

The Right Words and Actions – Volunteers Make a Difference

I have volunteered for many years, and at a number of organizations. And the personal rewards that I have received over the years have been life-long friends, many memories, and a feeling of making a difference in this world.

The words that inspire me daily, I learned from the Boys' and Girls' Brigade and the American Youth Foundation Four-fold motto; "My Own Self, At My Very Best, All The Time." While "...My Very Best, All the Time" is indeed a lofty goal, it is a type of gatekeeper that helps you decide what to say or do.

Here is why I have continued to volunteer for 24 years at the Boys' and Girls' Brigade; I recently attended Girls Camp 3 at Onaway Island. While there, I had a younger volunteer leader come and talk to me. This younger leader had gone to camp as a camper. She then has continued to come to camp as a volunteer leader for a few years. Her last year as a camper, she was chosen to be the chief of her tribe. This is a position that is carefully considered by the camp manager and director. A day before camp was to start, back then, she committed a serious traffic offense.

This young lady knew that she had made a bad mistake. And even though she was struggling with this during camp, it seemed to motivate her to prove that she wasn't a bad person; she had just made a bad mistake.

Because I had been through the same thing when I was her age, I understood how hard you are on yourself after making this kind of mistake. So, during the week of camp, I gave her praise and encouragement and let her know she was a good person.

As a result of her hard work during camp, she had earned the Four-Fold Award. Because I was the camp director at the time, I had the honor of introducing the winner of the award. Although I didn't remember the words that were used, this young leader did. She told me that I said she was a person that "truly lived the four-fold." She continued to tell me that by my words and actions, she was uplifted at a time when she desperately needed it. That day, and week of camp, made a huge difference in her life.

WOW!

This is one more, of many, personal stories I could tell about the rewards of volunteering. But volunteering is much more than putting in your time, it's about volunteering with the right words and actions.

I am grateful to have the opportunity to volunteer for the Boys' and Girls' Brigade and make a difference in young peoples lives.

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