

Who Packed Your Parachute?



Sometimes in the daily challenges that life throws at us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please, thank you, or congratulate someone on something wonderful that could have happened to him or her, give a compliment, or just do something nice for no reason.

Charles Plumb, a US Naval Academy graduate, was a jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions, his plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile, Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent six years in prison.

He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learnt from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down!"

"How in the world did you know that?" asked Plumb.

"I packed your parachute," the man replied.

Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man grabbed his hand and said, "I guess it worked!"

Plumb assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb kept wondering what the man might have looked like in a Navy uniform. He wondered how many times he might have seen him and not even said a good morning, how are you, or anything, because you see, he was a fighter pilot and the man was just a sailor. Plumb thought of the many hours that the sailor may have spent in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he did not know.

Plumb now asks his audience everytime, "Who is packing your parachute?" Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day.

As you go through your weeks, months, and even years, recognise the people who would have packed your parachute and enabled you to get where you are today!

The only way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him.

- Henry Stimson