

## Plate Glass Words

beautiful minds  
inspire others

When I was in my late teens and early 20s there was a lovely florist shop located on the shopping street. He always had the freshest flowers and robust plants and when you spoke to him you knew he loved what he was doing for a living. How many can say their job brings them joy?

But flowers weren't the only vehicle of expression that this florist possessed. There were many weeks that I found myself stopping in front of his flower shops plate glass window amazed by his self-expression-and it had nothing to do with flowers. When this florist was so moved (which was quite often) he would take long sheets from the role of white paper that he used to wrap his flowers in and write about whatever thoughts were in his head that needed to find a place to be expressed.

He would then take these massive sheets of paper that held his precious words and attach them to the flower shops plate glass window facing outward enabling any passerby who was so inclined to read his newest creation. So many of us stopped and read his written observations on the changes of seasons, his opinion on a community board meeting, his complaints of the current mayor, his praise of a teacher or nurse or police officer, thoughts on a new tax or city ordinance, world affairs, or the running of our country by the politicians and president. His subjects were varied but there was a consistency in his writing. He wrote what he felt he needed to express whether people agreed with him or not.

Watching the passerby's read his words and seeing their facial expressions and body language you could see whether his words left them deep in thought, touch their heart, or left them puzzled. Still others walked by without giving the plate glass window a second look. Unfortunately, sometimes a reader's reaction was anger that led this person not to question or analyze the florist's words but react with an unkind deed. More than once I would pass the florist shop to find his plate glass window broken to bits by a propelled brick.

Unperturbed, the florist would be sweeping up the broken glass, once again putting up plywood to protect the store from possible vandalism, and wait for the new plate glass window to be made and installed. Passerby's would express condolences, shake their heads, and move on, silently pondering the power of words. It wouldn't be long before the florist would once again, on a brand-new plate glass window, display his new missive to be read.

I often wondered if those that threw the bricks ever felt remorse after their deed was done. I was consistently amazed by the florist's calm acceptance of this overt criticism.

Today, the Internet seems to be our plate glass window. Some people ignore the words, some read the words without a second thought, and some after reading the words think about them in depth. At times, unfortunately, there are those that react in anger and throw bricks filled with damaging words of their own.

Words have power. They have started revolutions, been the seedlings of change, and have foretold the future. There are times when words need to be said and at other times need to remain silent. Please remember my neighborhood florist, saying your words that need to be said, expressing your opinions, but never reacting unkindly to the hurtful words of bricks thrown in anger.

*With Gratitude,*

*Kai*