

Calming a Terrified Trucker

Sociologist Robert Wuthnow of Princeton University has explored how it is that people make everyday ethical decisions.

Many people, he found, perform deeds of compassion, service and mercy because – at some point in their past – someone acted with compassion toward them.

He wrote: “The caring we receive may touch us so deeply that we feel especially gratified when we are able to pass it on to someone else.”



Wuthnow tells the story of Jack Casey, who was employed as an emergency worker on an ambulance rescue squad. When Jack was a child, he had oral surgery. Five teeth were to be pulled under general anesthetic, and Jack was fearful.

What he remembers most, though, was the operating-room nurse who, sensing the boy’s terror, said, “Don’t worry, I’ll be right here beside you no matter what happens.” When Jack woke up after the surgery, she was true to her word, standing right there with him.

Nearly 20 years later, Jack’s ambulance team was called to the scene of a highway accident. A truck had overturned, the driver was pinned in the cab, and power tools were necessary to get him out. However, gasoline was dripping onto the driver’s clothes, and one spark from the power tools could have spelled disaster.

The driver was terrified, crying out that he was scared of dying. So, Jack crawled into the cab next to him and said, “Look, don’t worry. I’m right here with you; I’m not going anywhere.” And Jack was true to his word. He stayed with the man until he was safely removed from the wreckage.

Later, the truck driver told Jack, “You were an idiot. You know that the whole thing could have exploded, and we’d have both been burned up!”

Jack told him that he felt he just couldn’t leave him. Why was that, you wonder?

Many years before, Jack had been treated compassionately by the nurse, and because of that experience, he could show that same compassion to another.

Receiving grace enabled him to give grace.

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No doubt that principle resonates in the hearts of the associates of Life Care and Century Park, who feel compelled to help others because they've been helped along life's journey.

And without a doubt, the grace they show to residents and patients will be paid forward to people they encounter in their lives.

Jesus had something to say on this subject: *If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet* (John 13:14 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter