

Encountering The Homeless In Chicago

by Annie Margarita Yang

This past weekend, I went to Chicago for the Publish A Book and Grow Rich seminar hosted by Black Card Books (fastest growing publishing company). This is an excellent seminar that shows you how to write a book in 40 hours and publish it and market it, so that you can grow your business. The seminar is free, but I actually paid for this seminar last year to be a VIP Member. The VIP Membership comes with a home study course and bonus documents, along with a book cover design.

The seminar was three days long (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) and when Sunday was over, I headed over to the Willis Tower in the Downtown Chicago area to meet my friend. While exiting the train station, I met a black lady with no legs and she was asking me for money to buy lunch. I told her I would give her \$2. She *insisted* on receiving \$5 or \$10. She didn't want \$2, she wanted \$5. I seriously only had \$22 in cash left in my pocket to last me another day before my flight back to New York. I told her I really don't have much, because I need to help myself before I can help other people. If I give her too much, then the next day I will probably starve out of having not enough money to buy food.

She got really mad at me for giving too little. So then I told her that I could give her \$2, and that's it, and then asked her what was it that put her in this sort of situation where she had to beg for money. "What? Now you're going to lecture me over a measly *two dollars*?" she snapped back. It's **not** a measly two dollars. Two dollars in her situation and in mine at the time meant a whole lot. I said, "No, I actually care and give to the poor all the time. It's just that I don't have much right now. But I really do want to know how everything ended up like this." It turns out that she had diabetes and had to amputate her legs. Her aunt stole her social security information and now she gets no money and now she can't work either because she physically can't.

I felt really bad for her and offered to give her some of the groceries in my bag. I had hummus, carrots, and peanut butter and jelly on me. But the moment I said hummus, she interrupted saying she hated hummus and didn't want to eat any of the food I have to offer - she wanted money only. She was being really ungrateful. I mean, if she wanted to buy lunch with the money, why couldn't she just take the food I had to feed her hungry stomach? So I just quickly turned and left.

I was waiting to meet my friend and then I met two more homeless people on the corner across from the Willis Tower. One of them asked for change, but I offered my peanut butter and jelly instead. He was glad to take it and was grateful. It turns out that he's in his 50's and his house was burned down in a fire last month. His wife and three kids are staying with his mother-in-law, but since he doesn't get along with his mother-in-law, he's sleeping on the streets. That's a really upsetting situation. I really feel compassion for these people. It's not like they ask to go through this.

His friend was next to him listening in on our conversation. His friend is only 23 and has been there for the past 4 days. His parents kicked him out of the house because he was doing too many drugs and being irresponsible. He wants to quit, but he's been doing it since 8 when his sister introduced him to it. He was shivering and only had a thin sheet to protect against the cold. Man, I must admit, that weekend the temperature suddenly dropped and not only that, it's really windy in Chicago. I had to walk around with a wool jacket and gloves on that weekend.

So finally my friend came to pick me up and I asked if we could head over to Target together to buy some blankets. My friend had time and said yes. We found the cheapest blankets. I bought two for \$16, and headed back to the corner to give it to those two men. I only had \$4 left for food the next day so I starved a bit until I landed in New York. All I could afford was a small sandwich from Walgreens for \$3.77. But those men were so thankful and I felt happy falling asleep that night knowing they were warmer.

So I guess it's the ungrateful homeless that give the homeless a bad reputation. People like the first lady deter people from giving. But there are people out there who truly do need help and appreciate every bit they get. There's a huge difference in attitude.

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