

Life Notes

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The Gifts of Compliments and Acknowledgement

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In our busy lives we often forget or hold back recognizing the people around us. The dictionary defines compliment as *an expression of praise, admiration or congratulation*. “That color is beautiful on you.” “Man, that’s an amazing new vehicle!” “Great job!” are compliments. They give praise and tell someone that you admire how she looks, what he owns, or what she has done. We all like to be praised and admired. Compliments allow us to feel special; like we made a good choice; or did something well and someone noticed. Remember when you were a kid and earned an “A” or did your chores on time? Your dad said, “Good job.” You felt on top of the world. Dad felt good too because he saw that it brightened you up. Compliments make both giver and receiver feel good. The receiver feels noticed. The giver feels that noticing was worth his/her effort. It’s an inexpensive way to make someone feel special.

Why don’t we give compliments more often? What stops you from passing on a word of praise occasionally? Maybe you think compliments but forget to say them. Maybe you feel you don’t know how; or you don’t give them because you have a hard time accepting them. Maybe the person will think it’s dumb that you admire her. NOT! Not to all of the above. There is no good excuse, and holding back is just that: an excuse. If you see it and like it, praise it. Experiment one word at a time: “Cool.” “Pretty.” “Awesome.” “Impressive.” Grow from there, one statement at a time.

Some people are too humble or even embarrassed to receive a compliment. A friend’s grandmother suggested treating a compliment as a gift. You wouldn’t say, “Oh, no. I don’t want your gift. It embarrasses me.” That would make the giver feel rotten. It is kind of the person to notice and to give the compliment. Your reply can be as simple as saying “thank you.” You will make the giver feel good too.

A similar valuable skill is *acknowledgement*. This has *really* become a lost art in our culture! Have you ever caught yourself saying, “He just doesn’t get me!” “I hate working here. The boss doesn’t value what I do.” “I wish mom would listen to what I’m saying.” You want to be recognized for who you are and what you believe. Acknowledging a person for who he is, the value he holds, the message she carries is a powerful tool to make him/her feel known and worthy. Acknowledgement creates an eagerness for the person to step up to greater accomplishments.

Acknowledgement requires knowing something about a person and what he stands for in life. It recognizes your knowing of the person. We all like being known. It is human. We were created to be social, interactive beings. We crave being known

and understood by others. When an employer, a teacher, a parent takes time to know what you value and says, “You are committed to doing a good job.” or “You are a thoughtful, compassionate person.” or “I understand that you value teamwork.” you feel validated. You feel like they understand where you are coming from; what you believe in, and stand for. Acknowledgement takes deeper knowing than a compliment. It is more than praise. It is not an opinion. It is recognition of who you are.

As a life coach, I help clients discover what is important to them and what values they hold. When they demonstrate these values in their work and personal lives, I acknowledge them. They feel good for being who they are. When we show up in life authentically, standing tall for what we believe, we are at our best. Being acknowledged for that by people around us inspires us to seek even higher ground and greater goals.

Who can you inspire today? Take a small step and pay someone a compliment. Take a bigger step and acknowledge someone you live or work with. You will be amazed at the results!

It’s nice chatting with you. I’ll be back in the paper next month, but if you’d like to learn more about life coaching or talk about where you are stuck in your life, visit my website at www.lifesongcoaching.com. or give me a call at 218-327-2691. We’ll make a plan!



Life Notes is a monthly submission to the Floodwood, MN, **Northern Independent**, and a newsletter to Life Song Coaching clients & potential clients. Contact Bonnie Henriksen, CPCC, at the above web address to request future copies of *Life Notes*.