

# A "thank you" can make a nice day even nicer

Steve Sorensen © 2004  
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## *By the way...*

You've made it through the checkout at your favorite grocery store, and the clerk gives you a friendly smile, a handful of change, almost makes eye contact and says, "Have a nice day!"

You've just paid hundreds of dollars at a reliable car repair shop and as you turn to go out the door, an employee says, "Have a nice day!"

After enjoying a good movie with some close friends, you exit the theater and one of the "theater hops" (Is that what you call those good-looking kids with the little bow ties?) smiles, stands by the door and says, "Have a nice evening!"

Enough with the nice days and evenings. Now that I'm on my way home with a carload of groceries, the day is certain to get better. Now that I'm relatively sure that my car won't leave me stranded, I'm confident that things are looking up. And after seeing a good movie with my friends, I've just had a nice evening! How about a "Thank you"!

Is it really so hard to say "Thank you"?

I've pondered this for a long time. Have those who work in our stores, restaurants, and other businesses been trained to

substitute an I-don't-care-if-you-really-do "have a nice day" for an honest, appreciative "thank you"?

Hey! Wake up! Your pay just came out of my pocket! Please tell me you appreciate it!

Don't get me wrong. I don't begrudge it to you. I just want you to understand the relationship here. I didn't have to come to this restaurant. Surely you realize that if I didn't, that 20% tip would now belong to

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someone else. I didn't have to shop this grocery store. Aren't you glad I did? Because if I didn't, your boss might have to lay someone off, and he might decide to keep the person who makes the customers feel appreciated.

I wonder, does this reflect someone's idea of independence? Is the avoidance of a simple expression of gratitude simply a polite way of saying, "Don't be offended, but I really don't need you"? Do college students tell their dads, right after he writes the check for a semester's tuition, "Have a nice day"? Does anyone, showered with the blessings of

living in the wealthiest nation on earth, glance heavenward and say, "Have a nice day" to the One who makes nice days?

You don't have to be especially creative to say "Thank you." It doesn't take flowers, chocolates, or even a card. You don't have to go to the trouble of wrapping it. You don't need to put it to music or make it rhyme. You don't need to gussy it up at all. Just say it, in English.

"Thank you." See how easy that was? If you want to be creative, try it in Spanish. "Gracias!" Or French. "Merci!" (It's no accident that the French word looks like the English word mercy. Both are derived from the same Latin word, as are the

words merchant, and merchandise. Get the picture? In French, "Thank you" recognizes the kindness of the customer in bringing business to the merchant. But enough with etymology.)

I'm suspicious that some shop owners out there are training employees that "Have a nice day" is more sincere than "Thank you." It might change your minds if you consider putting a little something extra into the pay envelopes of your employees. Numbers are always welcome, but whether you can include more numbers or not, try adding a couple of words. You

can write them on the memo line of your paychecks or include them on a sticky note. Which will be more meaningful? "Have a nice day" or "Thank you"?

This past summer my college student son was home only briefly, and was fortunate enough to find a few weeks work at a local greenhouse. One day he handed me his paycheck to deposit into the bank. Guess what I saw on the memo line. In the handwriting of his boss was a *bona fide* "Thank you." Here's a business owner who knows that payday is always a nice day, and he also knows that an honest "Thank you" makes it even nicer.

*"None is more impoverished than the one who has no gratitude. Gratitude is a currency that we can mint for ourselves, and spend without fear of bankruptcy."*

~ Fred De Witt Van Amburgh

*Steve Sorensen lives in Russell with his wife and Greta. He has been a puppet, a pauper, a preacher, a poet, a pawn, and he knows a king. He pounds on the keyboard because he thinks that a word is worth a thousand pictures. He's seen it done, but hasn't yet succeeded in writing that word himself. Maybe next time. Greta, by the way, is a miniature dachshund, just to clear up the pictures that word created.*

