

# American Inspiration



## *American Weekly Inspiration*

### Thoughts for today and every day:

“You can clutch the past so tightly to your chest that it leaves your arms too full to embrace the present.” Jan Glidewell, columnist

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“We are each gifted in a unique and important way. It is our privilege and our adventure to discover our own special light.”

Mary Dunbar

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“Everything is complicated; if that were not so, life and poetry and everything else would be a bore.” Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)

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“To earn trust you must have values. Values are about personal consistency. Values give you a rock solid sense of who you are — what you believe in—which side you are on.” Jeffrey Immelt, business executive

### American Update:

As the Christmas and holiday season approach, I hope that you, your co-workers, or your team are planning an activity to allow you to make Christmas a little brighter for someone in your community. This can be done in so many ways: a special performance at a nursing home; volunteering to serve food for those less fortunate; adopting a family for Christmas gifts; taking an angel from the Angel Tree, and so many more. Kindness is one of the greatest gift you can give of yourself.

## Inspiration of the Week:

### **PRACTICE RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS**

There is a bumper sticker that has been out for some time now. You see it on cars all across the nation (in fact, I have one on my own car). It says "Practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty."

I have no idea who thought of this idea, but I've never seen a more important message on a car in front of me. Practicing random kindness is an effective way to get in touch with the joy of giving without expecting anything in return. It's best practiced without letting anyone know what you are doing.

There are five toll bridges in the San Francisco Bay area. A while back, some people began paying the tolls of the cars immediately behind them. The drivers would drive to the toll window, and pull out their dollar bill, only to be informed, "Your toll has been paid by the car ahead of you." This is an example of a spontaneous, random gift, something giving without expectation of or demand for anything in return. You can imagine the impact that tiny gift had on the driver of the car! Perhaps it encouraged him to be a nicer person that day. Often a single act of kindness sets a series of kind acts in motion.

There is no prescription for how to practice random kindness. It comes from your heart. Your gift might be to pick up litter in your neighborhood, make an anonymous contribution to a charity, send some cash in an unmarked envelope to make someone experiencing financial stress breathe a little easier, save an animal by bringing it to an animal rescue agency, or get a volunteer position feeding hungry people at a church or shelter. You may want to do all these things, and more. The point is, giving is fun and it doesn't have to be expensive.

Perhaps the greatest reason to practice random kindness is that it brings great contentment into your life. Each act of kindness rewards you with positive feelings and reminds you of the important aspects of life-service, kindness, and love. If we all do our own part, pretty soon we will live in a nicer world.

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