

## Observing

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While sitting on the lobby floor of the dance studio waiting for my class to begin, I couldn't resist people watching. I noticed several parents and dancers sitting next to each other captivated by their phones; I would have been on mine too if it had not been charging. I watched as a dad entering held open the door for his daughter and told a few parents to "drive safe." He sat with his daughter, tied her ballet slippers, re-clipped her hair, and still his phone was not in sight. I glanced at the other parents—still scrolling on Facebook—not paying attention to their daughters who were dismissed from practice. Here I was, with a "few moments of unplanned-for, unscheduled time" (Friedman 5) which gave me the opportunity to observe behaviors that would eventually inspire this writing.

In *Thank You for Being Late*, Thomas Friedman addresses the differences between machines and humans. His answer—which includes words from Dov Seidman—was our ability "to form deeper and better connections" with others. When I first read that, I wrote it down in my notebook having aspirations of using it in this essay. What I originally envisioned changed after my observations at the studio. I noticed machines make humans impotent and unable "to form deeper. . . connections" that living in the moment gives you. The father without his phone was focused on his three-year-old until she went into class; then he was fully engaged in a conversation with another parent who smiled through its entirety. He spoke with a calming confidence that seemed to come with ease; I speculate he made a positive impact on each person, who will be able to recall his kindness during the following days. He simply smiled and nodded at me, and thus inspired this paper. A simple gesture can make a meaningful impact on many

people. It can be as easy as smiling at someone, holding a door open, or volunteering in your community. Big or small, anything that can put a smile on someone's face can make a positive and meaningful impact.

I have many role models in my life that I view as being thoughtful community members. When I think about them, I think about all the times they have lended a hand to whomever needs one. If someone needs a ride, a place to stay, a person to talk to, they will be there. They are aware of what is happening in their community and they volunteer as often as they can. Thoughtful community members can be found around every corner. They help make our community thrive by spreading smiles. They are the people who can put down their phones to live in the moment and form closer relationships with everyone they meet. Thoughtful community members are essential for every community to succeed. They spread awareness to other community members and help inspire other members to contribute to the greater good. My role models consistently volunteer and are the reason many people, including myself, have started volunteering.

Anyone can be a thoughtful member of their community and create positive impacts on others. I am beyond grateful to have so many great people in my community. They inspire me every day to continue on the path of being a thoughtful member of my community. I plan on volunteering and contributing positively within my community even more than I do now; I hope to get more of my family members and friends involved also. Helping others by volunteering is an easy thing to do that benefits everyone involved. When you help someone, not only does it make them appreciative and grateful, it is also gratifying. As a community we should strive in helping others and making each other feel supported. Everyone should feel as if their whole community is behind them: supporting them, helping them, loving them. Every day communities

take a step closer to reaching their own goals and becoming even more cohesive than they already are; they can do this by every small and grand gesture they receive from the people of their community. It can start with a smile and a nod and blossom into meaningful and impactful interpersonal connections. Through random acts of kindness, one person can strengthen and inspire an entire community.

Work Cited

Friedman, Thomas L. *Thank You for Being Late: An Optimist's Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016.