

## Tiny Treasures

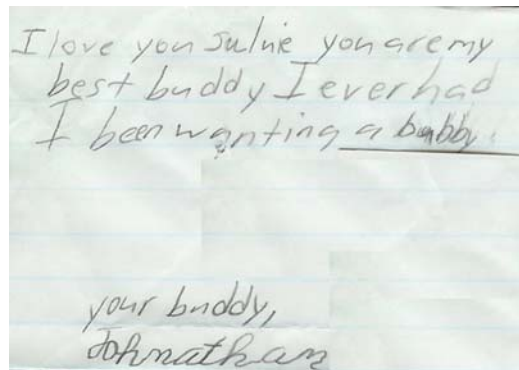
In the immortal words of Madonna, “We live in a material world.” And, I must admit that to some extent “I am a material girl.” I mean, I live alone and still have more than enough stuff to completely fill up a two bedroom apartment. So how is it that out of all of the things crammed into my closets, a small scrap of paper is one of my most prized possessions? The answer is very simple: these items remind me that (to quote the Beatles), “money can’t buy you love.”

During my time as an undergraduate at Baylor, I worked as a Baylor Buddy. For three and a half years I tutored and mentored a local elementary student named Johnathan. It was during those times that I came to truly appreciate that it is often the smallest things that mean the most. I call these things “tiny treasures” and now understand that our lives are large treasure chests simply waiting to be filled.

You see, unlike the PAL I worked with in high school, who came from the same middle class neighborhood I did, Johnathan and I were from different worlds. His family life was unstable at best, his clothes were often dirty, and he had never left Waco. He also changed schools five times over the course of those years as his family passed him and his brother from one rundown home to another.

I went to his school for an hour every week and at the end of every semester would take him and his brother out for a Fun Day. I spent less time with him than I did doing my laundry. Yet, that hour a week and two days a year meant more to Johnathan than I could have imagined. Johnathan never held a party in my honor, or gave me any kind of award. No, he showed his gratitude for my time in subtle, but powerful ways.

Every time that I came to visit him he would jump from his seat and run to me as soon as he saw me standing in the doorway of his classroom. Whenever someone would ask him who I was, he would loudly announce “That is my Baylor Buddy!” Those are the memories that flood my thoughts each time I catch a glimpse of the small scrap of paper I keep framed on a shelf. The scrap is a note Jonathon gave me one day at the end of my visit. (He had been working on his handwriting in class that morning.) I cannot adequately describe the overwhelming feeling of surprise and joy that surged through me when I read these words.



You see, the amount of time spent is not always equal to the impact that service has. The smallest acts of kindness can become the tiny treasures in someone else’s chest. Those, in turn can become the treasures in yours. That small scrap of paper is worthless monetarily, but it means more to me than anything I could buy.

### Questions for Reflection

How do you measure your successes when you participate in a service project or program?

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How might your measures of success be different from those you serve? \_\_\_\_\_

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What “tiny treasures” have you discovered in your service experiences? \_\_\_\_\_

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What made those “tiny treasures” significant to you? \_\_\_\_\_

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What “tiny treasures” can you offer those around you whom you deeply appreciate? \_\_\_\_\_

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