

The Domino Effect of Goodness

The domino effect is a chain reaction that occurs when a small change causes a similar change nearby, which then will cause another similar change, and so on in linear sequence. It typically refers to a linked sequence of events where the time between successive events is relatively small.

That day I did experience the domino effect of goodness. A small act of kindness from me triggered a series of good-hearted responses from the rest. That's all is needed - a genuine initiative - a simple act of goodness - and you know it is still a beautiful world with beautiful people.

I kept my laptop bag below my seat and sat down in my assigned seat. It was going to be a long journey of eight hours. "I'm glad I can take a nap," I thought.

Just then a line of soldiers came down the aisle and filled all the vacant seats, totally surrounding me. I decided to start a conversation. "Where are you headed?" I asked the soldier seated nearest to me. "Srinagar! We'll be there for two weeks for special training, and then we'll be deployed at the border."

After travelling for about an hour, a train attendant kept calling out, "Limited Meals Rs.50/-." I felt a lunch would help me pass the time. As I reached for my wallet, I overheard one soldier ask his buddy if he planned to buy lunch. "No, that seems like a lot of money for a lunch. I'll wait till we get to base." His friend agreed.

I looked around at the other soldiers. None were buying lunch. I walked to the attendant and handed over a thousand-rupee note. "Give lunch to all the soldiers." He grabbed my arms and squeezed it tightly. His eyes were wet with tears. He thanked me. "My brother is a soldier and he is somewhere out there fighting for the country in the Siachen region. It's almost like you are doing it for him." Picking up lunch packs, he headed up the aisle to where the soldiers were seated.



After we finished eating, I headed towards the restroom. A man stopped me. "I saw what you did. I want to be part of it. Here, take this." He handed me a five-hundred-rupee note. As I returned from the restroom, another man reached out his hand. Thinking he wanted to shake hands with me, I stretched my hands and he placed a five-hundred-rupee note in my palm.

When we reached the station, I gathered my laptop bag and alighted from the train. As I got down in the platform, another man said to me, "We all can help but it didn't strike us. We wait for the big occasions and miss out on these little acts of kindness. You taught me the most important lesson today. Giving should be a spontaneous action." Saying so, he handed me over a thousand-rupee note.

I walked up to the soldiers who were gathered in the platform and handed over to them two thousand rupees and said, "It will take you sometime to reach the base. You will need this. God Bless You."

Twenty soldiers left the platform feeling the love and respect of their fellow travellers. As I walked briskly out of the station, I whispered a prayer for their safe return. These soldiers were giving their all for our country. I could only give them a couple of meals. It seemed so little... after all, these were courageous souls who are writing a blank cheque made payable to their country, for any amount 'up to and including their lives'.