

The Jefferson Charm

Thomas Jefferson was a man of exceptional ability. But there have been many other people with as much or more talent who never received the acclaim the world gave to this man.

The reason is that Jefferson had more than ability. He had the gift of being able to see how he could please others, and he pleased them. How did he exert so much charm over folks he met? Even those who had doubts about him, who even disliked him and opposed him on occasion, became his friends. Why? The answer is simple. He made everyone feel important.

When he was President, Mrs. Samuel Harrison Smith wrote something that gives us an illuminating example of how he accomplished this.

“He gave everyone an opportunity of talking,” Smith said. “I recollect at one dinner there was a man who was silent and neglected. To him, the President said, ‘We are indebted to you, Mr. Collins. No one deserves more gratitude of the country.’ He then described a very minor contribution Mr. Collins had made.

“Every eye turned to the guest,” continued Smith, “who honestly looked more astonished than anyone else in the room. He had been a mere cipher before. Now he had become a person of importance.”

It’s such a simple idea and one that all of us can use every day in our contact with others. Today, in the centers of Life Care and Century Park and in the work of Life Care at Home, we will meet men and women who are starving for attention, yearning for importance.

Give it to them and you will win friends.

--Beecher Hunter