

Yellow Ribbon Activity (Lionel Hartley)

A teacher in New York decided to honour each of her seniors in high school by telling them the difference they each made. Using a process developed by Helice Bridges of Del Mar, California, she called each student to the front of the class, one at a time. First she told them how the student made a difference to her and the class. Then she presented each of them with a yellow ribbon imprinted with black letters that read, “Who I Am Makes a Difference.”

Afterwards the teacher decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact recognition would have on a community. She gave each of the students three more ribbons and instructed them to go out and spread this Acknowledgment Ceremony. Then they were to follow up on the results, see who honoured whom and report back to the class in about a week.

One of the boys in the class went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honoured him for helping him with his career planning. He gave him a yellow ribbon and put it on his shirt. Then he gave him two extra ribbons, and said, “We’re doing a class project on recognition, and we’d like you to go out, find somebody to honour, give them a yellow ribbon, then give them the extra yellow ribbon so they can acknowledge a third person to keep this Acknowledgment Ceremony going. Then please report back to me and tell me what happened.”

Later that day the junior executive went in to see his boss, who had been noted as being kind of a grouchy fellow. He sat his boss down and he told him that he deeply admired him for being a creative genius. The boss seemed very surprised. The junior executive asked him if he would accept the gift of the yellow ribbon and would he give him permission to put it on him.

His surprised boss said, “Well, sure.” The junior executive took the yellow ribbon and placed it right on his boss’s jacket above his heart. As he gave him the last extra ribbon, he said, “Would you do me a favour? Would you take this extra ribbon and pass it on by honouring somebody else? The young boy who first gave me the ribbons is doing a project in school, and we want to keep this recognition ceremony going and find out how it affects people.”

That night the boss came home to his 14-year-old son and sat him down. He said, “The most incredible thing happened to me today. I was in my office and one of the junior executives came in and told me he admired me and gave me a yellow ribbon for being a creative genius. Imagine! He thinks I’m a creative genius! Then he put this yellow ribbon that says ‘Who I Am Makes A Difference’ on my jacket above my heart. He gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find somebody else to honour.”

“As I was driving home tonight, I started thinking about whom I would honour with this ribbon, and I thought about you. I want to honour you. My days are really hectic, and when I come home, I don’t pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good enough grades in school and for your bedroom being a mess, but somehow tonight, I just wanted to sit here and let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You’re a great kid and I love you.”

The startled boy started to sob and sob, and he couldn’t stop crying. His whole body shook. He looked up at his father and said through his tears, “I was planning on committing suicide tomorrow, Dad, because I didn’t think you loved me. Now I don’t need to.”

Now I have here some yellow paper ribbons each with the words “Who I Am Makes a Difference.” I would like us to use these to honour someone here tonight. I am going to start the ball rolling here and ask _____ to come up the front. I am going to tell him/her why I have chosen to honour him/her and give him/her two ribbons. One for him/her and the other for him/her to give to someone else.

—— **Follow through with exercise** ——

Closing prayer:

Lord, we hear you praising good and faithful servants, we hear you praising the seven churches of Revelation and we hear your Father in Heaven praising You. We recognise that the greatest thing we can give is encouragement and it is a privilege to give a cheerful word when we can.

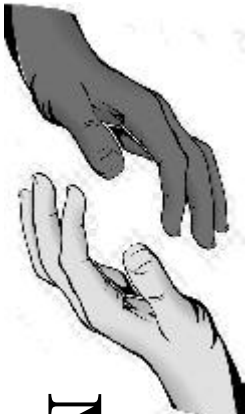
Help us, Lord to find opportunities to be an encourager.

Thank You Lord that because of the value that You place on each of us you can change us to be the very best so that who we are can really make a difference.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.



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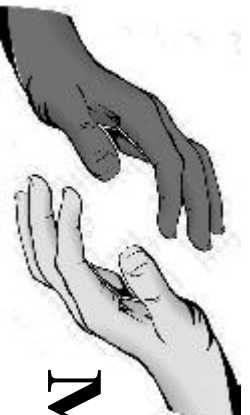
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