

The Value of a Smile

Do you ever consider the actual value of a smile? On a recent day, I was in a city other than Carmel and in a state other than Indiana. It was a location near the Gulf of Mexico, and the city has a reputation for being sophisticated, international and cosmopolitan. I decided on that particular day to take a walk and proceeded to a boulevard called Gulfshore. As I approached the sidewalk there, I noticed a young man standing on the corner. I could see that he was of a minority race. As I got closer to the corner, I noticed that he was leaning on crutches. As he steadied himself, I could see that he had lost one of his legs and part of his hip. He was young, otherwise fit and, although not particularly well-dressed, he looked "clean-cut." As I approached the corner, I looked at him straight in the eye, smiled and said "good morning." He looked surprised and said, "Well, good morning." Then he said, "You know, people here are not very friendly." I said, "That is a shame.

They do not know what life is all about, do they?" He almost had looked shy, like he was hesitant to look me in the eye, but then he smiled one of the biggest smiles I have ever seen, looked me straight in the eye and

said, "Thank you, and I hope you have a great day." Then, he smiled that wonderful smile again and stuck out his hand to shake my hand. He said, "Thank you." (Again) "God bless you." I shook his hand, returned the last remark and walked on. As I finished my walk, I wondered why he thought people in that city were so unfriendly. I also wondered if he had lost his leg defending our country. I wondered if he had lost it due to cancer. It brought strong emotion that surprised me. I was glad that I had chosen to smile.



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