

Living The Good Life

by Krysta Gibson



It's About Kindness

Before I continue with my series on finding a job, I want to share an incident that happened to me when I was on vacation in Slovenia last month.

I was on a tour with some family members and made some new friends from Australia and Washington, D.C. During one of our day trips we were in the Julian Alps and there was a suspension foot bridge that went across a river. The river was about 40 feet below the bridge.

I don't like heights and I don't walk across suspension bridges. I would much rather take photos of the other brave people who like walking on them. One of my new friends is a senior master sergeant in the Air Force, and Mike had no trouble walking across the bridge and offered to walk across with me. "No thanks!" says I. There was no need to get to the other side so I was staying right where I was.

A few days later our group visited a cave. This was to be the highlight of my trip. I have been in caves and love them. I am in awe of how various geological formations exist inside the earth. This was the Skocjan Caves and has one of the largest underground canyons in the world.

It was not until we were right at the cave entrance (a 15-minute hike from our tour bus) that I found out I would be walking for two miles and climbing 500 steps! There was mention of a bridge in there somewhere, but for some strange reason I assumed it would not be very high. I walk every day and thought this would be an exciting time. Little did I know just how exciting.

Instead of walking through the cave and enjoying the sights, we were almost jogging! It was as if the 100 or so people in the group had decided to see how quickly they could get through the cave rather than taking their time and really experiencing it. About halfway



Entrance to the Skockan Cave in Slovenia.

through what was turning out to be an ordeal rather than the highlight I thought it would be, I looked up and saw ahead of me a bridge that people were walking across. It was above an underground river 154 feet below. By this time I was exhausted and when I looked at the bridge ahead of me I almost started crying. (Go to www.park-skocjanske-jame.si/Eng/Unesco_heritage.htm to see what I saw ahead of me. I wish I had seen this online before I was actually there!)

I had to go across this bridge. Turning back was not an option. I admit I was terrified. I saw my new friend Mike at the entrance to the bridge. I saw the instant he remembered me and I saw him turn to a fellow traveler and say, "Krysta will have trouble with this bridge. I am going to wait here and help her."

I can't begin to tell you how he touched my heart. His kindness towards someone he had known for less than a week was incredible. As I walked towards him, he held out his arm and said, "Here, grab hold of my arm and just keep looking straight ahead; don't look down." That is exactly what I did. Mike was my guardian angel who walked me across that bridge. I was still scared but having him to hang onto made all the difference in the world to me.

The incident was not a big deal to Mike. He was just helping someone who needed him.

Why am I sharing this story? I share it to underscore how important it is to be kind to people. We never know how a simple act of kindness that means nothing to us can mean everything to someone else. When you think a simple smile, or holding a door open, or listening to someone's opinion doesn't mean anything, you could be very wrong. Simple acts of kindness sometimes mean the world to someone else.

And what did I learn? Ask more questions before I go into any more caves!

The Interview

In this series of helping you find the job of your dreams, I am going to talk about the interviewing process. Interviewing for a job is an acquired skill which most of us have not had the chance to perfect. Statistics show that frequently the decision to hire or not to hire is made during the initial stages of the interview. Your first contact with the employer is of prime importance.

Successful interviewing can be accomplished only if you are prepared mentally and physically. First, you should make every effort to learn as much as possible about the prospective employer. Look them up on the internet, go the library, ask your friends and associates to share anything they may know.

Try to learn something about the company's history, product or service, industry standing, growth plans or challenges. The more intelligently you can speak about the organization, the more impressed the interviewer will be.

Try to learn some details about the position that is open. Put your business contacts to work for you and try to learn as much as you can before you go to the interview. The internet can be a great friend in accomplishing this.

Proper mental and physical conditioning is important so you will present yourself at your best. This is not the night to party. Wait until you land the job before you celebrate. Physical appearance is very important. The manner in which you choose to dress for the interview

tells the employer how you feel about working for his or her organization. Make it a positive statement.

Unless you are applying for a very casual job, men should wear a suit and tie, be cleanly shaven, with shined shoes and clean nails. Women should wear a conservative business suit or dress, moderate make-up and a tidy hair-style. No one should go to a job interview in jeans, cut-offs, T-shirts, or other casual clothing. Always dress at least one step above the position you are applying for.

The day before the interview compile all necessary documents, letters of reference, transcripts, etc. Be sure to have enough copies on hand that you can leave a set with the employer; don't expect them to make the copies for you. Have a pen handy for filling out their application form.

Have all necessary phone numbers with you so you can complete the application quickly and properly. Never write "see resume." That makes you look lazy and shows disregard for the employer's application procedure. Remember, you are trying to project yourself as organized, alert, and responsible.

Being late for the interview will cast a negative light on your candidacy. Proper planning (gas in car, bus fare in hand) will prevent this. Know exactly where you are going. Locate the company the day before, time yourself, and allow at least a half hour for unexpected delays. A good rule of thumb is to arrive at the employer's office five to ten minutes before your scheduled appointment. If you are too early, find a place to be quiet, collect your thoughts, and set your intention for a positive interviewing experience.

Attention to the above will make you feel good about yourself and about the interview. Proper preparation cannot influence your qualifications for the job, but it can cause you to feel confident and relaxed so that when you meet the interviewer you will project an air of calm organization and be able to concentrate on the conversation that will take place.

Next month: The interview, part two.

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