

Balcony Person or Basement Person?

Let us love one another, for love is of God. (1 John 4:7 NKJV).

In our world of librarianship, we have the opportunity to touch many lives in our day-to-day work—students, faculty, staff, alumni, and visitors. We can do this with a spirit of affirmation or one of evaluation. Do we have a smile, listen carefully to their questions, or notice that they are having a bad day? Or do we have a sharp word, a scowl on our face, or a judgmental spirit?

In Joyce Landorf's book, *Balcony People* (Word, 1984), she describes the traits of a balcony person and a basement person. Balcony people are those that are in the audience of our lives cheering us on with words of affirmation. They say and do things that encourage us and make us feel valued. A balcony person loves, listens, and cares from the heart.

Basement people are judgmental, critical, and negative. They break our spirits by their harsh and disapproving evaluations. That negativity stays with us. Our world today is filled with basement people at every turn.

New Testament writers taught the early Christians to be balcony people. They wrote for us to love and affirm one another.

This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you (John 15:12).

Let us love one another, for love is of God (1 John 4:7).

The world is changed by loving one another, affirming each other, and being balcony people.

We want our libraries to be a safe and welcoming places for our students and faculty. How we interact with them will determine whether we are a balcony person or a basement person. Take a few seconds to notice if they are sleep-deprived, walking with a cast, or have a change in their hairstyle. Share their excitement with a sports victory or a good grade. Listen when they have returned from a funeral or broken up with a girlfriend. Your words of affirmation can be encouragements to make them feel valued as individuals.

Let your students, faculty, administration, and staff see you as that person on campus who is leaning over the balcony railings, shouting: *You can do it! I believe in you! You've got this! I'm there for you!*

Be a Balcony Person!



—Nancy Draper

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