

Ordinary People

Category: Unsung Heroes

written by Esther Pottoore | April 13, 2023

On my first day at nursing college, everything was a blur. When I came home, my sister asked if I knew the name of the security guard at the college gate. I looked at her like she had two heads! Why on earth would I need that information?

“Trust me!” she said. “It will come handy!”

I rolled my eyes and sighed. But I knew my sister, and she always had a method to her madness.

The next day, I asked the guard his name. He looked surprised. “My name is Ram Sevak,” he said. “Servant of god Ram,” he shyly added.

I introduced myself, and he smiled at me. After that, I greeted him daily, and he always had a word of good cheer. One time, I noticed him coughing and offered to bring him cough medicine from the college dispensary. He was very grateful. Another time, he warned me that it was going to pour and offered me his umbrella. It rained cats and dogs that day!

I used to stop and talk to him. Heard about his ailing wife; comforted him when she died; rejoiced over the pictures of his first grand child. He was a living, breathing human being. When I graduated from nursing college, he blessed me. Some of my fondest memories of college life include him.

Since then, I’ve made it my practice to learn the names of parking lot attendants, security guards and front-desk staff. On one occasion, I was able to encourage a parking attendant to go back to school. I met him again years later, and now he is an accounts manager in the same building I work!

What I’ve learned is that these are the people who make things happen. Advocating from the front desk for a patient to get an appointment. Offering a parking spot in a restricted area during a snow storm. Opening the door when you are loaded with shopping bags. Asking you why you look glum and perking you up with a joke!

In society’s eyes, they have ordinary jobs, but in my eyes they are the super stars who make things happen! They have been instrumental in helping me get a crucial appointment for an asthmatic child; a new mask when there are no supplies; a hot cup of coffee when I really needed it. They’ve made a huge difference.

Almost forty years after my sister asked the question, I understand the why.

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