

Acknowledgement

written by CD | JUNE 28, 2020

Telling someone that they are amazing, naturally creative, resourceful and whole with unbounded potential is NOT an acknowledgement.

Acknowledgement is not a statement.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IS NOT A STATEMENT

It is an introspective recognition.
IT IS AN INTROSPECTIVE RECOGNITION

A few years ago, a senior leader said he observed that members of my team loved me and would do just about anything for me. He wanted to know how that came to be. My initial inclination was to tell him that it needs to start with letting them know and trust that their growth and success is very important to you.

However, luckily, I realized that statement would have been wrong.

Instead, I recognized and said, it starts with it actually being truly important to you that they grow and succeed. To his credit, he was honest enough to say that he had never seen that as an aspect of leadership. Your team will not believe you care unless you actually do. Once they recognize you care for them and their success, they will care more for themselves and their own success.

So, back to my original statement:

Telling someone that they are amazing, naturally creative, resourceful and whole with unbounded potential is NOT an acknowledgement.

You yourself recognizing, truly believing and internalizing that they are amazing, naturally creative, resourceful and whole with unbounded potential is the actual acknowledgement. Telling them that they are

amazing is a statement of acknowledgement. Without first appreciating it, the statement is hollow with little impact.

Nonetheless, the magic doesn't really happen until they themselves recognize, acknowledge and truly believe in their own ability to grow, achieve and succeed without bound. When you truly recognize another person's magnificence, they are much more likely to also see it themselves.

Acknowledgement in the Classroom

When teaching, especially 8th graders, if you want to have any hope of reaching your students, you need their trust. Start with first acknowledging yourself that they are fully capable individuals. This is a necessary foundation for establishing genuine trust. It's hard to make progress in the classroom if there isn't a connection established. I remember a school event where parents were dumbfounded that their 8th graders were asking me to be in selfies with them. If you can have that kind of connection with 8th graders, you can also help them appreciate that your objective is to enable them to discover they are ready for life. Now you can begin evoking the transformation to help them learn how to learn.

As a teacher, a parent, a mentor, a manager, and a human,
I like:

*"If you are personally interested in the child,
they can sense it in about five minutes,
and I think they are forever grateful
because most schools are not like that."*

[National award-winning Palo Alto teacher takes unusual approach](#)

TRICK — Trust, Respect, Independence, Collaboration and Kindness



Actor James Franco with former teacher Esther Wojcicki

[National award-winning Palo Alto teacher takes unusual approach](#)

The way you do anything is the way you do everything

When we look closely at another or their actions, we get a window into the whole person. Everything they say or do in some way sheds more light. The values driving small actions and choices are the same as those driving small and large decisions in other parts of their life. As the saying goes *"the way you do one thing is the way you do everything."*

When we look deeply into another's eyes we may see their soul; when we look at, understand, appreciate and acknowledge small achievements we

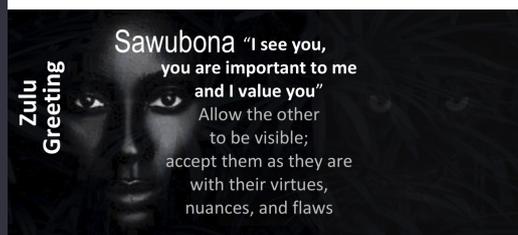
may have just opened a window into what lies inside waiting to venture out. The Zulu greeting [Sawubona](#) means “*I see you, you are important to me and I value you.*” It’s a way to make the other person visible and to accept them as they are with their virtues, nuances, and flaws. In my experience if you truly see and accept someone, it opens the door for them to become visible to themselves.

When we observe others and acknowledge and appreciate their potential and allow them to recognize what we truly see in them, they may come to recognize their own potential. By truly seeing them, you enable them to evoke transformation in themselves. See them.

When [I stood face to face with the Dalai Lama](#) many years ago and he looked into my eyes, he certainly evoked transformation in me with that look, an acknowledging smile and nod.

– I see you –

CD



Sawubona – I see you