

## **Acting Out in Life**

**Cody P.**

Grade 12

Delphos Jefferson High School

There is a story I came across on the internet that I thought had such a powerful message. It is a story about a soldier who was finally coming home after having fought in Vietnam. He called his parents from San Francisco.

“Mom and Dad, I’m coming home, but I’ve a favor to ask. I have a friend I’d like to bring home with me.” “Sure,” they replied, “we’d love to meet him.” “There’s something you should know,” the son continued, “he was hurt pretty badly in the fighting. He stepped on a land mine and lost an arm and a leg. He has nowhere else to go, and I want him to come live with us.” “I’m sorry to hear that, son, Maybe we can help him find somewhere to live.” “No, Mom and Dad, I want him to live with us.” “Son,” said the father, “you don’t know what you’re asking. Someone with such a handicap would be a terrible burden on us. We have our own lives to live, and we can’t let something like this interfere with our lives. I think you should just come home and forget about this guy. He’ll find a way to live on his own.”

At that point, the son hung up the phone. The parents heard nothing more from him. A few days later, however, they received a call from the San Francisco police. Their son had died after falling from a building, they were told. The police believed it was suicide. The grief-stricken parents flew to San Francisco and were taken to the city morgue to identify the body of their son. They recognized him, but to their horror they also discovered something they didn’t know, their son had only one arm and leg.

Most would look at this story and say it demonstrates the fact that all of us avoid problems; even I though this at first. I thought that we avoid others because they aren’t as healthy, beautiful, or smart as we are, but that isn’t the case at all. I thought about it and found that we don’t avoid others because of how healthy, pretty, or smart they may be; it is because we steer clear of inconveniences and situations that make us feel uncomfortable.

Think about it: if anyone would see a handicapped person in a wheel chair they would naturally feel sorry for the person. They would demonstrate a compassionate and caring attitude, but where many people make the mistake is acting upon their feelings. When we see the handicapped person we will smile at them and then look away, so not to be rude. Why don’t we do something as simple as going up and saying hello?

The matter of the fact is we don’t want to leave our comfort zones. Yet, if we just went a little out of our way, we could positively impact so many others. Imagine what a hello or a compliment could do for many. Sure, you may not know the person, but doesn’t that make it more meaningful for the recipient? It makes people feel good to be complimented; it makes people feel good to be noticed. Everyone deserves to be noticed, to be happy.

How does this affect my life? Well everyday I try to go against the norm and talk to, compliment, and do other things for others. I try to overcome the uncomfortable feelings and reach out to others, and what an impact it makes. Every week I volunteer at the local hospital just to talk and interact with patients. Not only has it meant a lot for them, but it has done so much for me as a person. You would be surprised at how good it makes people feel to be noticed, and how good you'll feel in return.

Now, the task is getting others to apply this to their life. Sure, it doesn't mean you have to take someone into your home, but it at least takes acting on, motivating yourself to talk to others. Take time out of your daily routine to notice someone, even if it is a simple hello. So the next time you get the chance, act out in life and see how many lives you can brighten.