

## Noticing - Noticing, A Way To Express Love

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### Noticing

There is a story of a professor who gave the class a pop quiz. The final question was a surprise to everyone: *"What is the first name of the woman who cleans our classroom?"* Some of the students thought this was some kind of joke. Many had seen the janitor and even bumped into her several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her fifties. When the time was up, all students handed their quiz with all, but the last question answered. Nobody knew her name. At the end of the class, one student asked if the last question would count toward the quiz grade. The professor replied, *"Absolutely, in your work and in life, you will meet many people. All are significant. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say 'hello.'"*

How often during the day do we take time to notice those around us: our co-workers, the checker at the grocery store, the parking attendant at the garage, friends, our spouse, or our children? When we can shift our focus from the tasks at hand to being aware of others, we are able to create connection, awareness, and empathy.

Noticing can be a way to express love, and some say that attention is the most basic expression of love. Saying to your child, "I saw how patient you were with your brother" is communicating acknowledgement and care. Putting your phone

away and listening to your adult son share about the challenges of find a work-family-life balance expresses much more than words could ever do. Author and educator David Augsburger has said, "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable."

Paying attention to ourselves is also an important life skill. Noticing what causes me to overreact helps me to become more aware of emotions and feelings that still need some attention. Things that trigger or challenge us are awakenings that something needs our attention. Noticing what brings us joy can help us to bring more of it into our lives.

"Every day is filled with opportunities to be amazed, surprised, enthralled—to experience the enchanting everyday. To stay eager. To be, in a word, alive."

— Rob Walker, *The Art of Noticing*

For more on this topic, read some previous blogposts.

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