PSYC 304

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Assignment 5

I have always believed that a smile is contagious. Which is why I was excited to complete this assignment. I decided to complete most of these acts of kindness at work. I have been teaching preschool for less than a month, so I am still the newest person at my work and many of the employees do not know me at all. I thought it would be a fun way to possibly make some friends or get to know some of the people who I work with.

On Monday I decided to grab an extra coffee at Starbucks on my way to work. I figured that I would grab the extra since I was already getting coffee anyways. When I walked in to work I gave it to our receptionist, Maria. I gave it to her because she is the first person in and the last person out of the academy every single day.

At the end of the day on Tuesday I vacuumed a colleague’s classroom in addition to my own. Similar to the first one, this was an act of kindness committed out of convenience. I already had the vacuum and it was not a lot of work to go next door and vacuum that classroom as well. I was in a groove so I also vacuumed the classroom across the hall from me. This saved the other teachers time at the end of the day so they could leave a couple of minutes earlier.

On Wednesday I had to stop and get gas on my way to work. I almost forgot about the assignment until someone pulled up on the pump next to me. I was immediately pulled to pay for their gas as well. I remembered a time a couple of years ago where someone did the same for me, and my entire day was made better. I hoped to pass that on to the person next to me.

Wednesday night I had to go to the E.R. and stay all day Thursday for observation. So on Friday I did two acts of kindness. On my lunch break someone’s snickers bar got stuck in the vending machine, so I offered them a dollar to get it unstuck. Then, Friday I was leaving work I offered to take someone’s trash to the trash can since I was already taking my own trash.

I was surprised at how much of an explanation I had to give people to show them that my act of kindness was just that simple, an act of kindness. On Monday, it took me over 5 minutes to convince Maria that the coffee was not a joke, and that I was just bringing her coffee. She seemed pleased when I left and came to my classroom later to tell me thank you.

On Tuesday the reactions were nice. I did not ask to vacuum the classrooms, I just went in with the vacuum and did it. My favorite part about this was on Wednesday and on Friday one of the teachers came and vacuumed my classroom. I hope that it becomes a routine where we just take turns vacuuming the classrooms and helping each other out. It felt a lot more like a community the rest of the week.

On Wednesday I described my act of kindness as a, “pay it forward.” The lady was so excited that she did a little squeal. I told her to fill up her car and then try to do a good deed for another stranger today. This deed made me feel warm inside, and I was in a really great mood on my way to work.

On Friday I figured out that the most common reaction to acts of kindness was, “you didn’t have to do that!” That is exactly what both of the people who I helped on this day said to me. Getting the snickers bar out of the vending machine was my favorite part because then we each had a snickers bar and spent the rest of our lunch time talking. This was the first time I have actually had a long conversation with a coworker at work.

I think that these acts of kindness may have made me feel better about life than the people that I helped out. I felt like I was gaining good karma and it made me want to do more acts of kindness. When I was out and about I found myself being more patient and nicer to strangers.

I think that I will continue to do random acts of kindness. I can get so caught up in life and sometimes I become negative. I go to college full-time, work full-time, and I’m pregnant right now. I have been feeling tired and cranky most days of the week, but this past week I was in a better mood. I think with enough repetition, this type of behavior can just become automatic. It makes me feel better and it makes me like myself more, in addition to possibly making someone else’s day better.