

Appreciation

If you're like me, you have at least one job (possibly one compensated and multiple other 'volunteer' roles – spouse, parent, taxi driver, church and civic group member, etc.) and myriad responsibilities that keep your days, nights and weekends occupied. Perhaps, like me, you spend time lamenting about how busy you are and how time just keeps flying faster. I know that as the school year winds down, I find myself commenting to friends how much I have to do and how rapidly this year, in particular, seems to have passed. I get so busy *spending* time that I neglect to properly appreciate my time.

It's funny, though. Time hasn't changed. Sixty seconds is still sixty seconds, and it still takes 60 minutes to make an hour. It's us.....the human race....that's changed. We have allowed technology and our circumstances to whip us into a frenzy of to-do lists and places to be. Most of us are doing more at work and at the same time trying to maintain a home. Are we so busy 'getting it done', though, that we've stopped taking time to appreciate the little things in life and express our appreciation to those who matter most? I'm afraid if I'm honest, in my case the answer is yes more often than it should be.

And so as we celebrate May and its character trait of appreciation, I have vowed to appreciate more and hurry less. For example, this morning when I arrived at an undisclosed location for a meeting that is actually *next* week, I chose to appreciate the opportunity to chat for a few minutes with a friend I spend lots of times in meetings with but haven't gotten to just talk to for a while! I also paused in my car for an extra moment as I returned to work to appreciate the sunshine. It may sound silly, but taking just a little bit here and there to slow down and smell the proverbial roses is making me more appreciative of their mere existence.

You see, as each of us is reminded when circumstances force us to acknowledge it, our time here is limited. We don't have the luxury of knowing exactly how much time we have, but we do have a choice of how we spend our time – or more directly, how we appreciate that time. Whether at work, running that carpool, or cleaning the house, I do have the choice to appreciate the fact that I have a job, that my kids are healthy enough to be involved in activities that give me cause to drive around Lee's Summit multiple times daily, and that I have a home to clean.

So while I have the opportunity via this column, here's a shout out to my friends, family and community. I appreciate you - more than you know. I am grateful for the opportunity to live, work and play in a city where people care and give so generously of themselves, especially through organizations like Lee's Summit CARES and initiatives such as the Community of Character, for it is character education that will give our children the foundation on which to build meaningful lives.

So as we finish off another hectic school year, I hope you will choose to see each day as filled with opportunities to appreciate your time. Whatever your form of gratitude– a smile, a hug, an ice-cream cone, let someone know today that you appreciate them being a part of your life. You won't regret it, and they surely will appreciate that you took the time.

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