

This is Dan Price with another Community Comment. The ‘comment’ part often comes easily since I have the gift of gab, and therefore have opinions about everything—even things where I say more than I know. What about the ‘community’ part. Periodically, I think it healthy for us to reflect on what makes a community. Things that pull people together can forge a community. For example: geography. On the north coast geography plays a big role in pulling us together, because we lack the myriad freeways that link people further south... thank goodness. We’re stuck with each other, our community is small enough that we tend to bump into one another while shopping, working, or ^{even} on vacation. A community is reinforced by seeing a familiar face, and entering places where people know your name.

Shared activities play a role in forming a community. The last days of summer typically close with a flurry of outdoor activities that cling to the remaining days of warmer temperatures and longer daylight hours. In the past few weeks I have enjoyed chatting with a neighbor, hiking with my son, daughter and daughter-in-law, long walks with my wife, and picking up kids from TLC Camp. I love the issue of the Times Standard where you get to view pictures of the fun activities people did over the summer! Things like that deepen our sense of community—and make ~~me~~^{us} look forward to next summer!

Common causes can bring people together: for examples, I noticed the “Tribute to Labor” on front page showing a gathering of local unions on Labor Day. Other causes can be common political affiliation (somebody’s got to do it), banning plastic bags, admiring vintage autos, or getting kids to 4-H meetings. People sometimes band together around causes that seek to make the world a better place to live, other associations are more for enjoyment than social utility.

Sharing common beliefs can bring people together:

Religious beliefs, world-views, concern for the economy or environment, educational goals. Ignorance ^{provides} is poor breeding ground for communities.

But, the bottom line is this. Neither geography, nor activities, nor common causes or beliefs provide enough glue to make a community stick. Rather, it is our attitude about each other as persons that forms community. Treating each other equally: neither looking down, nor fawning before others. Treating others with respect : respect that includes speaking and *listening*, rendering assistance where needed, and doing it all cheerfully and without keeping a ledger. In sum, it is caring for others, not only those who make us look good, but those with whom we disagree. In a good community we see the divine spark in every, single person.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment