



Charlotte Regional Office Counseling

Peace of Mind The Miraculous Act of “Knowing”

by Lori Fox, Counseling Supervisor

One of our most precious resources as human beings is about to become extinct. We are becoming completely invisible to each other. We can spend a busy and productive day, running a dozen errands around town and not actually “see” any human beings. We can go to the bank drive-through and withdraw our money from a machine. We can go to the grocery store and check out through the self-checkout line. We can talk on our cell phones as we drive through town, never noticing anyone else around us.

Our modern technology affords us incredible ease in our daily lives. But with each new convenience, there is a part of our humanity that is being lost. That is our connection with each other. We don't look at each other, don't make eye contact, and don't touch. We rarely smile or say a kind word.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta called America “the loneliest, the most disconnected, and the most unhappy nation on earth”. Loneliness, according to Mother Teresa, “is the most terrible poverty.” This is reflected in some of the biggest problems our society faces: increasing crime that objectifies people as irrelevant, all time-high rates of depression which leaves people feeling alone in facing their problems, and a divorce rate that illustrates just how quickly we give up on each other.

Do you know your neighbors?

Do you address the grocery clerk that you see sometimes twice a week by name?

Do you look your fellow elevator riders in the eye and say good morning?

Do you ever touch anyone with a pat on the shoulder or back?

Saint Paul tells us, “Now we see but a poor reflection; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” (1 Corinthians 12:13). As Christians, this is our goal, to share the God that is within us and to recognize the God that is in others. This is what feeds our spirit and brings healing to the wounds of life. But how does this happen when we don't make a conscious act of “seeing” those around us?

Let us now challenge ourselves to help break down the walls of alienation and loneliness in some of the following ways:

1. Be in the moment when we are with others. Let us turn off our Ipods and pull out our Bluetooths. Let us open our senses and honor the presence of the life that is around us.
2. We can make a connection with a smile or a handshake.
3. We can treat people around us as though we truly care about them, even if it's just for the one moment we're passing by.

One of our greatest human fears is that we will be invisible to others. Our deepest need is to know that we matter. You have the power to heal and encourage a total stranger with merely a smile and a nod. You have the power to bring more of God's love into your heart every time you interact with another person, whether it's standing in line at the bank, waiting at a bus stop, or spending a few minutes with co-workers before a meeting begins.

To know and be known? The choice is yours a hundred times a day.