



If We Could See the Unseen

Everyone has a story. We are a combination of the successes, failures, hurts, experiences and treasures of life. And everyone is a living story, molded by the tapestry of their life experiences into who they are today. If we could only see the unseen, how would it impact our relationships, respect and communication with each other?

I have two great uncles, both of whom served in the Pacific during World War II, that recently gave me their stories in their own words. One was shot at close range by a Japanese soldier on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. The other served on Okinawa and the Solomon Islands as a front line soldier. I have a friend, Mr. Tim McCoy, who was assigned to the submarine *USS Grenadier* in World War II. Tim and his crewmates were bombed by a Japanese plane which caused everyone to abandon ship and into the waters of the Pacific. They were captured and held as prisoners of war for nine months of unspeakable hell.

The Korean War, the Vietnam War, Desert Storm, Afghanistan, Iraq and whatever is next. People living their lives all around us with what they've done and seen and never complain or even bring it up. The unseen scars, the unseen service and valor. And yet their lives are a function of what makes them who they are.

The single mom working two jobs – but you only know about the one she works with you. The classmate sitting beside you that grew up with an abusive parent. The relative who's fighting cancer. The neighbor that has a handicapped child. You. Me.

Many times we don't see these parts of their lives. They're unseen. And if you don't struggle yet, it's just a matter of time. So what's my point? Love your neighbor. The Romans 12:10 kind of love. Respect. Honor.

Our country today is full of political discourse that divides us into Red and Blue. And while it's okay to disagree, it's not okay to be disagreeable. I have to confess that I don't always follow my own rhetoric. Our passions and emotions get the best of us at times and we say things we wish we could take back. Or we ignore the person next to us because we're "too busy" to say hello and look them in the eye. Or worse yet, we're looking at our SmartPhones so much we ignore those around us. And being ignored is the ultimate put down.

But in order to communicate, we must put aside political correctness. There is a radical element in our society today that have become such speech police that it's hard to have a meaningful conversation and not be demonized for saying what you think – but with respect and honor for those around you. We should be able to discuss both sides of gay marriage, abortion, freedom of religion, race and bigotry and many other social issues without being demonized for taking a traditional or conservative stand. The

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speech police, the media and our college universities are constantly trying to change our culture from the freedom and liberty that made us a great nation to a secular progressive society where there is no right or wrong. If we allow the secular progressives to change our speech because we're "afraid" society will label us as bigots, then what else can they do to our Constitutional rights? "We The People" have the final say. Let's not allow the insidious nature of secular humanism to transform our culture into a godless state where our freedoms are compromised. So go Washington Redskins! And Merry Christmas to all (admittedly a little early).

If we could see the unseen, what would your life story say? Sacrifice? Service? Giving? Or is it time to write a new script? I'd like to encourage you to perform a random act of kindness for someone you don't particularly like. It's hard to criticize someone you disagree with that's not disagreeable. We'll never be remembered for the money we made, the cars we drove or the house we lived in. We'll only be remembered for the lives we touched – seen or unseen.

So with all the issues burning around us – from the Middle East to Asia, ISIS and Ebola, it's my belief we should take a 9/11 type of rallying point in the midst of the chaos. Relax the political discourse, do something kind for someone you ordinarily wouldn't and appreciate the stories of so many that contribute to the overall greater good without being seen. We truly live in an exceptional country with exceptional countrymen. Let's not forget in the midst of everything going on around us that there are incredible stories walking by in the form of incredible people.

Jim Jones is President of Wellspring Benefits Group located in Colleyville, Texas. He is a visionary leader with an eye for emerging markets in a changing healthcare environment. Through Jim's 30 years in the insurance and healthcare industry, he has developed a business model that integrates healthcare services that lowers insurance utilization, improves clinical outcomes and lowers overall healthcare spend. Jim can be reached at jim.jones@wellspringbenefitsgroup.com.