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MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!



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Some years ago, while waiting in the check-out line with my young grandson, a young mother ahead of me struggled to bag her groceries while at the same time trying to keep her two young boys under control. One of them was particularly active and not listening very well, which prompted a rather negative comment from another shopper directed at the lad. A look of pain swept over the face of the mother. She turned away without saying a word and when done left the store with her boys in tow.

The cashier, who had been extremely patient, and seemed familiar with the mother and children, turned to the shopper and quietly said, "That little boy is not spoiled, sir, but he does have a disability, and he was actually doing very well today." The shopper embarrassedly mumbled an apology.

This incident reminded me how important it is not to judge, accuse, or voice our opinions about someone or something too quickly, and especially when we don't know all the details about a situation. There may be root causes or personal issues that affect the way someone behaves, and a quick comment may hurt a situation more than it helps.

The articles and inspirational stories in this issue of *Motivated* illustrate the potential that lies within each and every one of us. They remind us not to judge too quickly, but rather to look for the good and possibilities in people, even in those whom others seem to have given up on.

When we accept others unconditionally, it truly can make a difference in their lives, and change the world we live in for the better.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

The Triple Filter Test

In ancient Greece, Socrates was reputed to hold knowledge in high esteem. One day an acquaintance met the great philosopher and said, “Do you know what I just heard about your friend?”

“Hold on a minute,” Socrates replied. “Before telling me anything I’d like you to pass a little test. It’s called the Triple Filter Test.”

“Triple filter?”

“That’s right,” Socrates continued. “Before you talk to me about my friend, it might be a good idea to take a moment and filter what you’re going to say. That’s why I call it the triple filter test. The first filter is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?”

“No,” the man said, “Actually I just heard about it and...”

“All right,” said Socrates. “So you don’t really know if it’s true or not. Now let’s try the second filter, the filter of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my friend something good?”

“No, on the contrary...”

“So,” Socrates continued, “you want to tell me something bad about him, but you’re not certain it’s true. You may still pass the test though, because there’s one filter left: the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my friend going to be useful to me?”

“No, not really...”

“Well,” concluded Socrates, “if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?” ■



4 THINGS THAT CANNOT BE RECOVERED:

- The stone... after it's thrown!
- The word...after it's said!
- The occasion...after it's lost!
- The time...after it's gone!

Broken Wing

By Jim Hullihan



Maybe you've heard the saying, "A bird with a broken wing will never fly as high." I'm sure that T. J. Ware was made to feel this way almost every day in school.

By high school, T. J. was the most celebrated troublemaker in his town. Teachers literally cringed when they saw his name posted on their classroom lists for the next semester. He wasn't very talkative, didn't answer questions, and got into lots of fights. He had flunked almost every class by the time he entered his senior year, yet was being passed on each year to a higher grade level. Teachers didn't want to have him again the following year. T. J. was moving on, but definitely not moving up.

I met T. J. for the first time at a weekend leadership retreat. All the students at school had been invited to sign up for ACE training, a program designed to have students become more involved in their communities. T. J. was one of 405 students who signed up.

When I showed up to lead their first retreat, the community leaders gave me this overview of the attending students: "We have a total spectrum represented today, from the student body president to T. J. Ware, the boy with the longest arrest record in the history of town." Somehow, I knew that I wasn't the first to hear about T. J.'s darker side as the first words of introduction.

At the start of the retreat, T. J. was

literally standing outside the circle of students, against the back wall, with that “go ahead, impress me” look on his face. He didn’t readily join the discussion groups, didn’t seem to have much to say. But slowly, the interactive games drew him in.

The ice really melted when the groups started building a list of positive and negative things that had occurred at school that year. T. J. had some definite thoughts on those situations. The other students in T. J.’s group welcomed his comments. All of a sudden T. J. felt like a part of the group, and before long he was being treated like a leader. He was saying things that made a lot of sense, and everyone was listening. T. J. was a smart guy, and he had some great ideas.

The next day, T. J. was very active in all the sessions. By the end of the retreat, he had joined the Homeless Project team. He knew something about poverty, hunger, and hopelessness. The other students on the team were impressed with his passionate concern and ideas. They elected T. J. co-chairman of the team. The student council president would be taking his instruction from T. J. Ware.

When T. J. showed up at school on Monday morning, he arrived to a firestorm. A group of teachers were protesting to the school principal about his being elected co-chairman. The very first communitywide service project was to be a giant food drive, organized by the Homeless Project team. These teachers couldn’t believe that the principal would allow this crucial beginning to a prestigious, three-year action plan to stay in the incapable hands of T. J. Ware.

They reminded the principal, “He has an arrest record as long as your arm. He’ll probably steal half the food.” The principal reminded them that the purpose of the ACE program was to uncover any positive passion that a student had and reinforce its practice until true change can take place. The teachers left the meeting shaking their heads in disgust, firmly convinced that failure was imminent.

Two weeks later, T. J. and his friends led a group of 70 students in a drive to collect food. They collected a school record: 2,854 cans of food in just two hours. It was enough to fill the empty shelves in two neighborhood centers, and the food took care of needy families in the area for 75 days.

The local newspaper covered the event with a full-page article the next day. That newspaper story was posted on the main bulletin board at school, where everyone could see it. T. J.’s picture was up there for doing something great, for leading a record-setting food drive. Every day he was reminded about what he did. He was being acknowledged as leadership material.

T. J. started showing up at school every day and answered questions from teachers for the first time. He led a second project, collecting 300 blankets and 1,000 pairs of shoes for the homeless shelter. The event he started now yields 9,000 cans of food in one day, taking care of 70 percent of the need for food for one year.

T. J. reminds us that a bird with a broken wing only needs mending. But once it has healed, it can fly higher than the rest. T. J. got a job. He became productive. He is flying quite nicely these days. ■



DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Adapted Web Reprint

A lady in a faded checkered dress, and her husband, dressed in a homespun, threadbare suit, stepped off the train in Boston and walked timidly, without an appointment, into the Harvard University President's outer office.

The secretary could tell in an instant that such backwoods country hicks had no business at Harvard University, and probably didn't even deserve to be there.

"We want to see the president," the man said softly.

"He'll be busy all day," the secretary snapped.

"We'll wait," the lady replied.

For hours the secretary ignored them, hoping that the couple would finally become discouraged and go away. They didn't. The secretary grew frustrated and finally decided to disturb the president, even though it was a chore she always regretted. "Maybe if you see them for a few minutes, they'll leave," she said to him.

He sighed in exasperation and nodded. Someone of his importance obviously didn't have the time to spend with them, but he detested faded dresses and homespun suits cluttering up his outer office. The president, stern faced and with dignity, strutted toward the couple.

The lady told him, "We had a son who attended Harvard University for one year. He loved Harvard University and he was happy here. But about a year ago, he was accidentally killed. My husband and I would like to erect a memorial to him, somewhere on campus."

The president wasn't touched... He was shocked.

"Madam," he said, gruffly, "we can't put up a statue for every person who attended Harvard University and died. If we did, this place would look like a cemetery."

"Oh, no," the lady explained quickly. "We don't want to erect a statue. We thought we would like to give a building to Harvard University."

Don't Judge Too Quickly

Submitted by Elana to www.values.com



The president rolled his eyes. He glanced at the gingham dress and homespun suit, and then exclaimed, “A building! Do you have any earthly idea how much a building costs? We have over seven and a half million dollars in the physical buildings here at Harvard University.”

For a moment the lady was silent.

The president was pleased. Maybe he could get rid of them now.

The lady turned to her husband and said quietly, “Is that all it costs to start a university? Why don't we just start our own?” Her husband nodded.

The president's face wilted in confusion and bewilderment.

Mr. and Mrs. Leland Stanford got up and walked away, traveling to Palo Alto, California where they established the University that bears their name, Stanford University, a memorial to a son that Harvard University no longer cared about. ■

Last winter, while visiting my sister and brother-in-law's house, I had to park in a nearby parking lot because they didn't have accessible parking. It snowed heavily and there was lots of ice on the ground—not too many people had ventured out that evening! When I returned to my car around 11:00 pm, I noticed that mine was the only car left.

Nervously, I hopped into the car and let it warm up a bit. When I finally tried to drive away, my wheels began to spin. I was stuck. I spun and spun and wondered what to do. All of a sudden, in my rear view mirror, I saw four teen-aged boys approaching my car. They were walking side-by-side in a line, and were dressed a bit like gang members—at least I thought that's what they looked like. My car was in a very isolated area and I began to panic. I was certain they were coming to my car to harm me.

Terrified, I just froze. One of the young men tapped on my window and said, “Excuse me, Ma'am, can we help you?” Still afraid and fearing the worst, I said, “I am stuck.” The young man said, “It's okay, stay in your car and we'll push you out of the snow.” And they did!

When they finally got me out of the snow, they smiled and waved. I rolled down my window and thanked them, embarrassed to have judged them so quickly and poorly. ■

How to Stop Judging and Criticizing People

Adapted Web Reprint

We're all guilty of judging and criticizing people. Some of us do it more than others. Judging and criticizing others doesn't feel good. After we've said something negative about someone, we often feel bad and wish we could take it back. Here's how to stop judgment before it starts:

Be mindful.

Knowing is half the battle. While you can't stop all judgments before they happen, you can notice when you're being judgmental. Take a week or so to notice all the times you criticize those around you, and then start to reign it in.

Don't stereotype.

Avoid stereotypical judgments of people that you don't know or hardly know. Often, they're inaccurate. Notice when you're starting to judge people on the street or on television. Take a step back, and turn your judgment into saying something positive about them instead.

How would you feel?

If other people were sitting around criticizing you for the same thing, how would it make you feel? Put yourself in the place of the person you're judging

and you'll be much less likely to act in the same manner.

Try and understand.

Try to understand where the people around you are coming from and why they're doing something that may bother you. Be compassionate. Sometimes it's hard to understand someone else's position, but give it a try anyway because once you do, you're much less likely to judge them.

Accept people for who they are.

No one is perfect, including the person judging, but at some point you have to learn to accept people for who they are without wanting to change them. This is a good way to build strong relationships. It's also a good way to finally accept yourself.

Try to love.

Even when it seems unrealistic, try and love those that you're passing judgment on instead of criticizing them. For the next few weeks, resolve not to say anything negative about the people around you. Lifting such negativity from your life will inspire you to stop judging beyond that initial two weeks. ■

The Law of the Garbage Truck

Adapted Web Reprint

One day I hopped in a taxi to go to the airport. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a black car jumped out of a parking space right in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his brakes, skidded, and missed the other car by just inches! The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy. And I mean, he was really friendly.

I asked, "Why did you just do that? This guy almost ruined your car and nearly sent us to the hospital!"

This is when my taxi driver taught me what I now call, "The Law of the Garbage Truck."

He explained that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it, and sometimes they'll dump it on you. Don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. Don't take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home, or on the streets.

The bottom line is to not let garbage trucks take over your day. Life's too short to wake up in the morning with

regrets. So love the people who treat you right. Pray for the ones who don't.

Life is ten percent what you make it and ninety percent how you take it. ■

Thoughts on Acceptance

Acceptance means embracing what is, rather than wishing for what is not. When we accept difficult realities, we are able to discover whatever positive feelings and experiences may be possible in a situation. We find ourselves more at peace and are able to experience life more deeply. Even so, acceptance must be guided by discernment, and we must learn how to tell the difference between what we can and what we cannot change.

Acceptance of our faults and the faults of others helps us to be patient, and to avoid hurtful kinds of criticism or judgment. By accepting faults we become more able to trust and celebrate strengths. Paradoxically, acceptance often leads to growth, because it creates a safe space for insight and understanding. ■

HOW I TEACH CHILDREN ACCEPTANCE

PARENTING
FROM THE HEART



By Daphne Rose Kingma

Acceptance is not one sit-down lesson in class. Acceptance is not just a topic you discuss every now and then. Acceptance is a daily value that is an important characteristic of who we are, and is a fundamental core value.

Acceptance of others, and teaching your children acceptance, starts with you, because as a parent you are the most influential human being in your child's life.

What you say, how you react, that roll of the eyes, and the times you think they can't hear you, filters into a child's

mind so very quickly, and in an instance an opinion, whether it is good or bad, is formed. Just like that.

The influence we have as parents in shaping our children's acceptance of others is nothing short of miraculous. It can supersede peer pressure if we place a strong enough value on acceptance of another human being, whatever their unique differences are. Educating children on acceptance of others and of themselves creates a sense of justice, and when you have a sense of justice you create a better and kinder world.

(From a 12 year-old student):

“Today I learned a very important lesson called acceptance. It means accepting others—not making ideas in my head about what I think they are like. Not presuming things about them because of the color of their skin, the way they speak, or what they wear, and any differences that may be physical or just a difference.

“Mrs. Brown made us all take off our shoes this morning; the whole class, girls and boys. She lay them all out and mixed them all up in rows. I sat there thinking, whatever will she do next? Her lessons are never like a regular lesson, they are fun and sometimes deep.

“She called us up, and with our eyes shut we had to pick up two shoes. I had 1 boy shoe and 1 girl shoe. All 22 of us did this. She then made us wear the shoes all day. It didn't matter if we complained and said they were too small, or too big. So we spent the day in odd shoes. At recess the other classes pointed and laughed, which I didn't like, so I stuck with my class. It was difficult to run in odd shoes and mine were pinching a bit.

“After lunch we came inside and Mrs. Brown asked us how we were feeling in our different and odd shoes. The answers were: sore, weird, don't like it, we didn't have a choice.

“Mrs. Brown said we shouldn't make ideas in our heads when we don't really know someone as we are not in their shoes and don't know everything that is going on in their life. Sometimes people have no choice (like we had no choice) and they have to wear the shoes they are given. Differences are part of human nature, but everyone has a heart inside.

“I felt sad with myself as I know I have been nasty sometimes to other kids at school who I thought it was ok to laugh at. I know how it felt when the other classes were laughing at me at recess. Now I know that I am not living their life or wearing their shoes.

“Man, I thought the shoe swap thing was crazy, but man, what a cool way to show a whole class that you can't ever know what it's like to be in someone else's shoes. That will stay in my head forever.”

This is one of the ways I teach acceptance to children. I have also been known to paint a class in an array of colors and have them wear clothes from the dress up box.

Visual prompts help children comprehend that differences, whatever they may be, do not change who they are inside. We are all humans.

We discuss why some people are different physically and how some people's differences may not be physical, with our common ground being that we all have a heart and feelings. People can look different, people can sound different, yet we are all people.

We chat about thinking before we speak and counting in our heads up to five, and we imagine what it might be like to be the other child or person, and take a few moments to think about what we might say.

Empathy is the key to acceptance. Children who feel good and accept who they are themselves are more respectful towards others and are also less likely to bully. ■

The Art of Acceptance

NOTABLE
QUOTES



We are each burdened with prejudice; against the poor or the rich, the smart or the slow, the gaunt or the obese. It is natural to develop prejudices. It is noble to rise above them.—Author Unknown

The test of courage comes when we are in the minority. The test of tolerance comes when we are in the majority.
—Ralph W. Sockman

Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike.—Oscar Wilde

Judgments prevent us from seeing the good that lies beyond appearances.
—Wayne W. Dyer

Our thoughts are unseen hands shaping the people we meet. Whatever we truly think them to be, that's what they'll become for us.—Richard Cowper

It is never too late to give up our prejudices.—Henry David Thoreau

Do not judge and you will never be mistaken.—Jean Jacques Rousseau

If you judge people you have no time to love them.—Mother Teresa

The greatest gift that you can give to others is the gift of unconditional love and acceptance.—Brian Tracy

Let us have but one end in view, the welfare of humanity; and let us put aside all selfishness in consideration of language, nationality, or religion.
—John Amos Comenius

Acceptance and tolerance and forgiveness, those are life-altering lessons.—Jessica Lange

The art of acceptance is the art of making someone who has just done you a small favor wish that he might have done you a greater one.
—Martin Luther King, Jr.

