

Saving Face

Here is my biggest single challenge in people skills. I have a history of running over people and leaving them no place to hide. There is another word for not allowing people to save face. It's pronounced "unkind."

Believe it or not, the world is not made up of people who intentionally make mistakes, who intentionally fail to plan, or intentionally cause other people grief. They do it without thinking. Don't you do the same thing from time to time? I know I do. Sometimes the brain just doesn't engage when it ought to. When that happens to me, I'm looking for forgiveness, understanding, compassion, and kindness. I don't want someone to publicly humiliate me for my lapse in judgment. Yet I sometimes do that to others.

I lose face on the highway a lot lately. There are just too many cars, too many people in a hurry, so many poorly marked roads and exits, an array of lights that I can't make out at night, lines on the road that are washed out... I'm just trying to survive. Can you identify with that? And then comes that other driver with a single hand gesture to encourage me to move aside. All I want is a little kindness and understanding, and that's what I get instead. It infuriates me. Maybe that's how other people feel when I put *them* down.

Massive changes in the economy and technology are pushing everyone I know into survival mode too. It seems like people's jobs don't stay the same for more than 3 months in a row. They just can't cope with all the changes. Their brain disengages. They need someone to gently give them direction and a helping hand. They don't need an attitude that tells them they are an idiot. I apparently convey that to people with a look - a furrowed eyebrow, a sigh, a tilt of my head. That's an improvement for me, not saying anything. Yet, I'm not as kind as I could be. I'm not as patient as I ought to be. I'm not as understanding as others need me to be. Are you?

Thank goodness my attitude is 100% under my control. All it takes is a decision to change once I understand why that change is important. And here's why: as Dale quotes, "*I have no right to say or do anything that diminishes a man in his own eyes. What matters is not what I think of a man, but what he thinks of himself. Hurting a man's dignity is a crime.*"

That says it all.