

QBQ! (The Question Behind the Question) QuickNote #17

Living Like Larry

It was 10 PM in Albuquerque and my flight home to Tucson through Phoenix had been delayed due to bad weather. I knew I wouldn't be in till after 2 AM. But things improved quickly thanks to an airport security officer named Larry. He will forever "raise the bar" for TSA officers at airports everywhere!

Larry was directing passengers to several lines for baggage x-ray and security checks. What was totally surprising, however, was Larry's approach to his job. Instead of the typical employee pointing travelers to line number one or two, Larry proudly introduced himself to about thirty passengers by shouting, "Good evening everyone, my name is Larry. I'll be helping you through security tonight. And just so you all know, it's my birthday!"

Well, I couldn't contain myself after seeing - and feeling - his enthusiasm so I shouted back, "Happy birthday, Larry!" He giggled and said, "It's not really my birthday, I just love the attention!" Then he asked the folks next in line, "How many in your party?" They replied, "Three." He responded, "Smoking or non?"

Meanwhile, a new line had been opened. As he waved several people into it, he quoted the movie "Finding Nemo" by chanting, "Just keep swimming, just keep swimming!" Everyone cracked up! By now, I couldn't help but be amazed at how Larry's attitude buoyed so many weary travelers. Then to the group behind me he declared, "Hi, everyone! I'm Larry!" And like a group attending a self-help seminar, the crowd enthusiastically replied in unison, "Hi, Larry!" As they moved toward the scanners he joyfully delivered their instructions. I trudged on to my gate as Larry's cheerful voice faded into the background.

And I was better for the experience.

And, John, the best part was actually watching the other TSA officers working nearby. They were smiling from a distance seemingly wanting to have as much fun as Larry - but not appearing to know how. What a shame that the only thing holding any of us back from doing so is ... *ourselves!*

Thom
A QBQ! reader
District Manager

Larry made a choice to have fun that night, and his choice delighted many travelers. Instead of asking lousy questions like "When will these people learn the rules?" and "Why don't I get paid more?" he embodied personal accountability by asking **QBQs**

such as: "**What can I do right now to serve my customers?**" and "**How can I exhibit enthusiasm for my job?**"

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we all had a little of Larry in us to cheer others on?

Living like Larry is a worthy goal.

John G. Miller

Author of **QBQ!**

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