

Man on the Train

Kent Nerburn, who wrote *Letters to My Son: A Father's Wisdom on Manhood, Life, and Love*, once took a train ride across Canada. On his journey, Nerburn encountered a man whom the other passengers avoided. This fellow was assumed to be a drunkard because of his slurred speech and unstable gait.

But Nerburn began a conversation with the man and soon learned he was recovering from a stroke. This man was once an engineer and operated trains along the very tracks that they were riding. For the next several hours, he told Nerburn tales of the land they traveled through and legends of the people who once lived there. He also offered some insight into some of the characters who worked for the railroad.

At the end of their conversation, the man thanked Nerburn for speaking with him. But it was Nerburn who was grateful for the experience.

Every day, we make uninformed assessments of people and things in our environment, the accuracy of which we sometimes never discover. So, the next time you are faced with choosing between avoiding an exchange with someone or embracing it, think of Kent Nerburn, who says: "Take a chance. Like people first, ask questions later. See if it doesn't open the world to you in a new way. See if the light you shine on others isn't reflected back on you a hundred-fold."

Of course, we who work in Life Care, Century Park and Life Care at Home have a living library of stories available in the residents we serve.

All we need to do is engage them in conversation, and enjoy the ride it brings.

--Beecher Hunter