

Write a note of encouragement

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Sometimes, when days are rough, it’s nice to receive words of encouragement from another person. Hearing someone tell you to keep your head up and stay positive can help change your perspective on things and redirect your spirit. Being encouraged can give you a much-needed boost to forge through the remainder of the day as well as improving your outlook for future days.

Although the spoken word of encouragement is nice, the written word is just as (if not more) significant. When someone writes you a note of encouragement, it is there for you to view over and over again, making it the message that keeps on communicating.

In the first *Chicken Soup for the Soul* book, teacher Sister Helen Mroska recounted how a spur-of-the-moment assignment in class became a source of encouragement for her students. In an effort to help students appreciate the best in each other, she asked them to write down what they liked about each of their fellow students. She then compiled the results over the weekend

and handed out a list for each student on the following Monday.

Years later when one of those students, Mark, was killed in Vietnam, she and some of those former students got together for his funeral. Afterwards, Mark’s father told the group, “They found this on Mark when he was killed,” and he showed them a folded, refolded, and taped paper--the one he had received years before from his teacher. Right after that, three of Mark’s classmates revealed how they, too, revered their notes from that school day and how they kept them secure and accessible for when they need that occasional reminder of encouragement.

Each person cherished the kind words of encouragement they had received from their fellow students. That’s the power of a few kind words. And in written format, it is often read and reread many times over to reinforce the message.

Take a look around your organization, in social gatherings, or at home and see who could use or appreciate a note of encouragement. There is no exact criteria for this, just find someone who

can benefit from or appreciate an ounce of positivity.

When I was an Air Force Chief, I often issued letters of appreciation to Airmen who displayed noble character traits and/or who performed above and beyond expectations. Airmen appreciated those letters. But I noticed during a three-year period when I was the Chief of a Security Forces squadron that the letters I hand-wrote seemed to have a more positive impact than the ones I typed. Airmen told me they liked receiving hand-written notes because they seemed more sincere. In reality, I was equally sincere whether I was writing or typing, but I learned a valuable lesson about the power of a hand-written note.

So write a note of encouragement to someone today. Somebody, somewhere needs it. Your note could end up making a big difference in the outcome of their day. All you have to do is compliment them sincerely or reveal how much you appreciate them. And who knows, if you change their day for the better, you just may change their life for the better!

~ The End ~