



Staff Reflection for Tuesday 28 April 2020: *Always look for the helper.*

Ubuntu – I Am Because We Are

“One day, a western anthropologist went to Africa to study the social behavior of an indigenous tribe. He proposed a game to the children and they willingly agreed to be part of it. He put a basket filled with fruits underneath a tree and told the children that whoever would reach the basket first would win the whole basket and could eat the fruits all by him - or herself.

He lined them all up and raised his hand to give the start signal. Ready. Set. Go!

The children took each other’s hands and started running together. They all reached the basket at the same time. Then they sat down in a big circle and enjoyed the fruits together, laughing and smiling all the time.

The anthropologist could not believe what he saw and he asked them why they had waited for each other as one could have taken the whole basket all for him - or herself.

The children shook their heads and replied, “Ubuntu, how can one of us be happy if all the others are sad?”

<http://www.amyreesanderson.com/blog/ubuntu-i-am-because-we-are/#.XqASsUBuLIU>

Ubuntu is a traditional African philosophy or concept. The word *ubuntu* comes from the Zulu and Xhosa languages, and can be roughly translated as "humanity towards others". Ubuntu embodies all those virtues that maintain harmony and the spirit of sharing among the members of a society. It ultimately celebrates our shared humanity and our interconnectedness, as well as emphasizing the necessity for us to belong to a whole as we simply cannot exist in isolation.

Theme for this week: Always look for the helper

In times of crisis it can be easy for us to feel overwhelmed by all the negative traits brought out in humanity. You just need to look in our local supermarkets at all the bare shelves and the confrontations over toilet paper for an example of people turning in and focusing on *self* rather than *other*. In times of crisis we can also feel very isolated and disconnected from our community, consequently causing us to be introspective and focused on our own struggles and challenges. However, whenever tragedy strikes, as a way to remember our common humanity and see the amazing traits humans possess, we need just look for the helper.

Reflection:

- Share a story you have heard on the news or witnessed in person that highlights the ever-present goodness in humanity
- Reflect on a person on the frontline of this crisis - the helper and the qualities they possess
- Reflect on the concept "I am because we are" and how this resonates with you
- A silver lining to this tragedy may in fact be the unprecedented opportunity for the earth to breathe. How has the pandemic increased our growing ecological consciousness and helped us rediscover our deep connection to the 'whole'- which ultimately includes our common home?

(Angela Scarafilo, Young Mercy Links, Victoria)