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# SUPERSTITION

I expect that you all survived yesterday being *'Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>'* unscathed! Maybe it's just me but it certainly seems as though people are getting less and less superstitious. Kids don't worry about stepping on cracks in the sidewalk, driving by cemeteries, crossing railroad tracks, seeing black cats or spilling salt. While I can be convinced of the supernatural ---- superstition is another matter entirely.

Walking under a ladder can certainly be unlucky if there is a painter on that ladder who happens to drip while you are walking under it. While breaking a mirror is a bit of bad luck on the day it is broken there is nothing about it that would cause me to believe that bad luck will continue for seven years. There are plenty of real things to worry about without needing to invent imaginary things.

There are things we don't control and there are things we do control. Many people are quick to say that they cannot be held responsible for someone else's happiness and that *"People Are About as Happy as They Make Up Their Minds To Be"* a quote often attributed to none other than Abraham Lincoln. Well put me on the list of people who disagree – I believe that what we do, and how we do it, has a tremendous effect on the happiness of others! We might not 'control' someone else's happiness -- but we can certainly contribute to their happiness!

At Meredith Bay Colony Club our *'Celebrating the Moments'* program of caring for those with Alzheimer's Disease and memory loss is all about finding ways to make people smile. And we do each and every day and we have fun doing it! That might not sound like a very ambitious goal --- but some days it can be quite a challenge!

Now there is nothing at all the matter with laughter and you certainly hear it all the time around here – and while that is a good thing – it is not the most important thing. Helping someone to smile is much more difficult than getting someone to laugh – and much more important. Helping someone to smile begins

by showing a genuine interest in the other person. It is not about entertaining someone by telling funny stories -- it is about discovering what pleases someone – not just what amuses someone.

*'Celebrating the Moments'* doesn't just create smiles as a by-product of providing care – it is an essential component of what constitutes great care. For way too long institutions have tried to define the quality of their care by what they do instead of the results that are achieved. *'Celebrating the Moments'* is all about Quality of Life – and while direct caregiving is certainly an important part of that – it is not the most important part. My older friends know that you always have to put first things first --- and for us that all begins with focusing on each individual to find out what it is that this day that will generate a smile and with that smile a feeling of well being. If we do everything else well and don't discover that reason to smile then we still haven't done the most important thing. *'Celebrating the Moments'* is a unique program that reinvents how care is provided. Other very nice places take a different approach that typically rely on a veery structured program that is heavy on quantity. Having every single minute of each day choreographed is no guarantee of quality – and we believe it actually gets in the way. Ours is a very value based approach that assumes a built in flexibility to adapt to an ever changing set of needs and of opportunities. Where other programs see spontaneity as an unfortunate interruption – We are constantly looking at those spontaneous interruptions as welcome serendipitous gifts that give us the opportunity to help *'Celebrate the Moment'* and find those smiles!

Are we superstitious? Not in the least! We know that there is no reason why two unrelated events would result in 'bad luck' as in seeing a black cat or breaking a mirror. But we do know that we have the ability to influence another's happiness and that is what *Celebrating the Moments* is really all about!

Age Well!

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