



My mom worked with a 24-hour hotline. People who were struggling or had problems would call, and Mom would try to give advice or put them in touch with an agency to help them.

One night she received a call, and Lois happened to be sitting in the room as my mom spoke on the phone. The conversation Lois overheard went something like this: “What? He lost his job? They overthrew the union? No unemployment? No, really? They have how many children? Four? And welfare can’t help until when? Oh, that’s terrible.”

When Lois heard this she began to cry, big crocodile tears rolling down her cheeks. “It’s not fair that they don’t have any money,” she said. Then her demeanor suddenly changed. She actually became excited. She jumped up from her chair and waved her arms. She began “snorting,” as though she were half-laughing and half-crying. This was such a common occurrence at our house that, whenever she did it, we would simply say, “There goes Lois again.”

Lois ran to her bedroom and grabbed an envelope from her dresser drawer and ran back to my mom. With tears still streaming down her face, but excitement in her eyes, she said, “Here, Mom, give this to them. This will feed them for a long time.”

My Mom, still on the phone, smiled and reached for the envelope. She opened it and her eyes filled with tears, too. What was inside?

Lois works in a special program assembling parts for a company that provides job-training opportunities for those who are disabled or handicapped. Inside the envelope was her paycheck for an entire week’s wages, 40 hours of her life. The amount of the check may surprise you. It was for \$1.19. Why? Because Lois is paid based on another external, yet another “P” called “piece count,” where her pay is based on her output or performance.

Lois had such a compassionate heart that she was willing to give an entire week’s pay to help children she didn’t know buy food they needed. She was willing to give all she had, not even enough to buy a Big Mac® with a coupon, but she gave what she had, 40 hours of her life, agape love, unconditional and selfless. She loved; true love.

Society’s system wants to tell her she’s not gifted or valuable. Again, I ask, “Would you tell her?” Lois believes she is beautiful, gifted, and valuable. She is proud of who she is. Would you tell her otherwise?

If you’re not willing to tell Lois that she isn’t valuable, then maybe it’s time to learn some life lessons from her. Some people may be too proud to admit someone like Lois could teach them anything. What would that say about them, or how they value her and her contribution to society, or the value and contribution of anyone who may be different?

The lesson is this: The meaning of life, our purpose itself, is found in love. The old system says only one person can be the best, but the new system says everyone can be their best, and every person has meaning, worth, and purpose.

Excerpt from *Dignity Revolution: Standing Up for the Value of Every Person* (Lenz 36).

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