

## 1001 Heart-to-Heart Hugs

It all started as a lark.

At a Jack Canfield seminar in August 2004, I set a goal of giving 100 Hugs by the end of the event on Saturday.

By day two, I was sitting at the front of the room, dancing to the music when we arrived in the morning and being noticed. It began feeling safe and comfortable to be hugging fellow participants.

I asked my subconscious “I wonder what it would be like giving hugs outside of the room? People would see me as off the wall and strange.” It felt scary! And strange. I let go of those thoughts and decided to have fun. Hey, I was in Vegas. I had set my goal but didn’t take it seriously.

I hugged strangers in the elevator, in the bar and in the restaurant. I hugged gamblers and businessmen, the serving staff for the seminar, and my waitress at breakfast. Whenever I asked from my heart, people welcomed a hug and by Saturday night I had shared over 100 hugs with people more different than I could have imagined. It felt connected and I was high on life.

I began thinking about putting this into action in the real world; wanted to see if I could take something that I was learning at a seminar, in a safe room, and extrapolate that into the real world. Vegas was safe, but what about home where people know me and I know myself. How could I face rejection? I just don’t go around hugging people in the real world. It’s not my style.

But... I began thinking. If giving 100 hugs was such a great experience how about more? How about 1000 hugs? What would that be like? I wanted to grow and push myself so I set a challenge. I would give 1001 hugs by New Years Eve 2004.

Back home in Vancouver, one of the first hugs I gave was to the bulk food clerk at my local grocery.

My mind screamed at me “PEOPLE WILL SEE YOU AS STRANGE, THIS IS NOT YOUR NORMAL BEHAVIOUR” while my mouth asked “Have you had a hug today? Can I give you a hug?”

He looked at me strangely then said “what the heck. I wouldn’t turn down a hug”

At the Mailbox Etc., where I have been going twice a week for over 2 years, I told them about the conference and my goal of giving 1001 hugs by New Year’s Eve. “Could I give them a hug?” I asked. Now each time I collect my mail I share a hug.

I noticed that service industry workers provide so much and desperately want to be acknowledged. They give so much and get so little back. Every server loved getting a hug.

At the senior's residence where my mother has lived for the past two years, I discovered that elderly people are starving for touch. They loved getting hugs and often had few or no visitors. Residents began watching for me so they were sure to get their hug.

After a while I began to take my goal seriously, shooting for the numbers and it turned into a job. When it became about myself, I was less attractive and people began to say no.

I became more aware of who I shy away from: hugely obese people or people with great deformities because I am afraid and don't know *how* to approach them. Serendipity offered me both and it was my sense of right and wrong that helped me to offer them hugs. The shift in me was great and I became connected to people in a way that I have never been connected to people before.

I eased up, moved to a place of love and became easy about giving. Once again it was fun to see the smiles and feel the raised energy.

New Years Eve and I have 60 hugs still to go. I have to decide whether to leave my family and friends in a warm and cosy cabin, get dressed up, warm up the car for the drive into town and finish what I set out to do 5 months ago. Nearest the finish line was where my mind frick was the strongest.

I drove into Whistler. It is now time for some strategy: where can I go to make it easy? I started at a coffee shop in the village and never left. I began by asking for their help. "I have set a goal of giving 1001 hugs by New Years Eve. I have now given 940 hugs. Will you help me? Can I give you a hug?"

This made it easy for people to help. It cost them nothing. The whole coffee shop started helping out. As each icy blast of air announced someone new coming into the coffee shop, customers whom I had already hugged began directing the newcomer over to me. It was a party atmosphere!

999 heart-to-heart hugs gifted. Only two left. From behind the serving counter two people, who had been hiding because of their shyness, are lead out by their friend. I hug each of them, look them directly in the eye and say "Thank you for helping me reach my goal." I was high on life!

I didn't know how important personal development was. I have a better understanding of who people are and it is about what I am giving, not about what I am getting. I experienced a place of peace and ease.

I never knew how difficult it was for people to ask meaningful and important questions. I never knew that I would learn so much about humanity. Never even knew that a lot of this stuff existed.

I discovered that when I do what I love, and give from a sense of love, what a calm place that is to come from and how better connected I become to people.

Qualifying hug: count only one heart-to-heart hug per person, per day.

By Jacque Small, as told to Hunter Dickson



Jacque Small was a highly successful Chartered Financial Analyst who left the security of one of Canada's top financial institutions to return to University. She graduated from Royal Roads University with top honours and started Catalyst Business Coaching for executives.

She is genuinely committed to helping senior management tap into their natural brilliance, transcend differences and re-launch their thinking power which will stimulate creative and innovative ideas, generating amazing results.

