Courtesy, One Civil Action

While last month I identified a variety of civil behavior, I want to focus on only one, COURTESY, which I believe is truly a cornerstone of civility. Some of the definitions of courtesy are as follows: excellent of manners or social conduct, polite behavior; respectful or considerate act or expression; favor, help, or generous; polite behavior that shows respect for others, and civility. If each of us in every action and communication does not act in the manner of courtesy, we will be uncivil and more often than not be treated in that same manner. Courtesy, courtesy, courtesy.

Before I give examples in our daily life of courtesy to others, I want to share a few quotes I found on the subject that I thought help to expand ones thinking on the action.

“Courtesy costs nothing, but buys everything.” Hazrat Ali Ibn-Talib A.S.

“Politeness is the art of choosing among our thoughts.” Anne-Louise-Germaine de Stael.

“Courteousness is consideration for others, politeness is the method used to deliver such consideration for others.” Bryant McGill

“Ah, hon, it’s the little courtesies that make life bearable, I feel, wouldn’t you agree?” Andrew Ashling, Bonds of Hate.

“With your lunch box, do not forget to carry courtesy, respect, and gratitude from home.” Rupali Desai

“Gratitude comes in a spectrum of colors, but ingratitude is always black.” Anakala V Subbarao.

“All doors open to courtesy.” Thomas Fuller

“What if today you gave yourself permission of be outrageously kind? What if you extended as much goodwill and kindness as you can possibly muster to everyone you meet? What if you did it with no thought of reward? I’m sure of one thing: it will be a day you will never forget. Steve Goodier.

Here are some examples of the common courtesy that we need to practice in our multiple interactions with people each day. As we are courtesy, so will most others. Even if someone is not, we need to continue to be courteous.

Use of roads. While we may be able to walk or bike two by two; when we see a car or walker/biker coming our way, we need to return to single file. Cars if able can move slightly over the center line to give some space and slow down. Two cars come up to a four stop intersection at the same time, following the recommendation of letting the car on the right proceed first. Make sure that you keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you.

Coming into contact with a person, we can extend a friendly greeting, we may want to extend a hand, or give a hug.

Playing a game of bridge or other card game, waiting until everyone has had a chance to sort their cards before taking any action. Allow your opponent adequate time to make a play. Provide encouragement and praise only unless asked to provide criticism.

Cell phones do provide us with immediate connections to others; they can interfere with the face to face communications that you are having. Situations where cell phones need to be turned off are business hours and educational classes, organizational meetings, entertainment performances, bridge games, appointment waiting rooms, driving, special events with friends, and any time that someone needs your undivided attention or you do to concentrate.

When you have used the last of anything, you need to replace or tell the person who is responsible. One example is if you use the last toilet tissue, but a new roll on the holder

There are times you need to follow certain rules of procedure like a curtsy to the Queen.

Often two people arrive at the door at near the same time, if first open the door and let the person behind you proceed. If you use public transportation, you may give up your seat to assist someone who better needs the seat.

We do get upset and angry, step away and cool off before you decide if and what you want to say. Often it can help to give someone the benefit of a doubt. There may be a very different reason that they are acting in an uncivil manner.

Quietly wait your turn. Everyone that is in that line also has other places and tasks to be done.

When someone speaks to you, make an appropriate response immediately.

It helpful to try to keep a positive attitude as it is much easier to remain courteous.

May you all have a glorious day!

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