

What does it mean to be ...



When I sent my manuscript for my book *Over the Top* to the publisher, he returned it and said, "You can't tell people how to go over the top until you identify 'the top.'" For over two months, I struggled to come up with the definition of "the top." Finally, I just threw up my hands and said, "It'll come to me."

My wife and I were visiting her sister, Eurie Abernathy, in a nursing home in Shreveport, Louisiana. Many of the people there are seriously ill, but Eurie, who has multiple sclerosis, only needs help with a few minor activities, such as getting in and out of her wheelchair.

When we go to nursing homes, I always feel like a fish out of water. I am one of those solution-oriented people who doesn't know what to do when I'm faced with something that can't be fixed. My wife, whom I lovingly refer to as "The Redhead," takes a different approach. She grabs everyone, hugs them, talks to them, listens to them, and makes them feel every bit as special as they are.

On this day, I was having more than my usual degree of difficulty handling the visit, so I walked outside and started to pray. I asked God to give me the kind of heart for others my wife has. I was outside for about 15 minutes, and when I returned, the words came to me. The only paper I had was the back of our motel bill.

**By Zig
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You are at the top when:

1. You clearly understand that failure is an event, not a person; that yesterday ended last night, and today is a brand-new day.
2. You have made friends with your past, are focused on the present, and are optimistic about your future.
3. You know that success (a win) doesn't make you, and failure (a loss) doesn't break you.
4. You are filled with faith, hope and love; and live without anger, greed, guilt, envy or thoughts of revenge.
5. You are mature enough to delay gratification and shift your focus from your rights to your responsibilities.
6. You know that failure to stand for what is morally right is the prelude to being the victim of what is criminally wrong.
7. You are secure in who you are, so you are at peace with God and in fellowship with man.
8. You have made friends of your adversaries, and have gained the love and respect of those who know you best.
9. You understand that others can give you pleasure, but genuine happiness comes when you do things for others.
10. You are pleasant to the grouchy, courteous to the rude, and generous to the needy.
11. You love the unlovable, and give hope to the helpless, friendship to the friendless, and encouragement to the discouraged.
12. You can look back in forgiveness, forward in hope, down in compassion, and up with gratitude.
13. You know that "he who would be the greatest among you must become the servant of all" (The Bible, Matthew 23:11).
14. You recognize, confess, develop and use your God-given physical, mental and spiritual abilities to the glory of God and for the benefit of mankind.
15. You stand in front of the Creator of the universe, and He says to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (The Bible, Matthew 25:21).