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Volunteer Service Project *Khris and Spanda Inc.*

Her legs did not move. Her waist did not move. Her arms did not move. Only her mouth failed to follow the doctor's orders.

"Tell me a story, college dude. Did ya' get drunk? Knock some chicks up? Do ya' have a girlfriend?," she winks at me.

"Well, umm--"

"Wearing condoms I hope."

I met Khris over spring break. We recycled ink cartridges and cell phones for an organization called Spanda Inc. The process was tedious. But she made the experience unforgettable.

"Alright, young dude. You're a strong boy. You can lift all these printers and place' em in this junk pile. Besides, my knees are given out on my old ass."

Time went by. Slowly. After I made some progress on the pile, I noticed Khris sitting down in a chair. She was watching me. I took a break and we began to talk about the reasons behind this repetitive task. I found out our ultimate goal was to raise money to fund medical equipment and a portable ultra sound machine for a village called Kip Karen in Kenya. She spoke about how the area was poverty stricken. I heard there were people starving everywhere. I heard about the uncontrollable AIDS epidemic. I heard it all. But I could not see. I could not feel. I wanted to show empathy for the people she talked about. I could not. I realized I did not know what it was like to suffer in the way these villagers did. I could read a textbook. I could read about the region in a book locked in the libraries of academia. I could memorize a bunch of facts

about the area and repeat them to someone else. But I still would not be able to capture the essence of what was actually happening.

“Is this project attacking leaves or is it targeting the roots,” I stated.

“Holy balls, dude. Do you really think we’re just going to throw money at the problem and dump the equipment on their asses?”

I bit my tongue.

“There *will* be trained professionals to run the ultrasound equipment. They *will* be stationed over there for a long period of time.”

“That’s good to know.”

We worked on the project for a few more hours. We made a lot of progress. I accounted for every ink cartridge and cell phone in the entire facility. By the end of my stay, Khris and I were friends.

“Jacob. I am gonna have knee surgery in a few weeks. I need someone to visit my ass.

Ya’ know, a college boy to take care o’ me. Besides, don’t ya’ need to have a few more hours to complete your assignment?”

I was a little embarrassed. I wasn’t doing all of this as an act of altruism. I was volunteering my time for a cause greater than myself just to cover my ass and meet some requirement for an assignment in one of my classes.

I hesitated.

“Don’t worry about the hours Kris. I will be there because I *want* to be there.”

I showed up at her home a few weeks later. Unfortunately for her, I didn’t have any stories, truthful stories, about getting drunk or having lots and lots of sex. I asked if there was anything else she needed from me.

She told me to sit my sorry ass down. This time she spoke a lot about her family. She rambled on about her childhood. She spoke about how hard it was to be recognized as one of eleven children. She spoke about how religious differences destroyed the relationships with some of her relatives. Eventually, Khris directed me to the doctor's instructions. When I went through them I noticed one instruction that stood out from the rest.

"Call 911 if you are suffering from moments of impending doom," I read aloud.

We both laughed. She laughed heartedly. I laughed nervously. When the noises stopped, the room was silent. Time came and time went. Finally, I broke the silence. "Time stops for no one," I said. "I have a limited number of ticks on a clock. And so do you and so do those people in Kenya."

There was another moment silence.

"Ya' know something?," Khris said. "I have really good friends. Really *really* good friends."

She spoke about the people that touched her life. The moments in life she cared the most about. The moments in life she helped other people.

"Khris. What motivates you to do what you do?," I said. "Why do you volunteer?"

I thought to myself. Besides, certainly one person can't change the world.

She turned her head toward me. She looked into my eyes.

"It takes one idea. It takes one action. That's all it takes to move the world."

Bibliography

Spanda Inc. | *It Takes Only a Single Idea, a Single Action to Move the World.* Web. 29 Apr. 2010.

<<http://www.spandainc.com/>>.