



BE A PEOPLE PERSON

A kind and compassionate act
is often its own reward.

—William J. Bennett

Jesse's Glove Full of Love

I do a lot of management training each year for the Circle K Corporation, a U.S. chain of convenience stores. Among the topics we address in our seminars is the retention of quality employees—a real challenge to managers when you consider the pay scale in the service industry. During these discussions, I ask the participants, “What has caused you to stay long enough to become a manager?” Some time back, a new manager took this question and slowly, with her voice almost breaking, said, “It was a \$19 baseball glove.”

Cynthia told the group that she originally took a Circle K clerk job as an interim position while she looked for something better. On the second or third day behind the counter, she received a phone call from her nine-year-old son, Jesse. He needed a baseball glove for Little League. She explained that as a single mother, money was very tight, and her first check would have to go for paying bills. Perhaps she could buy his baseball glove with her second or third check.

When Cynthia arrived for work the next morning, Patricia, the store manager, asked her to come to the small room in the back of the store that served as an office. Cynthia wondered if she had done something wrong or left some part of her job incomplete from the day before. She was concerned and confused.

Patricia handed her a box. “I overheard you talking to your son yesterday,” she said, “and I know that it is hard to explain things to kids. This is a baseball glove for Jesse because he may not understand how important he is, even though you may have to pay the bills before you can buy baseball gloves. You know we can't pay good people like you as much as we'd like to, but we do care—and I want you to know you are important to us.”

The thoughtfulness, empathy, and love of this convenience store manager demonstrates vividly that people remember how much an employer *cares* more than how much an employer *pays*. That's an important lesson, for the price of a baseball glove.

—Rick Phillips

*The slightest word of comfort
To help us on our way,
The slightest smile from someone
To brighten up our day;
The slightest act of kindness
To lessen care and such—
All these cost so little,
But they mean so very much.*

—Quoted by Francis Gay

To be a good leader, a good employer, to take care of people and watch over them, you have to have great compassion. You have to understand what people need and try to supply that. You have to feel their hurts, their pain, as well as their joys and happiness. You have to want to know these things, even if you feel it will break your heart to be so involved.

If you do care, if you are involved, they will know it. And because you care, they will want to work together with you to achieve great things, and you can go far together.

People are starved for real love. They see it so seldom and experience it even less. So if they find someone who truly cares about them, who truly has their best interests at heart, they will go very far for that person, and will give of their best.

But you can't care about people just so they will perform well for you. You have to care about them because *God* does. You know He cares about you, and doesn't that make all the difference in your life? So because you experience His love in your life, that makes you want to pass it on.

—David Brandt Berg