

Life Giving # 14

Respecting Boundaries

A lady recently wrote me an e-mail about a personal problem. I wrote back a personal response suggesting some strategies.

The Plumbliner was so excited about those ideas that she promptly forwarded my e-mail to her 487 closest, most intimate friends.

I found that offensive. In most cases a personal e-mail should not be forwarded without the permission of the person who wrote it.

There are times when we are carrying a painful burden and there is absolutely nothing that can be done about it, but it lightens the load a bit if we are able to share it with someone.

However, we often don't share, because we are not absolutely, positively, 100% certain it will remain confidential. Many people mean to be discrete, but ...

It is incredibly life giving to people in crisis when they know from long relationship with you that you can be totally, unequivocally trusted with the most sensitive information. You not only are intentional, but you are wise and will not get trapped in a bad situation.

So what are you doing today in the little things of life, like handling generic e-mails?

Each day is an opportunity to build your reputation as someone who can give the immense gift of being a safe listener. And only you can build your reputation. All it takes is 100,000 consistent acts of protecting others' reputations more than is necessary.

