

## “You Say it Best When You Say Nothing at All”

Throughout my 18 years of living in close quarters with Jeff and Cynthia, the pair has worked diligently to teach me many successful tools to ensure the stability of my future. As useful as these tips and techniques are, it is the lessons that I have learned from their actions that have the most powerful meanings. It is the time when the obnoxious ring of the telephone breaks the silence of the early morning and I can hear my father downstairs consoling a heartbroken member of his bible study. Or it is the time at school when I look around the corner and witness my mother assisting one of her mentally handicapped students down the hallway. It is these blind acts of selfless devotion, when they dive into a situation not knowing the conditions or consequences just to pull somebody to safety, that they teach me the most useful lessons in life. It is the moments when my parents dedication to serving others blurs the demands of their everyday lives and allows them to solely follow God’s calling and to assist the person who’s need is written on my parents hearts. These moments mirror to me my personal responsibilities as a follower of God and as a giving neighbor.

My father, Jeff’s, actions directly reflect the lessons he preaches to me every day. That frankness alone demonstrates to me the serious and genuine nature of service. One must be passionate about those that they serve and continually serve, not just during the time slot that they signed up to volunteer for.

Another lesson my father taught me is that you have to utilize your strongest talents, and if there’s not an organization out there that fits your abilities then you have to create one. The creation of Destiny Movers illustrated this lesson to me. My dad is the bible study leader of a men’s group at my church, Destiny. In order to spread the word of Christ his group began assisting community members during their moves, for free. After a few months of this service

the word got around and many people were calling the church saying that they were in the process of moving and was wondering if the men's ministry would help them finish the process.

This service project became monumental as many people the group assisted then became curious about what would encourage a group to move someone for free when other company's charge absurd amounts? To satisfy their curiosity people then began attending church the following Sunday and were greeted by the message of God.

Destiny movers illustrates that service does not have to be an extravagant and well organized ordeal, but instead a simple gesture to make life easier for others. After witnessing the success of my father's ministry I decided to "pay it forward" and collect phones for SMS Frontline: Medic, an organization built around the idea of distributing cell phones to citizens in developing countries to provide medical assistance. My time is consumed by a variety of activities and I saw the opportunity of SMS Frontline: Medic as a chance to aid those in Haiti using my personal abilities; leadership and communication. I then decided to get my other activities involved in my new service project and collected phones from church members, volleyball players, yearbook editors, and members from my clubs at school. Overall the project was a success and allowed me to serve those in Haiti with the talents the Lord provided me with. Not everyone is blessed with enough money to pack up their belongings and fly to Haiti and work at the root of the devastation, but everyone is blessed with the fact that the Lord is our creator and therefore everyone is given individual talents which can be used to serve others in many ways.

During high school years service is spoken with the connotation of work and duty. Many people sign up to volunteer at events, an hour here, an hour there, so that they can fill up the lines

on their log and turn it in to colleges. In my opinion this is not service. True it is helping those in need, but with the intention of directly rewarding oneself, which is not service.

Service is done solely for the desire to aid other people and those serving are blind to the future rewards they may receive.

My mother works with the mentally handicapped students at my high school. Sometimes her work is filled with mundane paperwork, basic teaching exercises and lengthy workshops. All of these events are not desirable but are necessary to provide an MR teacher with techniques for success. When I view the precautions and courses my mother is required to take I question her unusual willingness and refreshing enthusiasm. She gladly goes through the sacrifices of certification because the reward of bettering the lives of her students outweighs the mundane activities.

Her work teaches me that service is not always pleasurable for the volunteer but that's not what is important. What matters is the end result—the joy and graciousness of the recipient. Words could not teach me this lesson, only my mother's devotion and endurance could fully force me to understand the sincerity and selflessness of service.

One must choose to serve because their heart is led in that direction and most of the time it is led blindly and following intuition and God's word. As I prepare to go to Guatemala this summer to do missions work I am terrified about the unknown. I have never gone on a mission trip or experienced the culture of a developing country. The only thing that I am sure of is the feeling that rose up inside of me when the opportunity of the trip arrived. That feeling was the Lord pointing his finger at me, looking me in the eye and directing me to put my name on the list.

I would not have recognized the significance of that feeling and intuition if my childhood had not been spent observing the actions of my parents. Choosing to serve not only influences the lives of those that you are directly assisting but also indirectly affects the lives of others whom you may not know are watching.