

Holly Stiel's **Service Moments!**

Keep your service spirit alive with these little insights from world renowned service expert Holly Stiel

A Service Moment For A Service Man

I was on a plane returning home after visiting my family in Cleveland and found myself seated in coach next to a soldier in fatigues. As we awaited takeoff, the flight attendant approached and informed the soldier that a gentleman in first class had offered him his seat. Surprised, the soldier politely refused: "Tell him thank you, but I'm fine sitting here."

After the flight attendant left, I tried to convince the soldier to take that seat. As we spoke, I acknowledged that it might be awkward for him to accept it, or perhaps it was even against Army policy. I went on to explain that I had named my business *Thank You Very Much* because these are undoubtedly the most positive words in any language—heartwarming words that bring joy to those on the receiving and on the giving end. Even so, he still wouldn't move.

I then tried to explain how the man in first class would be disappointed if he didn't accept the offer, that receiving was just as important as giving. It would mean more to this man to give up his seat than to spend the flight enjoying the accommodations in first

class. Still, he wouldn't budge. I gave it one last try: "Are you sure I can't talk you into it?" At that moment, the man from first class approached our row, addressing the soldier by name. "Please allow me to switch seats with you. It would mean a great deal to me." I smiled to myself and thought, "See! I told you so!"

With his fellow passenger's personal and heartfelt request, the soldier was finally convinced to switch seats, and as he did, the man from first class shook his hand, saying, "Thank you for your service." After having spent a year in Iraq, I hope that serviceman savored every moment of his first-class homecoming. I also hope he remembers the lesson that receiving a gift gives as much to the giver as the recipient.

Later, I told the man from first class, now my new seatmate, that I wanted to tell the story about what had just happened and share it with hundreds of people. He asked to remain anonymous and added, "I hope it inspires others to do the same." I hope so too. Whether or not we travel in first class or coach, it's important to remember that both giving and receiving are always the first-class way to go.

If you have examples or thoughts about the importance of "attitude" in your work, please send your comments and stories to holly@thankyouverymuchinc.com. We'd love to hear from you!

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