

Kindness. I came to fully understand its impact in only a few short minutes while taking one of the more important examinations of my life.

The test was oral. The test giver was a radio announcer. The classroom was my car.

While traveling along in the rain on a Monday morning, a voice coming from the little speaker next to my steering wheel asked, "Can you name the last Nobel Peace Prize winner?" I knew I should remember, but the name escaped me. While I was trying to think, more questions were asked: "Can you name a recent Pulitzer Prize winner?" Again, I couldn't. "Can you name athletes who received gold medals in the last Olympics? Or the last woman to be crowned Miss America?"

Or...or...or. No...no...no.

Music, literature, art, government officials, scientists—I was zero for zero and wondering how many other listeners were answering these questions correctly. *What a way to start one's day. And on a Monday, in the rain.*

But then it happened. A question was asked that I could answer: "Can you name the last person who told you they loved you?" My heart melted as I remembered, vividly and without hesitation, my children running for the bus that very morning, yelling over their shoulders simultaneously, "Love you!"

Another question was asked, and again I had the answer: "Can you name the last person who hugged you?" Certainly. Most definitely.

Still others: "Can you name a person who showed you a kindness recently?" Of course. "Can you name a person to whom *you* showed a kindness recently." Again, of course. Yes, of course.

"Can you name someone whose smile makes a difference in your day? Or a teacher whose dedication made a difference in your life?" Yes, yes I know. Oh, who to choose. There are so many.

The announcer continued to speak of the friends, neighbors, co-workers, and even strangers who touch our lives, and I continued to smile. He spoke of encouragement, of helpfulness, of thoughtfulness, and of charity.

I felt like laughing out loud. *What a way to start one's day! And on a Monday! In the rain!*

The announcer's lesson would fit in a nutshell: Kindness matters. It is longed for and lived for. And it is remembered.

The mighty accomplishments and praiseworthy achievements of past and present may be chiseled in stone, but our individual hearts will recognize, first and foremost, the simple deeds of love and kindness which have left their imprint on our own humanity. Truly, to give love and receive love in the common moments of everyday life are goals as worthy as all others.

*"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can."* John Wesley

*"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And just because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."* Edward Hale

*"Make a rule and pray to God to help you keep it, never, if possible, to lie down at night without being able to say, 'I have made one human being a little wiser, or a little happier, or at least a little better this day.'"* Charles Kingsley

*"They might not need me, but they might. I'll let my head be just in sight. A smile as small as mine might be precisely their necessity."* Emily Dickinson