



This humorous Circle Tale emphasizes storycatching as well as two of the three practices of PeerSpirit circling: Listen with attention and Speak with Intention. And it reminds us that circles of two can happen anywhere and anytime. Thanks to Kim Jensen, Nursing Department, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota.

## **Circle Tale, May 2008 Just Say Hi!**

The Nike Corporation did it right. I bet they put a little extra money in the bank by telling us to "Just Do It" and, of course, we did "Do It" while wearing their shoes. Every Gen X-er and their parents remember the "Just Say No" drug education campaign. And although many of those youngsters ultimately decided to say "yes", don't think they weren't haunted by images of Nancy Reagan telling them they should have said "no."

I like the idea of "justing." It's simple and to the point, there's no indecision and, apparently, you can get a lot of mileage out of it. I decided to try "justing" for myself. I considered the "Just Get Off My Ass!" or "Just Get Off Your Cell Phone!" campaign but that was making me feel a little cranky. I "just" wanted to try and do something positive for myself and, maybe, for mankind so what would happen if I "Just Said Hi!"?

I first tried out "Just Say Hi" at Target. I decided I was going to purposefully say "Hi" to my fellow unsuspecting shoppers and see what kind of response I got. The young woman in the feminine hygiene aisle perked right up when I greeted her. She even inquired if I knew anything about yeast infection products. We reviewed the offerings and decided on the product that was the easiest to use with the least amount of mess and only had to be used for 3 days. I could tell that, to her, I was not just a middle-aged lady pushing a red shopping cart; I was a wise medicine woman.

Off I went to the electronics department. There I found a lone male eyeing the largest of LCD televisions. I crept up and stood silent beside him. "Hi", I said, "Lookin' for a TV?" Yes, he was and he was buying it for himself because he had just broken up with his girlfriend and she kicked him out of the apartment and she got to keep everything and he had nothing so he was treating himself to a new TV but he didn't have the money to buy a TV stand or a bed or a table or a couch or groceries or pay rent or put gas in his car or even buy beer but this TV was going to make him feel better because he should have never hooked up with her anyway because she was nothing but a selfish bitch. At that moment, in liquid crystallized clarity, the balding head of Dr. Phil appeared before us. "What do you think Dr. Phil would say?" I asked. "He would say something stupid like I need to be happy with who I am and not depend on selfish bitches to make me happy." "Is that true?" I inquired. "Ya, I guess," he said, looking a bit pensive, "A new TV would help, though." In that young man's eyes, I was better than Dr. Phil. I was not only his counselor; I was strong enough to assist him in carrying his TV to the check out counter.

I had hit the jackpot at Target. My "Just say Hi" campaign was proving to be quite successful. I was feeling great! I had to wonder, "What might happen in a produce department?" Produce departments are designed to accommodate crowds so I crossed the street to Rainbow. I thoughtfully stood before the zucchini and soon a young man joined me. I glanced over and said "Hi." "Is coriander the same as cilantro?" he asked. "Well, what are you making?" I replied. Not only did I get the low down on a new curry recipe, I also got to join him as he began his new journey into uncharted territory-his new love. He was going to cook his way into her heart. "What do you say we hit the spice aisle?" I said. We located the coriander. He was filled with gratitude. "Now, can you tell me how I should set the table?" I became his surrogate Mom wrapped in Martha Stewart.

The meat counter happened to be located right next to the spice aisle and I really did need some back ribs so I sauntered up to the friendly looking meat guy. "Hi! How many pounds of ribs would I need for six



people?" I asked. "Well, are any of the six people guys and are the guys going to be drinking beer because then you're going to need extra" he said with a note of humor. At that same moment, another gentleman happened to come up to the counter and asked how many pounds of back ribs he would need for 12 people. I said, "Hi, I can answer that! You will need about a half pound per person but extra if any your guests are guys that drink beer." He looked at me suspiciously as the meat guy was doubled over laughing. "No really!" I confirmed, "That's what the meat guy said." Well, that's all it took. If the meat guy had trusted me enough to give me his precise calculations on number of ribs versus number of beers, I must be worthy of confidential information. I became privy to the specifics of his party and his deeply touching story. His brother was coming home after several months in a rehab hospital. He had served in the war in Iraq and had sustained several injuries including the loss of his leg. I was deeply moved and saddened. Even the meat guy stopped laughing. In fact, the three of us ended up spending some memorable time at the meat counter. The meat guy and I transformed ourselves into a support group for a grieving brother and even though we didn't talk much, I could tell that we were just what he needed at that moment. He "just" needed someone to listen.

Sometimes we need someone to "Just say Hi!" so we can tell our stories and have someone listen to us. Sometimes we might need a medicine woman, a Dr. Phil, a surrogate Mom, a support group or even a Martha Stewart. But maybe what all of us really need is someone to "just" recognize us for being alive, human and worthy of respect. So "Just Say Hi!".....HI!

*If you have a tale to tell, contact the PeerSpirit office and we'll help you share it.*

*For more information on many applications of circle, visit our web site at [www.peerspirit.com](http://www.peerspirit.com) and subscribe to our monthly Circle Tale newsletter using the subscription mechanism at the top right of the page. Your e-mail address will **not** be shared or used by anyone other than PeerSpirit, and you can unsubscribe yourself at any time.*