

Sharing a smile

We are taught early in life that it is good to share. Most of us at that young age really don't want to share things that we consider ours. We will happily share things that don't belong to us, especially if the item belongs to an older sibling. ☐ Hopefully, as time goes by it gets easier to share things we have.

We can share our 'stuff' with others. Give money to the charity. Give items to various thrift shops. By food and sundries for a local soup kitchen or food pantry. Local agencies of many kinds ask for donations of money, food, clothing and even blood. Yes, we can share our stuff with others.

We can share our time with others. Volunteering at the above locations is also a way of sharing. We can help our friends, neighbors and other members of our community by doing things for them, that they are unable to do by themselves. Our time is precious and it can be shared.

When we get closer to people (friends, family, loved ones) we often share our emotions. This can be difficult for some, but it can be very rewarding to both parties. Because of the nature of this sharing, it can, at times, cause pain and heartache. Emotional sharing opens many doorways to our souls.

But even when we have no 'stuff', time, or deep emotions to share, it can be easy and wonderful to share one last thing. With almost no effort on our part we can share a smile. Smiles, like yawns, can be infectious. Start a smile in a room and see how many others share your smile. Start laughing in a room and see how long it takes for that to make the rounds.

I've found that sharing smiles and laughter are some of the best things to share. It will make a lasting impression on those you meet, and generally that impression will be a good

one.

□

Words of life

As I live life, talk with friends, watch movies, or live theater, I come across words that in some way touch my life. That touch may only be for a second or two, but the results can be extraordinary.

Last night, I was humbled. People came down after the show to express their gratitude for our acting. My little performance received high praise from many people. As I said, I was humbled. This is a role, as late early this week, I did not feel was my best effort. I am very glad it pleased the audience. Those short “thank yous” meant a lot to me.

Over the course of my life, I’ve been fascinated with words and our ability to communicate many things with those words and how we say them. Written communication can never compete with the vocal/visual combination, but they do have some effect on the way I view things. If they didn’t, I don’t think I would be writing a blog.

Being able to communicate well is helpful in most situations. There are times that I wish my skills in this area were better, but I will take what I have. Of course I want to share the words that have touched my life in some way or another.

Around in the winter of 1983 and 1984 I started hearing the words “Hi Daddy” from a precocious 2 year old. Those two words changed my life. In her eyes, I was daddy from the time those words were uttered. According to the State, it took until

1985. I was able to hear those words from 3 other lovely young ladies over the past years too. Sometimes I wonder what I did to be able to hear those words with the love that is evident every time they say them.

Of course, other words from my family have also deeply touched me. Words like: "Father of the Bride", "Husband and Wife", "I love you." There have been sad words too. "I'm sorry we couldn't do more.", "We need to go to the hospital (or emergency room).", "We don't know.", "It was a heart attack.", "It was cancer."

And with my family there were also many movie quotes that are used in our daily lives. Here are a few that I think are special.

This is my family. I found it, all on my own. Is little, and broken, but still good. Yeah, still good.

I always have a wonderful time, wherever I am, whomever I'm with.

No matter what happens tomorrow, or the rest of my life, I'm happy now because I love you.

Years ago my mother used to say to me, she'd say, "In this world, Elwood, you must be" – she always called me Elwood – "In this world, Elwood, you must be oh so smart or oh so pleasant." Well, for years I was smart. I recommend pleasant. You may quote me.

I'll give you a winter prediction: It's gonna be cold, it's gonna be grey, and it's gonna last you for the rest of your life.

I know. You know I know. I know you know I know. We know

Henry knows. And Henry knows we know it. We're a knowledgeable family.

Words and how they are said make a difference. That is one reason I am careful with the words that come from my mouth, pen or keyboard.

Things I think I think?

Before cell phones and text messaging, before the internet and email, before the telephone, before the typewriter, people used to write letters by hand. They knew their language, both the writing part and the reading part.

Today in this fast paced world people don't take the time to write letters anymore. A quick email here, and text message their, an entry in a blog or on MySpace are what communication is today. I'm as guilty as the next person, except that I don't instant message, chat or text. I'm much too wordy for any of those media. It is just too sad that people don't know anything about the complete art of letter writing/reading.

NOTICE!!! I included reading in my assessment of a lost art. Before the advent of all these new ways to communicate, people took the time to read their letters. They were not meant to be a quick read. These were missives that someone took time to write and they deserved time in reading also.

Why am I mentioning this? Good question, I asked it of myself too. It seems that some maybe most people are looking at blog sites, and bulletin boards as direct communication to themselves. They take comments meant for general consumption and think others are talking about them. They have hard

feelings when they think something or someone is against them. Now, I will admit that in some cases they may have a valid point, but in others, people weren't talking or writing about them. But they want to take it personally.

Then again, people today don't think before they write. They can write things that could be considered cruel toward an individual or a group. People then get bent out of shape and small wars tarnish the blogs, bulletin boards and myspace accounts. So sad sometimes. Good conversations are ruined by misunderstandings. It happens almost everywhere on the web.

So in this, I asked myself: Why?. I came up with one simple idea. It could be something, it could be nothing at all. We are losing the ability to communicate effectively with the written word, just by not paying attention to what we write and how we read. Is this something we will miss in our lives, or will the older members of society who remember this sort of communication, just talk (write?) about the good ol' days.

Just one word of advice to those who read Blogs, myspace accounts, bulletin boards, emails, text msgs. and the like. If you read something that bothers you, take some time, leave it, come back to it later read it again. Before responding in haste or anger, make sure you understand what is written, and if those words really apply to you. I've used that since my very first e-mail, and intend to keep using that practice well into my very last e-mail or whatever form of communication the future brings me.