



The Penny

It is often unexpected how even the most chance meetings can inspire us. I was recently honored to speak in the nursing industry. After presenting the keynote speech at the opening general session, I decided to walk through the rather large trade show to see some of the attention-grabbing booths.

One of the large booths was a multimillion-dollar software company, which had some new software, and I was standing there observing how the interactive software worked. Two executives were in the booth, smartly dressed, plus several sales associates. The executives recognized me from the keynote, and we made our personal introductions and hellos. One of the executives explained the software to me, while the other was meeting and greeting the first visitors to the trade show that morning.

I then noticed an assistant putting out stress toys for giveaways. With six grandchildren and a seventh on the way, I asked her for a couple of freebies. "What is your job with the company?" I asked.

"Oh, I'm not a big-shot. I don't have an important job," she laughed. "They bring me along to make sure the booth looks pretty."

She was a mature woman who took what she did seriously. I laughed and told her

the booth looked beautiful, and that my grandchildren would appreciate the toys. At the same time, I couldn't help but remember what my former secretary, Margaret, always communicated to me.

No Such Thing As "Just A"

The woman in the booth was a person who Margaret always recognized as important. It was Margaret who would remind me to acknowledge people for their contributions and take time to point out their value.

Martin Luther King Jr. said, "Everybody can be great...because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love."

My secretary mentored me and continuously pointed out the value of people and circumstances. From the value of a receptionist to the value of mistakes, she was quick to readdress my feelings about value and the concept of adding value. She would always say, "There is no such thing as 'just a' receptionist or 'just a' janitor."

The Value of Small Coins

The latest data indicates that picking up small coin denominations is a thing of the past. While seven in ten adults over 55 would stop for a penny, just 37% of young millennials (ages 18-24) say the same. These same millennials, along with their slightly older cohorts, are more likely than any other age bracket to say that they would stop for a quarter but not anything smaller than that. If a cashier fumbles your change and a few pennies drop to the floor, most people don't take time to stoop down and pick them up.

"O Ye of Little Faith"

As I grew older, I would occasionally question my faith even to the point of

sometimes feeling like I don't really believe what I say I believe. When my father passed away in 2005, I struggled. Not long after, I was asked to speak for a 200-employee faith-based company. The affluent business owner who hired me to talk to his employees inquired with my office about me joining him and his wife for dinner the night before the event.

When the evening finally arrived, the couple picked me up at my hotel, and we proceeded to a casual restaurant in the area. As we progressed to the front door of the bistro, the couple stopped short, and I witnessed the man bend over and pick up a penny on the sidewalk. I couldn't help but think of how wealthy this man was, and yet he picked up a dirty old penny from a grimy sidewalk. I then speculated that this is how he became wealthy and went so far as to ask him, "I noticed you didn't walk by the penny on the ground outside. Is this how you have become so wealthy?"

He reached into his pocket and, while laying it on the table said, "Read what it says." I leaned forward and saw the words "In God We Trust." He then explained that he didn't become wealthy by picking up pennies, but rather by reminding himself of the words. He said, "I believe that God drops a message to me at times, He wants to remind me to keep my trust in Him.

The Rest of the Story

As the late Paul Harvey would say, "The rest of the story." August will mark the one-year anniversary of the death of my mother-in-law, Rita Rohde. Prior to Rita's passing, she struggled with her health. As her death was imminent, my thinking began to relapse as it had twelve years earlier when my father passed away. However, this time it was worse. After all, in 2005, I was 46 years old, and now I was one year shy of celebrating my 60th birthday. Just 20 younger than my mother-in-law.

I was in Houston, Texas when I received the call that she had passed away. I was overcome with sadness I had never experienced. That evening, I ventured out of my hotel room to eat dinner at a Cheesecake Factory restaurant. While waiting for my dinner to be served, I began to cry uncontrollably. It was then I shut my eyes

and asked God to reassure me that I would see Rita again. After eating a couple of bites, I paid my bill and continued back to the hotel. Prior to entering the front door of the Marriott, I looked down and saw a scruffy penny face up. It read, "In God We Trust."

Within a few days, my wife, two stepsons and I made our way to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin for a memorial service at the local cemetery. I would be lying if I said that I wasn't still troubled by my belief in seeing Rita again in the afterlife. The night before the service honoring Rita, we went out to dinner as a family and were joined by three other relatives. At that dinner, I leaned over and let my wife know that I was going to find an ATM so I could pay cash for the seven of us who were dining. I normally take enough cash with me when I travel; hence, I virtually never use an ATM. Just to be safe, I decided to procure another \$200. An employee informed me that the machine was located by the restrooms. As I slashed my way through the crowded bar area and finally located the ATM, I walked over, and on the floor precisely positioned in the front center of the machine was a penny face up.

Ever since her death, when I find myself worried or frazzled about something, I can always count on finding a penny to remind me of my faith. Some people have suggested that pennies are from heaven, tossed to you by angels. Whatever your belief, or skepticism, the truth is that Rita Mae Rohde added value to my life while living and strengthened my faith through dying.

The Value of Value

It is important to add significance to another person's life and deliver value in everything you do. To realize that great companies with great cultures add value to their people, products and services. The woman at the trade show booth reminded me of the many things that add value, and that sometimes the things that you believe are insignificant are worth more than what you perceive has merit.

The next time you see a penny, remind yourself of the message and its true significance. Become more aware of the many things that add value, and begin to

develop an outlook to enhance yourself and the people you encounter.

Rita Mae Rohde, thank you for adding value to so many people, and for all the pennies you continue to send my way.

*Best,
Steve*

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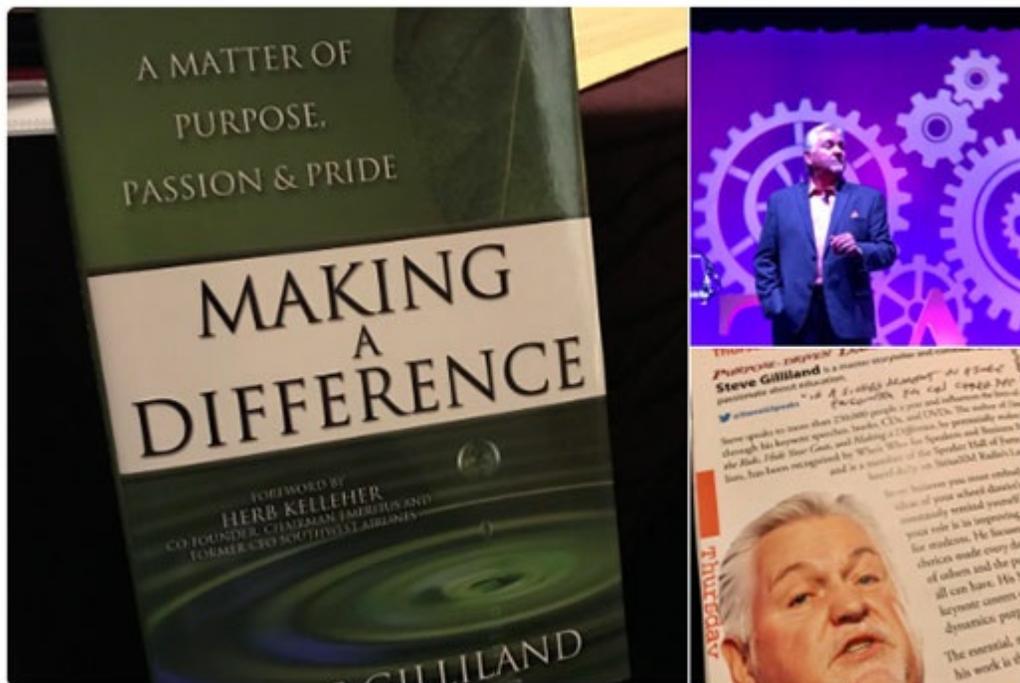
"When you can answer the WHY, the HOW is easy. Why do you do what you do? Education is not a career or a job, it's a calling. If you're called, if you can answer the WHY, you'll make a difference." -
@SteveGSpeaks #tasbsli18



Jim de Garavilla
@jrdg1961

Follow

Great Kick-off to #tasbsli18 Fort Worth with @tasbevents and @SilsbeeISD trustees! It's all about "Purpose, Passion & Pride" and that a "Single moment in a single encounter can change the trajectory of someone's life!" Thanks @SteveGSpeaks Gilliland.





Cheryl Viadero > Steve Gilliland

June 30

Thank you Mr. Gilliland for signing our new book at SHRM! We love Margaret! Love, Brandon and Addison, from Orlando, FL.



LOOKING AHEAD...

Steve's August 2018 Schedule

- 1 - Picayune, MS
- 1 - Hattiesburg, MS
- 2 - Schaumburg, IL
- 3 - New Albany, MS
- 6 - Lumberton, TX
- 8 - Rogers, AR
- 8 - Nixa, MO
- 9 - Brainerd, MN
- 13 - Hamilton, T
- 13 - Stephenville, TX
- 14 - Bismarck, ND
- 15 - Lindale, TX
- 17 - Sumter, SC
- 20 - Brookings, SD
- 21 - Indianapolis, IN
- 22 - Chicago, IL
- 22 - Hillside, IL
- 23 - Sioux Falls, SD
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- 30 - Huntington Beach, CA

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