



## The Extra Ribbon

Wishing to honor her students, telling them the difference that each had made in her life, a high school teacher presented each of them with a blue ribbon imprinted with gold letters which read, "It is Who I Am That Makes a Difference."

Later, the teacher decided to do a class project to see what kind of impact recognition would have on the broader community. She gave each of her students three more ribbons and instructed them to go out and repeat the recognition with others who had made a difference in their lives.

One of the boys went to a junior executive in a nearby company and honored him for helping with his career planning. After giving him the blue ribbon, he said, "We're doing a class project on recognition, and we'd like you to find someone to honor in your life. Give them a blue ribbon to keep and an extra ribbon so they can acknowledge a third person."

Later that day, the junior executive went in to see his boss, who was noted to be a grouchy fellow. He confided to his boss that he deeply admired him for his creative genius. The boss seemed very surprised and honored when the young man asked if he could present him with the blue ribbon. After pinning the ribbon to his lapel, the young man told his boss about the student who gave him the ribbon and asked if he would take the one extra ribbon and pass it on by honoring somebody else.

That night the boss came home to his 14-year old son and sat him down. He said, "The most incredible thing happened to me today. I was in my office and one of my junior executives came in and told me he admired me for being a creative genius and pinned this blue ribbon on my lapel. Then he gave me an extra ribbon and asked me to find someone else to honor.

"As I was driving home, I started thinking about whom I would honor and I thought about you. I want to honor you. My days are really hectic, and when I come home I don't pay a lot of attention to you. Sometimes I scream at you for not getting good grades and for your bedroom being a mess. But tonight, somehow, I just wanted to sit here and just let you know that you do make a difference to me. Besides your mother, you are the most important person in my life. You're a great kid and I love you."

The startled boy started to sob and he couldn't stop crying. His whole body shook. He looked at his father and said through his tears, "I was planning on committing suicide tomorrow, Dad, because I didn't think you loved me."

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