

The Cab Ride

..... source unknown (adapted and modified by Amy Fox)

A New York City taxi driver arrived at the final stop for his shift. He honked. After waiting a few minutes, he honked again. Because it was his last stop, he considered pulling away. But for whatever reason that day, he put the car in park and walked up to the door.

He knocked on the door and he heard an elderly voice call back, "Just a minute."

He then heard the shuffling of bags moving across the floor before the door finally opened. There was a small woman in her 90's with a soft smile wearing a print dress and a pillbox hat with a veil pinned on it. As she answered, the taxi driver caught a glimpse inside the house. It looked as if no one had lived there for years. All the furniture was covered in sheets, no clocks on the wall, and no knickknacks on the counters.

"Could you carry my bag?" the elderly woman asked.

The cab driver walked her slowly down the steps of the front porch to the cab. Once in the cab, the woman handed the driver an address and asked, "Could you drive through downtown?"

"It's not the shortest way," The driver answered.

"I'm in no hurry. I don't mind," she said. "I'm on my way to hospice..."

The driver and passenger shared a quick glimpse in the rearview mirror, enough for her to see his concern and continue: "I don't have any family left. The doctor says I don't have very long."

The driver quietly reached over and shut off the meter, "What route would you like me to take?"

For the next two hours, they drove through the city. She showed the driver where she once worked, the neighborhood where she and her husband first lived, a furniture warehouse that had once been a ballroom when she was a girl. There were a few parts of town she asked the driver to slow down and she would sit, staring into the darkness, saying nothing.

After a couple hours, she suddenly said, "I'm tired. Let's go now."

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They drove in silence to the address she had given him. When they arrived, two orderlies came out to the cab as soon as they pulled up. They must have been expecting her.

The driver opened the trunk to take out the suitcase. As he shut the trunk, she was already in a wheelchair.

"How much do I owe you?" She asked, reaching into her purse.

"Nothing," said the driver.

"You have to make a living," she answered.

"There are other passengers," he responded.

Without thinking, the driver bent down and gave the woman a hug. She held on tightly.

"You gave an old woman a little moment of joy," she said. "Thank you."

The driver gave her a final squeeze before the two turned to go their separate ways. As he got in the car and glanced over to her, the door was shut.

He didn't pick up any more passengers that night. In fact, he could hardly speak. *What if that woman had gotten an angry or impatient driver? What if she got someone who refused to get out and go to her door? Refused to take the time driving around the city?*

The taxi driver couldn't shake the feeling that this single cab ride might be one of the most important moments of his life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

OPENING CLASS

On a daily basis we interact with hundreds of people. Interactions with people, whether it's family, friends, or complete strangers, are the construct that make up our life. And yet, we too often move quickly past one interaction to get to the next.

As you become more successful—grow your family, your relationships, your company, your team—the number of interactions will only increase. It becomes more tempting to treat a new neighbor like any other person you bump into on the street.

Your presence is a present— it's a gift to those around you. And by offering your full attention to the moment, life itself becomes more full and rich.

Start to deepen your breath....allow yourself to be right here, right now....

DURING CLASS

Before Telling the Story

Notice where you are rushing or trying to force something. Where can you be as you are?

Every breath, every moment of this class, is an opportunity to cultivate patience.

After Telling the Story

We never know whose life we are impacting and how a small, simple gesture might make, or break, someone's day.

Tiny things have ripple effects and when we show up and lead with our heart, that generosity expands to those near and far, known and unknown.

CLOSING CLASS

No matter what you're doing, you have a gift to offer the person in front of you in that very moment.

This week, may you know that your presence is a gift and you bring real value to this world.

EXTRAS

This story offers a great take-away challenge. Challenge your students to notice how they show up in conversation and to see where they can cultivate more patience in conversations.

Ask your students to take a few moments today or this week to find more patience with the people in their life. This might be listening more intently to their spouse, enjoying a conversation with their kids, taking time to check in with a neighbor, or listening to a coworker's struggle with something outside of work. Whatever it is, see if they can give their full attention.

Invite them to look for the lesson, the opportunity to give encouragement, or, often the most important: to simply be present with that person. It might mean the world to them.