

2AOK by Mike Schadek

Featured in the Book: *INSPIRING HOPE – Stories of Hopeful Living for More Success*

When my wife and I lost our three year old daughter Macy to cancer in 1998, I thought my life was over—literally. Any glimmer of hope or promise of happiness seemed to be extinguished the day we buried her. For a time, I was mad at the world, mad at myself and mad at God. How could such a precious child so full of life and love be subjected to such a despicable disease? Neuroblastoma—a rare and deadly type of cancer—ravaged her body and robbed her of the pure joy of growing up and experiencing life. If something so terrible could happen to a beautiful child that never harmed another human or uttered an evil word, how could I be assured that anything good would ever blossom again in my life? Hope and faith seemed laughable. Life seemed random and meaningless and tragic.

Just as death had nearly extinguished hope, life and love brought it back into focus. My wife and I were quickly blessed with the birth of two healthy and happy boys and slowly we rebuilt a life filled with joy and laughter and great expectation. It was the very act of having more children and taking a chance on the future which allowed us to get our lives back on track and to truly begin to live again. It wasn't an easy decision. What if we suffered the scourge of cancer again? What if some other tragedy befell us and robbed us permanently of any hope?

It was precisely this experience of losing my daughter which helped transform my life. It was Macy's death that helped illuminate a compelling and startlingly simple truth which has forever changed my life: life is about love, and love is actionable. It is how we treat others each and every day that determines our worth as individuals. Every day enables us the opportunity to help a family member, friend, neighbor or total stranger. By proactively engaging in positive acts of kindness, we make the world a better place and we make ourselves better people. Life isn't just precious—we all know that—but our time with those around us is literally passing before our eyes never to be recaptured. I only had 3 years with Macy, much of which was spent in a hospital watching her die before my eyes. In hindsight, I regret the myriad of moments when I didn't take action with her but sat by as a spectator. I regret the things I didn't do with her. I regret the things I didn't say to her. I regret the times I didn't hug and kiss her as if it would be the last day I saw her. Sadly the number of days I had with her were agonizingly short, and I regret most the acts of love I didn't perform.

My loss of Macy became the foundation of change in my life, and I will never be the same. I realized I could not longer sit idly by and watch the world pass by. I had to take action and become part of the solution rather than part of the problem. In an age of terrorist attacks, economic meltdown, increasing crime and rising depression, I could no longer afford the luxury of retreating into personal ambivalence and apathy. I tried that after Macy's death and it didn't work. My sadness and pain and depression didn't abate by burying my head in the sand. I needed to take action and take control of my life and I did this by developing a simple process that everyone—regardless of age, financial wherewithal or intelligence—can put into effect IMMEDIATELY.

Two Acts of Kindness—2AOK for short—is a lifestyle commitment that literally changes your life—and the world—from the moment you begin the system. The requirement is ridiculously simple: commit, beginning TODAY, to perform two acts of kindness each and every day for the rest of the year. Some acts will be large, some will be small. Some will take preparation and planning, some will occur in the blink of an eye. Some acts will take place in public, some will take place in the silence of your heart. All, however, will be priceless because you will be making an empirical difference in the lives of those around you. But for those two acts of kindness each and every day, the world would not be better off. Because of those two acts of kindness each and every day, not only have you elevated those around you and literally “made things better” but you have also increased your significance and meaning in the world. You truly matter and your acts serve to elevate not only those around you, but you yourself are elevated to a more meaningful role. By helping others you help yourself. As Mother Teresa instructed: “Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person.”

The second requirement for 2AOK is to record your two acts of kindness each day in a journal entitled The Vault. The Vault serves a dual role. First it encourages accountability for your actions. You must take the time to record your two acts each and every day and this requires forethought on your part. Secondly, and more importantly, The Vault serves as a tangible and daily reminder of the positive impact you are making each day. You now have concrete and empirical evidence of the difference you are making in the world. These acts can never be taken away and no matter what happens in your life, you have a treasure trove of acts which are truly priceless. The contents of The Vault will always eclipse the contents of your bank account.

You and I CAN change the world, two acts at a time. Your acts may include volunteer work at a local charity or it may be a simple smile or kind word to a stranger. It may be a phone call to a lonely neighbor or the gift of time for a family member. It can literally be anything, but you must commit at least two every day and you must record them in The Vault. If you do this, your life will change dramatically and the world around you will change. As Marian Wright Edelman succinctly stated, “A lot of people are waiting for Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi to come back—but they are gone. We are it. It is up to us. It is up to you.” 2AOK serves as a roadmap to put this conviction into practice. In the end, 2AOK restores hope to each of us and promises hope to the world. I only wish Macy was here to participate. How I would love to watch her two acts of kindness each day.

Get your copy of the 207 page book today direct from Mike or from the bureau at 614-841-1776

Schedule Mike Schadek to speak to your group ASAP by phoning 614-841-1776.