

Remember RAK?

Before COVID, Random Acts of Kindness became a movement. People paid for the coffee of the person behind them at Starbucks, bought a stranger's meal at a drive-thru, and left encouraging notes for people they would never meet.

And let me be clear—I love that concept.

Please don't stop doing it.

Kindness is always worth celebrating.

But what if we took it a step further?

The person standing behind you at Starbucks can probably afford their coffee. More importantly, paying for their drink requires very little extra effort. You're already at the counter. You're already paying for your own order. All you have to do is swipe your card one more time.

That's kind.

But what if we kicked kindness up a notch?

Or two.

Or ten.

What about the bell ringer standing outside a department store in the cold? The one enduring wind, rain, and long hours while most people hurry past without making eye contact?

What if we went out of our way for that person?

One day, my husband Daveed and I stopped at Walmart. He stayed in the car while I ran inside to grab an item. On my way out, I noticed the bell ringer standing outside in the cold.

I walked over and asked, “Can I go to Starbucks and buy you a cup of coffee or maybe a hot chocolate?”

She immediately replied, “Oh no, that’s too much trouble.”

I smiled and said, “That’s exactly my point. I want to go out of my way to do something kind for you. So which would you like—coffee or hot chocolate?”

Her face lit up.

“Hot chocolate.”

“Would you like whipped cream?”

“Absolutely.”

I got back into the car and told Daveed, “We’re not going home just yet. We’re making a quick stop at Starbucks.”

He immediately started clapping his hands and grinning.

“Oh my goodness, I know exactly what you’re going to do. You’re going to buy something for the bell ringer, aren’t you?”

“Absolutely.”

We returned with her hot chocolate. As she wrapped her hands around the warm cup and took her first sip, her entire demeanor changed.

Not because it was hot chocolate.

But because someone had noticed her.

Someone had seen her.

Someone had decided she mattered.

She became so excited that she wanted to FaceTime her sister and introduce me. Then she said something I'll never forget:

“No one has ever done anything like this for me before.”

She didn't know how to thank me.

I told her, “You can thank me by paying it forward. Look for opportunities every day to show kindness to someone else.”

She hugged me.

Then Daveed and I walked away.

That encounter reinforced something I've believed for a long time.

We live in a fast-paced world. We're rushing to the next appointment, the next obligation, the next notification. We spend so much time looking down at our phones that we often fail to see the people standing right in front of us.

We've become experts at living digitally while becoming disconnected from reality.

The greatest need in our world may not be more technology.

It may be more awareness.

More compassion.

More humanity.

More people willing to slow down long enough to notice.

Notice the cashier.

Notice the elderly person eating alone.

Notice the single mother struggling with her groceries.

Notice the veteran.

Notice the janitor.

Notice the bell ringer.

Notice the people who are often invisible to everyone else.

This is the heart behind what I call D.A.S.H.

Display Acts of Selfless Humanity.

Most people think of the dash as the small line between the date of someone's birth and the date of their death. Yet that tiny mark represents an entire lifetime—every choice, every sacrifice, every act of kindness, and every life touched along the way.

The question is not how much money you accumulate.

The question is what your dash will say about you.

Will it tell the story of someone who was too busy to notice the needs around them?

Or will it tell the story of someone who intentionally displayed acts of selfless humanity?

Someone who noticed the overlooked.

Encouraged the discouraged.

Lifted the burdened.

Helped the hurting.

And made the world a little brighter simply because they were here.

D.A.S.H. is more than an acronym.

It's a challenge.

A challenge to slow down long enough to see people.

A challenge to look beyond ourselves.

A challenge to choose compassion when indifference would be easier.

A challenge to go out of our way to make someone else's day better.

Imagine what would happen if every person committed to displaying one act of selfless humanity every day.

One encouraging conversation.

One handwritten note.

One meal.

One prayer.

One cup of hot chocolate.

One moment of kindness that says, "I see you. You matter."

The atmosphere of our communities would change.

Negativity would lose ground.

Hope would spread.

People would feel seen.

And the world would become a little brighter.

One act of selfless humanity at a time.

So yes, keep practicing Random Acts of Kindness.

But every now and then, go out of your way.

Because the greatest impact often comes when kindness costs us something—our time, our effort, our convenience, or our comfort.

That's what D.A.S.H. is all about.

Display Acts of Selfless Humanity.

And make sure the dash between the dates of your life says something spectacular about who you were.