Choice of a Lifetime

(Original)

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Kindness is just an eight-letter word. How complicated could it be? This is a question that I ask myself whenever my grandmother reminds me to always be amiable. Well, to my surprise, that eight-letter word has a galaxy of meanings that even I, couldn't understand. When things started to turn around, little by little, I caught glimpses of what kindness really is.

At age 13, my friend got diagnosed with leukemia. It was a hard time for him and for all the people who care for him. He would always joke about how he looked better being bald, but instead of laughter, all I could reply were sobs- sobs filled with so much guilt and regret because I couldn't do anything. Their family was struggling financially while I was just··· there.

I was only a 13 year old without a paying job back then. What was I supposed to do?

The school and his family began to raise money for his treatment. I was there – watching how the funds grew. I was there - seeing how his face would light up whenever someone donates. I was there – observing how their family looked so thankful to everyone who shared their wealth. I was there - watching but not helping.

My deep-seated desire to give assistance was crushed. I didn't have anything – not even a penny. My mother's salary is just enough for me and my sister to live comfortably. We didn't have any cash to give. Luckily, a Christmas competition at our school offered a cash prize for the winner. I saw it as an opportunity-- an opportunity for me to give a helping hand to my friend. After winning the competition, without hesitating, the cash prize was immediately donated to them. It wasn't much. Yet, the feeling of contributing to their ease – financially - felt like I did something right. It felt like I wasn't just a useless audience watching them struggle.

I wasn't privileged. I couldn't continue donating money even if my whole being wanted to. I just couldn't. I knew that I won't able to keep that up and within a single blink; I was

back-- back to being just a mere viewer. And I hated it.

My spirit was down for a long time. Until it got lifted up by simple words from his parents; "Even without the money, you helped. You helped us because you were there."

And yes, I was there. I was there through everything. I was present during the gloomiest times. At that moment, I was reminded of what kindness is once again.

Most people tie the meaning of kindness with wealth. They believe that those who are more privileged are obliged to help those who aren't. They say that they can't help the less fortunate because they don't have the money as well. They think that charities are only for those who are rich enough to give aid to others. But for me, being good has nothing to do with the fortune or the social status.

Kindness is all about how you contribute on easing the burden of someone. It's about making them feel lighter despite all the hurdles that they go through. It's about reaching out to them and making them feel that you're fighting the challenges with them. It's giving those people clues that they're not alone in the battle.

Greeting people "Good Morning" wouldn't hurt. Simple acts such as this would go a long way. Give compliments, hold the door for somebody, do someone a favor, call an old friend once in a while – really, aren't that hard. Kindness doesn't have to be extravagant. It's all the tiny details of the good deed that matters.

Kindness. That simple eight-letter word could change lives. That simple word could make humanity better. Do good, even if you have nothing to give. Do good, even if others wouldn't. Do good, and make other people join in too. For kindness isn't just an act for one person; it's an act for every human being to give society a better version.

Kindness is a choice⋯ and choosing it is the best decision we could ever make.