

Random Acts of Kindness



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You know what rules? Random acts of kindness. Now telling people about those random acts make the acts seem pretty uncool, but I'm no Fonzie so after I tell a few that have been done to me, I'll share my favorite one that I committed.

Only once in my life have I used an umbrella. I was a senior in high school, and I cut school to wait on line for tickets to see The Who. WNEW 102.7 was there and gave out free painters hats. It was a pretty nice day at first, but all of a sudden it started to pour. I don't mean heavy rain, I mean crazy rain.

There were many of us just hanging out on line and I was enjoying the rain. I had on my hat and I was all good. But it started to rain so hard, that the brim of the hat actually fell off. It was a really cheap free hat but still, the brim should hold. But it didn't. But still...I was goood. Well this woman had an extra umbrella and she hands it to me. I told her, "Nah, I'm good." She was like, "No, you're going to use it." We got into an argument and finally, she was like, "You're !%#%#!@ using this umbrella!!!" So I did. I regret it to this day, but at the time, I really was touched by her kindness for a stranger. And when I get depressed...sometimes I will think back to that lady and hope she is doing well, wherever she is.

One place where you rarely find random acts of kindness is at a poker table, but I have a few from there. It must have been the late 90's and I was playing limit 7-card stud. That means you can't go, "All-in" you can only bet a certain amount. But after the 7th card is dealt, and there's just two people in the hand (heads up) you can raise the other person until one person just folds or calls. I was in Atlantic City and I had a flush. I was pretty new to casino poker so I didn't really know all the sharks that were at the table. I was the little fishy. So we got to the 7th card and I think I had a flush. I didn't think it could be beat. So the old man bet, I raised, he raised, I raised, he raised etc. Looking back...I can't believe what an idiot I was. Obviously I didn't have the nuts (the best hand possible) and this man had a better flush than me. But I didn't realize it. I would have still been there but finally he said, "OK, kid, show me the winner," and instead of raising he just called. I turned over my flush, and he turned over his freaking Royal Flush. The best hand possible in poker. He could have taken me for all I was worth but he left me with plenty of money.

But one of my favorite random acts of poker kindness happened on the early morning of May 23, 2006. It was my birthday and it was around 12:15 a.m. I was poor, and was living day to day trying to get by on my poker winnings. I had pocket kings and got it all in with this dude and sure enough, he had pocket aces. Or maybe I had the aces and he had the kings. Either way I remember he won and took 155 bucks from me. Ouch. Happy Birthday Richie. So this young kid Chris, he didn't know me. He was 21, had a ski cap on and saw I was sad. He said, "Hey seat 3, do you wanna do a shot with me?" My roommate Anthony shook his head because he knows the only alcohol I drink is beer. I look at Chris and I said, "Yeah!" I turn to the guy who just beat me and I said, "It's 12:15 now. By 8 a.m. I'll get all my money back." I was determined not to lose on my birthday. We did a Jaeger Bomb, and at 12:30, I was only down 5 bucks. By 8 a.m. I was up \$600. If it wasn't for Chris trying to make me feel better, I doubt I would have won that day. It saved my birthday. I felt bad because much of my winnings came from him. But I hope he's doing well, and though he can improve his poker game, his people's skills were top notch.

This brings me to my story. I was going to NYC on a train from Lynbrook with Anthony. There was a black woman, a little older than me. She was on her cell phone and she was crying lightly. It seemed she

had an argument with her boyfriend. It seemed serious. She was talking lightly so not to bother us and I just felt horrible for her. She seemed so alone. So after she was done with the call, she kept on crying lightly. I turned to her and said, "Hey! This is the happy train. There's no crying. Everyone here is happy." I then gave her a fist bump.

When we arrived in NYC I got up and she thanked me. It made me feel so good to know I helped this lady out. And I hope she's doing well, and maybe thinks of me once in a while.