

The “having a coffee” reference in our last article was intended to suggest that the art of conversation is alive and well up in northern Ontario. In spite of having the same technologies - cell phones, text, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc. - our northern neighbors seem much more capable of enjoying conversation at a level I rarely experience ‘in the states.’ What’s more, no one up there seems in a particular hurry to get on to the next task, something we in the Cincinnati region – and many other geographies – seem compelled to do.

Which leads me to wonder why “BUSY” has seemingly become the typical response to the question: “how are you doing?”

Maybe instead of rushing by people after asking the “how ya doin’” question, we should stop short, turn if necessary, and wait for their reply? Or maybe following up on their “busy” response with a question: “any way I can help?” [though you’ll want to be careful here since they just may have ways to put you to work! :-)]

Thinking about those living in Cincinnati, my hope is that you have neighbors similar to those Kim and I enjoy. If someone nearby us were to have an issue, there would be plenty of support. And while we don’t often “have a coffee” with the neighbors, it’s fun to be able to exchange a few greetings and updates plus periodically get together with them for a meal, a drink and/or block party.

Talking with folks – neighbors, friends or strangers – about interesting topics can bring joy to a day, and isn’t that a wonderful gift to you and your acquaintances? In her book, *Power Schmoozing*, Terri Mandell mentions “Remember, you’re sharing a common reality with the other people in the room, so you can always talk about what’s going on around you ...”

In the right situations, even introverts enjoy a little conversation. So in some cases, maybe it’s not a lengthy conversation but instead a peace-giving smile & wave, possibly coupled with a sentence or two?

This reminds me of the movie “What Women Want” and the character, Erin (played by Judy Greer.) Erin feels largely ignored by an entire office full of people when at one point Mel Gibson’s character helps her pick up some dropped files and makes small talk with her. With his super-natural ability to read women’s minds, Mel’s character can hear Erin’s thoughts after the interaction, which are “What do you know? There is life on this planet.”

So, sometimes a few words of greeting, a wave and a smile are all it takes to make the world a little brighter this day and in those that follow...

Enjoy the day, the conversations ... and the memories!

Steve Long, an Anderson Township resident, is an “aspiring memory missionary.” He and wife Kim are having fun with Long Memories efforts (www.LongMemories.info), focusing on helping others in “Making, Capturing, Organizing and Sharing Memories...Now and (Virtually) Forever!”