

Everyday Leadership

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During each of the college courses that I instruct, I try to find a way to incorporate a TED Talk into my lectures. A TED Talk is a short presentation that discusses constructive ideas that people can use to support a worthy cause or improve a person's situation in life.

For many of my courses that involve leadership principles, I often choose a short TED Talk by Drew Dudley called "Everyday Leadership." In his presentation, Drew calls on all of us to celebrate leadership as an everyday act of improving each other's lives. He also suggests that every person has the potential to be a leader, regardless of our role or position. In fact, many of us serve as leaders without knowing it when we offer someone help or extend a kind gesture to support someone in need.

However, how will we know if something we have done to help someone made a positive difference in their lives? Will they take the time to say thank you or provide us feedback so we realize that our actions actually helped?

During a recent chance meeting, I was given feedback by my former hair stylist about something I did over 20 years ago that made a significant difference in her life during a family tragedy. Over the course of a few months when I visited her for my haircut I would offer her words of encouragement and hope during her time of need. My investment of time and effort was minimal, and I did it simply to try to make a small difference in her life as she struggled with the loss of a child.

Because my gesture was so insignificant to me, I had forgotten that I even did it. However, for her it was something that she never forgot and she wanted me to know how much my efforts meant to her. As you can imagine, I was shocked that my gesture had made such an important impact in her life. Had I not run into her at her new hair salon I would never have known the significance of my words.

In conclusion, "Everyday Leadership" does not typically require great effort, expense or a position of power. However, your gesture of kindness can often make a positive difference and impact on those you help. Unfortunately, many times we never know if our words or deeds make a difference.

In light of this, what will you do this week to let someone know how much you appreciate what they have done for you?