

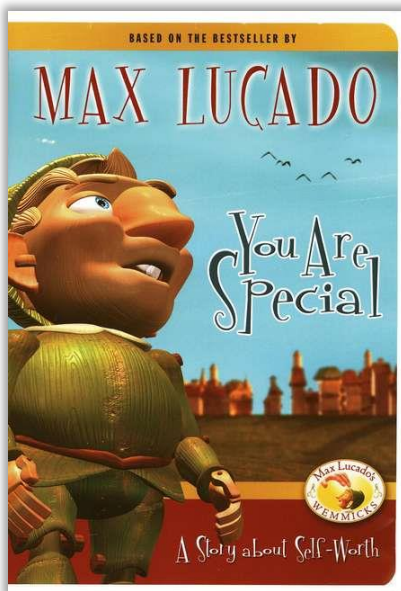
Tears in a Chinese Orphanage

In his book, *You Changed My Life: Stories of Real People with Remarkable Hearts*, author and minister Max Lucado tells a compelling story from a Chinese orphanage that every human being needs to hear.

The orphanage was for deaf and mute children. China's one-child policy has a way of weeding out the weak. Males are selected over females. Healthy babies outrank the impaired.

Chinese children who cannot speak or hear stand little chance of a healthy, productive life. Every message tells them, "You don't matter."

So when someone says otherwise, they melt. Chinese missionary John Bentley describes such a moment:



Deaf orphans in Hunan province were given a Mandarin translation of a children's book Lucado wrote entitled *You Are Special*. The story describes Punchinello, a wooden person in a village of wooden people. The villagers had a practice of sticking stars on the achievers and dots on the strugglers. Punchinello had so many dots that people gave him more dots for no reason at all.

But then Punchinello met Eli, his maker. Eli affirmed him, telling him to disregard the opinion of others. "I made you," he explained. "I don't make mistakes."

Punchinello had never heard such words. When he did, his dots began to fall off. And when the children in the Chinese orphanage heard such words, their worlds began to change.

Here is how Missionary Bentley described the moment:

When they first distributed these books to the children and staff of the deaf school, the most bizarre thing happened. At a certain point, everyone started crying. I could not understand this reaction. Americans are somewhat used to the idea of positive reinforcement. Not so in China, and particularly not for these children who are virtually abandoned and considered valueless by their natural parents because they were born "broken."

(more)

When the idea came through in the reading that they are special simply because they were made by a loving Creator ... everyone started crying – including their teachers. It was wild!”

This story from Bentley recorded by Lucado has special application to us who work in Life Care and in Century Park, for two reasons:

1. For you professionally. You deal with men and women on a daily basis who may feel broken physically or spiritually, who may feel discarded by society – and perhaps even by their own families – because of time and circumstance. These are the broken ones.
2. For you personally. Caregiving can take its own demanding toll – particularly in an environment in which we face an over-reach in regulation and the ever-present threat of litigation – and erode our sense of self-worth if allowed.

Just remember: Our Lord created you and called you to this field of service. And He doesn't make mistakes. You are special!

For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because I am fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:13-14 NIV).

– Beecher Hunter