extremely rowdy. The opposite was actually true. Each camper had a counselor directly watching him or her; no one got out of line. She was complaining because, in her eyes, our campers were "different" and didn't belong with her "perfect" children. What right did she have to judge? Later when I really thought about it, my feelings to her turned to pity. Her ignorance of anyone different will block her from some wonderful people.

I heard a quote (that I do not know the source of) that applies. "We could learn a lot from crayons: some are sharp, some are pretty, some are dull, some have weird names, and all are different colors but they all have to learn to live in the same box."

Chapter 11 - Michael

Michael has cerebral palsy and requires total care. He cannot talk or walk, has limited control over any muscles and needs to be fed and cared for. He says 'yes' by raising his left hand and 'no' by raising his right hand, sometimes he has trouble even doing this. When I first met in he was small and extremely thin. You could wrap your thumb and index finger around his biceps and his legs weren't much bigger.

If you are around Michael much you will soon realize there is a lot more to Mike than you may first imagined. He understands everything you say. His eyes are his communication board; just by looking into them you can tell when he's happy, sad, or mischievous. His smile is completely infectious. When he smiled at you, you couldn't help but smile back.

Mike signed up to go to camp, and I nervously agreed to be his counselor. I had never fed or dressed him. More than that I was worried something would be wrong and I wouldn't be able to figure out what it was.

When Mike first arrived, I tried my best to act confident for his Mother. When it came to Michael she was not quick to give her trust. She must have bought my act, because she left him with me.

My first order of business was to get Mike in a good mood. I pulled out all of my best jokes and ridiculous actions. He laughed so hard he could hardly breathe. We joked and kidded our way through the evening. He made it easy by laughing at everything I did no matter how ridiculous. I felt he was working to put me at ease instead of the other way around.

The first time I tried to get Mike dressed was quite an experience. Mike's joints, especially his elbows and knees, are extremely stiff. They can be moved but only slowly and carefully. I was certain I was going to hurt him. The first step was to get his shirt off. Mike cannot sit up on his own or hold his hands up for an extended period of time. You can probably imagine the scene as I attempted to hold his body up, his arms up, and pull the shirt off over his head all at the same time. Because I was afraid to bend his elbows I tried to accomplish this without bending his arms. I managed to get the shirt halfway off, with his head still covered. I was certain Mike was thinking, "What is this clown doing?" 10 minutes later the shirt made it up over his head. I expected Mike to be upset but he had a huge smile on his face, he thought it was loads of fun to see me struggling. Once again I was working to keep Mike at ease and it was him who showed patience and a sense of humor that put me at ease.

From then on Mike found great humor in any troubles I would have. Mike especially found my inexperienced wheelchair driving amusing. Anytime I would bump into a door or have trouble getting over stones he would laugh.

The most frustrating part of dealing with Mike was the communication. It is scary to think that he might have some, otherwise, minor problem but his lack of communication prohibits him from telling you. When he was upset, it was up to me to figure out what was wrong. I always started with the most obvious, hunger and thirst. It could be an itch, or a stomachache or the need to be put in a different

position in his wheel chair or bed. Luckily Mike was almost always in good spirits and enjoyed the "guessing game". I tried to be "super aware" of any changes in mood or facial expressions and to react immediately, we were having a great time and I didn't want to lose him.

Mike mother arrived early Sunday. She passed me as I was pushing Mike up the hill for the last time. My aching muscles were glad to see her, but my heart wasn't quite ready to let Mike go yet.

I will never forget my first weekend with Michael. Here he was, stuck in a body that barely worked. What did he have to give? He gave what he had: his smile and his attitude. He gave them with all he had. He took the cards life dealt him and played them for all they were worth. Michael not only tried to make the best of life, but he also made the people around him happier. Can we say the same?

Chuck Brodsky said "We are each others angels, we meet when it is time." I started this weekend thinking I was going to be helping and teaching Michael, I soon realized it was Michael helping and teaching me.

Chapter 12 - What Do You Do at this Church?

I had recently started attending a new church. One of the first people to stand out was Caroline. She was a cute little seven year old who was always smiling and happy. When she was younger she had a bad bout of spinal meningitis. As a result of that her vision was affected, she walked with a noticeable limp, and there was some brain damage. But in spite of her weakened eye sight she appointed herself the unofficial church greeter. Before the service she would work her way through the crowds talking to almost everyone. She would walk up and touch their stomachs and say "Who are you?" Then after you told her your name she'd respond "Hi" repeat your name, then introduce herself. Her spirit and sincerity was infectious.

One day she made her way to where I was sitting and said "Hi, who are you?" I told her my name. Instead of her usual response she surprised me with the question "What do you do at this church?" I immediately started listing in my head all the things I do and how important I was. Then I looked down at Caroline and realized that she wouldn't "get it". So being the mature adult that I am I turned the question back on her and asked "I don't know what do you do?" In a calm, clear and unhesitant voice she said "Worship God." With two little words Caroline knocked me off the pedestal I had sat myself upon. God sent the person who I didn't think would "get it" to remind me what "it" really was. After I picked my battered ego off the floor I realized that was the answer I should have given her. Whenever I feel myself become too prideful, I think of Caroline and am reminded of what is really important.

Chapter 13 - Circling Girl

One time at the center I was doing the paperwork for a new family. The little girl, about 5, was filthy. Her hair was greasy and her clothes were dirty and torn. I could not even guess the last time she had a bath or her clothes were washed. I hoped she would be shy and hide behind mom until she was cleaned up. I was o.k. with her being "over there". Instead she started circling the room watching me. At first I avoided eye contact. We could be friends later. I noticed her watching me as she walked in circles around the room. There was a look in her eyes that was beyond sad; more like an acceptance of being rejected. It was like she was saying "You are going to reject me too." I heard God's voice in my ear saying "Why are you here? It is easy to care for the beautiful, clean children but I sent you here for her and she needs you now" I looked at her, smiled and said her name. We finished the paperwork with her sitting with me, her dirty head resting on my shoulder. The sad look replaced with a little smile.

I think how this parallels our relationship with God. We first approach him dirty and feeling unlovable. He smiles, calls our name and loves us in our filth. He doesn't wait for us to "clean up" he accepts us just as we are. After we experience his love we are a different child but he loved the dirty child just as much.

Chapter 14 – The Beginning

I can't believe I have been coming to the Lehman Center for five years. I still remember my first day. My biggest worries were fitting in and babies; so when my co-worker arrived I told her to tell me what to do and that I would do anything. She said "go get the baby up".

I nervously walked in the bedroom and the baby lifted her hands. I picked her up and she put her head on my shoulder and her little hand on my chest. My heart melted and any apprehension disappeared. I knew I was where I belonged. At that moment I said a little prayer that I would always see these kids as the precious gifts they are and that I would always feel grateful for my time here.

The five years since that prayer have been much more than I even knew to ask for. "Those kids" are now "my kids" and the feeling of gratitude has been joined by a deep sense of responsibility. I know

that the male role models, in many of the kids lives, are not great. I also know that this makes my actions (and reactions) important as they develop a sense of how men should act. I am reminded of this over and over. I am reminded by the boy who asked , as I went to pick up a crying baby, if I was going to "beat his ass" and by the little girl who said she was sad her Dad was in prison (again) but "at least she had me" and by the hugs and smiles from the ones too small or incapable of words. Mostly I am reminded by the stories of little kids who have seen and heard much more than little kids should have to see and hear.

When I question how much of a difference I am making I think of the quote by Doc Childre: "An aware person loves all children he or she meets and interacts with for you are a caretaker for those moments in time." I am grateful for five years worth of "moments in time".

Chapter 15 – Cate

As a child I had a severe stutter. Not the occasional vocal stumble like Jimmy Stewart (those of us old enough to remember him) but the kind of stutter where you were happy if two or three words in a row came out o.k. Kids can be cruel, so I spent the better part of my grade school years trying to fade into the back of the class and avoid being called on or speaking. As you can imagine, this did a number on my self-confidence.

God redeems and plans everything. He used this experience to develop in me a heart for his broken and hurting children. As I grew that heart lead me to help start a camp for children with special needs (that I served at for 20 years). While my confidence grew as I got older, I still had trouble picturing me being used like the great men in the Bible stories I would share. I couldn't see me as a Moses, Joshua or David.

That changed one year at camp with the help of Cate. Cate was a cute little 10 year old with Cerebral Palsy. She could not walk, had some use of her arms, and could talk in short, forced breathes. The hard "D" in Dan was too difficult for her so I became "Him". When she needed help, and someone else went to help her, you would often here her ask "Him Help Me". We quickly developed a bond. You have really been hugged when you are hugged by little arms that struggle to lift up to hug you.

One night I was laying in my cabin when I heard someone knock and enter. It was a counselor from Cate's cabin. She said Cate was really crying and they didn't know why. I got up and headed over.

The difficult thing about dealing with kids with speech difficulty is that when they are upset it is impossible to figure out what is wrong. First you have to get them to calm down, then begin the process of finding the issue. I entered the cabin and scooped her up in my arms. By the time we reached the

door the wail was down to a cry. By the time we sat on the rocking chair on the porch the cry was down to a sob. I held her close and talked softly to her. In a few minutes she was asleep in my arms.

It was then I truly felt God speaking. He was saying I didn't need you to part the Red Sea because he perfectly made and perfectly prepared Moses for that. I didn't need you to see the walls of Jericho crumble because he perfectly made and perfectly prepared Joshua for that. I didn't need you to slay Goliath. I perfectly made and perfectly prepared David for that. But for this night, in the hills of central Pa, for this little girl, I perfectly made and perfectly prepared you for that.

I realized that if I could go back in time and relive my childhood as the star athlete or eloquent class president, but it meant that on this night, this little girl would not have found comfort in my arms; I would decline the offer. God's plan is perfect even if we can't see it.

Chapter 16 - View from the Cross

I wonder what Jesus saw as he looked down from the cross? In his loneliest moment, whose eyes did he meet as he gazed outward? Where were his friends and family? Was the comfort he found when he cast his eyes upon his mother and his beloved friend John vastly outweighed by the hurt he felt as his eyes met the mocking jeering faces in the crowd? If we would have been there, where would he have found us?

As he scanned the crowd did he see the same faces that were cheering him on Palm Sunday? Were some of the same people that were laying palm branches at his feet now spitting on him? Here was Jesus, paying the price for their sins and they were jeering and mocking him. How must Jesus have felt giving his life for them and receiving mockery and spittle in return? Would we too have followed the crowd? Do we only "cheer" for Jesus when we are surrounded by others cheering for him? Do we then mock him, by our words or our actions, when others around us are mocking him? When Jesus looks in the faces of those jeering at him and spitting on him does he see us?

As he scanned the crowd he must have seen others. Some of whom looked away in shame when his eyes met theirs. They were not jeering or spitting, but were still afraid to show their loyalty. Could these have been some of the people he healed? Where these people who were happy to receive his gifts but not willing to open themselves up to share his trial? We are blessed by God in many ways. When our faith is challenged do we look away or do we stand with Mary and John by the cross? When Jesus scanned the crowd from the cross if his eyes met ours would we have looked away in shame or fear?

What kind of disappointment must Jesus have felt when he scanned the crowd and did not see Peter? The pain of his trials must have been multiplied by Peter's absence on Golgotha. Peter must have been so ashamed of his actions, his denial of Jesus the night before, that he decided it was better to hide from Jesus than to face him. How many times have we stumbled then attempted to hide our mistakes? How many times have we decided we should carry the burden of our mistakes alone? Instead of hiding, like Peter, we should take our mistakes to the cross and lay them at Jesus' feet. Jesus knew what Peter did and he knows what we do. When we stumble and make mistakes where does Jesus find us? Are we hiding in the darkness or under the cross at his feet?

What comfort Jesus must have felt after peering out at the angry crowd then looking down and meeting the eyes of his mother and John? John's presence was so important to Jesus that he entrusted his mother, for the rest of her earthly life, to him. Are we loyal enough to Jesus that he would have entrusted his mother to us? Even in the darkest hours can we still fix our eyes on the cross? Are we bold enough to humble ourselves before the mockery of others for Jesus' sake? When Jesus looks down from the cross does he find us looking back up at him?

Chapter 17 - Nazareth Day Care

I am in the middle of a dream. I am just a toddler. My mother is taking me to day care. As I enter the building I see Mary, the mother of Jesus, walking out.

I look up at her with questioning eyes.

Mary knows what I am wondering and answers "Yes, He is in there".

I enter the day care full of excitement, knowing that baby Jesus is there with me. But when I look around the room there are so many babies. I notice one baby sitting alone in the corner. He could be the baby Jesus, so I go and play with him. Then I see another baby crying. He could be the baby Jesus so I go comfort him. At snack time I share my snack with the baby who had his snack taken by a bully, because I wouldn't want Jesus to go hungry. When the bully threatens me, I smile trying to tell him "Be happy, Jesus is here."

All day I am extra careful to be nice to each baby. When there aren't enough toys, I go without because I want to make sure Jesus has one. When there is a line I wait and go last, because I don't want to be ahead of Jesus. When someone's sad I cry with them, because maybe I'm crying with Jesus. When someone's happy I laugh with them, because maybe I'm laughing with Jesus.

Later Mary returns. I looked nervously at her. Did I fail? Did I ignore Jesus?

She walked directly up to me. She looked down and lovingly said "Thank you for taking care of Jesus."

Which one was him? Was he the one that was crying, or the one alone, or the one who had his snack stolen ?

She understands my questions and answers "Yes, he was the one that was crying and he was the one that was alone, and the one that had his snack stolen. You also shared your toys with him, let him in front of you in line, cried with him and laughed with him. He was also the bully you smiled at and tried to share God's love with. You put each baby before yourself, because you saw Jesus in each of them."

Take these lessons out into the world. Cry with the ones who need someone to share their sorrow, and laugh with the ones who need someone to share their joy. Think of others first. When there's a line, be last. When there is only one left, go without. Reach out to the ones who are alone or rejected. Don't worry about what others will think. It is only with a purely humble heart that someone can be truly bold for Jesus. Now go, Humble yourself before the face of Jesus in everyone you meet, because he loves you and humbled himself for you on the cross.

I wake up.

Now what?

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