

Custodians & Professors

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RANDOM THOUGHTS

A history professor wandered on campus to check out and one of the classrooms for the coming semester. A custodian was cleaning the carpets. The professor stopped to chat with him. The custodian stopped and looked at him more than a tad stunned when the prof said with a pat on the shoulder, "Thanks for keeping this place so clean. I for one really appreciate it."

"I thank you for that," replied the custodian. "No one has ever said that to me, especially a professor. People act like I'm made of see-through glass. Thank you for seeing me."

The professor recalled thinking of something Daniel Goleman, author of *Emotional Intelligence* wrote, "Threats to our standing in the eyes of others are almost as powerful as those to our very survival." He thought, "I realize how much I admire those who work with their hands – and their minds – a competent carpenter or gardener or mechanic or electrician or plumber or painter who may not have a college degree, yet who can masterfully wield a hammer or wrench or screwdriver or paintbrush....I so honor anyone if he does his work skillfully with excellence and with integrity more than I do anyone whose work is shoddy and less honest, however eminent that person claims to be...."

"I look around campus and see...other 'see-through glass' people. Too often ignored. Too often sneered at or brow-beaten. Too often laughed at. Too often passed by without a 'hello.' Too oft-en invisible....The problem is, as Goleman says, that there is nothing more precious than the feeling that you matter, that you contribute to the value of the whole, and, for most, that we're recognized for it. Feeling that you're genuinely appreciated and cared about is the greatest energizer for most people.

"Be consciously and vocally appreciative. It doesn't cost anything to say a kindly and acknowledging 'hello' or 'thank you.'"