

"It's Nice To See You Around"

by John Fischer

I am just back from my two-mile jog, pacing in front of my house to cool down when I notice my neighbor from across the street is headed to work. I wave at her and she waves back as she opens the car door, gets in, and starts the engine. With my headphones in and knit cap over them, I feel like a turtle in his shell. Bonnie Raitt is in the middle of *Come to me*, and I have been imagining God singing it to the human race (I do things like this just as a way of worship).

Suddenly, I act on the impulse to say something to Doris. She travels a lot working for an international company and I realize I haven't seen her in a while. Turning the music off and taking off my hat, I stick my neck out of my shell as I walk over to her car. She sees me coming and reaches for the keys to turn the engine off. I don't want her to do that, because this is not the time to talk. I know what it's like being on your way to work. So I hold up my hands to indicate I didn't want to slow her down, and without any thought it just comes out: "It's nice to see you around!"

A huge smile lights up her face as she calls back, "I'm around for a couple weeks."

That was it. No major life-changing moment, no conversation, just an acknowledgment that someone's existence was appreciated.

Turning back to my house, I feel like a million bucks. That was just an unplanned, unrehearsed little affirmation of someone's personhood. Such a little thing to take any credit for and that is not my intention here, merely to point out that it takes so little to give someone a reason for being alive. I actually kind of shocked myself with the simple statement. It was exactly what I would want to say in that situation, and, by golly, I said it! (Usually comments like this come in hindsight, like the Terry Taylor line, *I knocked them dead with what I could have said.*)

Think about what you can do to affirm someone's existence today. We all need attention at the most basic level, and don't take the obvious for granted. It doesn't take much, but it can mean a lot to the other person *and* to you!

(And for those of you who are turtles like me, don't be afraid to pop your head out. It will be worth it.)