

Giving to Yourself

By Dylan Klomhaus

I felt no love from the world. People didn't want anything to do with me; I was different. So I had nothing to do with them. If there was a senior that needed a seat on the subway, I didn't give mine up. I didn't help that person who needed assistance with their groceries. I had no friends and I didn't even have a neighbor on the 4th floor of my apartment building. I had no one to receive hello from in the mornings. Sometimes I could go a whole day without speaking to anyone.

But then it happened. Oh, what a glorious day that was when I first met Robby. When I first saw him, I could just make out his outline. He drew closer and I strained to hear him but no sounds of his feet came to me. Finally, he got close enough for me to see that he didn't walk, he had a wheelchair. What puzzled me most was the smile he flashed around, as if he had won the lottery. What could this man, who had been cursed to never be able to walk, be so happy about? As he rolled by, my brain forced me to ask him, what it was, what feeling or event allowed him to be so happy even though he was handicapped?

He simply remarked to me as if he had rehearsed it over and over in his head, "At first I was bitter about my problem. But then I learned that I couldn't change my position. I had to live with it. Live with what life gave me. And having that positive attitude has helped me get through life. I have learned to accept it." That simple quote, etched into my mind, would affect me for the rest of my life.

That week, a string of events seemed to place me as a spectator at a football game, but instead of watching a football fly around, I was watching Robby. I saw him struggle for over a minute just to get a door to open, and he still wore his smile when he got through. I noticed him get cut in lines multiple times just trying to get a soda, but when he got it he still wore his smile. I observed him try to get through a bustling crowd and how people kept cutting him off, but his smile still shone. That week I realized that if that man in a wheelchair whose problems were obviously worse than mine could show the world love, then I could too.

The next day as I was walking home from my laundromat I saw Robby struggling to open a door. I thought of his struggles and opened the door for him. He looked up at me and gave me that huge smile of his. Some door in my heart, obviously closed for a long time, opened up and the warmth of love flooded over me.

That next week I continued to use Robby's example of love, even when the world was against him. Things obviously started to go my way. The next day I even gave up my seat to a senior who had a hard time standing on the subway, and it felt great. At my job I helped anyone I could in any way and by the end of the

week I received a raise. Great things kept happening to me in return for what I did to others. Still the most rewarding thing of all was the love I received from the world by giving, not just expecting.