

Reality Check

...Ned Hamson

Teams, Teamwork, and Human Spirit

The human spirit can seem stronger than the steel and concrete about to rain down on a team of firefighters, and city and Port Authority police rushing headlong into the yawning jaws of mortally wounded buildings to do their job.

It's 4:43 a.m. Monday morning. Five men wait for the first bus in the pre-dawn darkness. Not a word is spoken until the bus rounds the corner and someone says, "The Rams were something yesterday!" The group comes to life talking for the next 10 minutes about the two football games. I get off at a transfer point alone—waiting for the next bus that will be delivered in exactly 13 minutes.

The human spirit can be as soft as a touch on the shoulder or as loving as a glance of concern.

It's 5:13 a.m. Monday morning. I step onto the cross-town bus. A team of seven—a working mother with a granddaughter in a stroller at her knee, her two working daughters, and their three toddlers sit silently on either side of the aisle as we bump along in the darkness. A cough brings a look of concern, a touch on the shoulder. The bus lurches and a foot is extended to stop the stroller from rolling down the aisle. Three looks of concern are exchanged.

The human spirit even in the simplest, almost automatic tasks can roll on as steady and reassuring and familiar as a big river.

It's 5:30 a.m. Monday morning. The early crew at the convenience store is getting coffee ready, checking stock in, and waiting for me. Few words are spoken. It's mostly smiles: a smile to start the day and one back. A glance at the coffee with a question in the eyes and a nod saying, "It's fresh—just made it."

Team, teams, teamwork, and community are containers waiting for us to give them meaning, value, and context.

John O'Donohue in *Eternal Echoes* writes about belonging and community that reminds us of how we think about teams and teamwork.

“Community offers us a creative tension which awakens us and challenges us to grow.”

—John O'Donahue

“We do not so much build community as if it were some external and objective structure as we allow community to emerge. In order for community to emerge, we need time, vision, and a certain rhythm of silence with each other.”

—John O'Donahue

“There is a desperate hunger for belonging. People feel isolated and cut off.”

—John O'Donahue