

COMPASSION UNDER PRESSURE

If you have been a frequent reader of my column, you know that I have a soft spot for those teenagers who show what I call “COMPASSION UNDER PRESSURE.” That is those young people who show respect for someone no one else wants anything to do with in fear it may damage their reputation. The loner; the “nerd,” the people in your school who are “different” from others. To me people who respect others like this are far and few apart and because they are so rare, are true heroes. Take the girl in the following true story:

A 16 year old boy from Connecticut has a rare form of dwarfism. He was a little over 3 feet tall and weighed only 42 pounds. A school dance was coming up and he wanted so much to go. He approaches a girl he secretly admired and asked her if she would like to accompany him to the dance. She turns him down. Later on he asks another girl only to be rejected once again. Disappointed and figuring he’d probably never be accepted for who he was, he makes plans to stay home the evening of the dance. A few days later a girl from the school, a very pretty girl who probably could have gone out with most any of the guys in her school, heard about what happened. Now I don’t know if this girl already had plans on going with her boyfriend, was thinking about going, or had a compassionate boyfriend who understood what this girl was going to do and signed on to it, it doesn’t really matter.



The girl approaches the boy with the dwarfism and asks him if he would be interested in accompanying her to the dance at the high school. The boy was ecstatic. According to him, “it was the

happiest day of my life.” He just couldn’t believe it. The two went to the dance and had a great time.

No doubt this situation had a profound impact on this boy’s life. It wasn’t just the dance, it was the fact that the boy was shown respect by this girl when most others didn’t have the courage to do so. It gave him hope. It showed him that his value isn’t wrapped up in some neat flesh package and put on the shelf for those to either purchase or reject, but somebody who was, as he put it, “appreciated.”

Considering the fact that the doctor only gives this boy 10 or so years to live due to the rareness of his dwarfism, happy moments like this couldn’t come often enough.

I know I said this before and I’ll say it again; having the courage to show compassion to someone who is shown none is far more heroic than some big league guy hitting a baseball over the fence. The thrill of the home run lasts but a few moments. The compassion someone feels from being respected will last a lifetime.