Law of the Garbage Truck

Has someone treated you with incivility, insensitivity or meanness today? Sadly, on occasions, it seems as if there is an all-too-frequent demonstration of such reactions, perhaps brought on by stress, fatigue, frustration or depression. How should we react when confronted with such behavior?

Jennie McClaren, vice president of People Development for Life Care, has used an article in corporate training classes – and distributed it to both campuses in Cleveland – that addresses this subject. Here it is, written by an unknown author:

One day I hopped into a taxi, and we took off for the airport. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a black car jumped out of a parking space right in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his brakes, skidded and missed the other car by just inches. The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy; and I mean he was really friendly.

So I asked, "Why did you just do that? This guy almost ruined your car and sent us to the hospital."

That's when my taxi driver taught me what I now call "The Law of the Garbage Truck."

He explained that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage – full of frustration, full of anger and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it, and sometimes they will dump it on you. Don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well and move on. Don't take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home or on the streets.

The bottom line is that successful people do not let garbage trucks take over their day. Life is too short to wake up in the morning with regrets, so love the people who treat you right, and pray for those who don't.

Life is 10 percent what you make it and 90 percent how you take it.

The advice of this story is good. Admittedly, it is hard to live out, but it is definitely the high road of human relations.

– Beecher Hunter