



Everyone
wants to be
seen.
Everybody
wants to be
heard.
Everyone
wants to be
recognized as
the person
that they are...

Loretta Lynch
(b. 1959)
Former U.S. Attorney General

Perhaps from our first cries as infants, one way of reflecting on our life is to think of it as a journey in being seen. We desire to be seen for who we are, and maybe for what we do. We seek some degree of attention but also sometimes hide our true selves. Those who study resilience know that meaningful recognition helps prevent burnout. We know moments when acknowledgement is almost a primal need.

Meaningful recognition is sustenance for the human spirit.

Being seen can affirm our self-worth. The core of our self-esteem is grounded in our inherent dignity; no one has a say on whether we have basic value. Yet sometimes we forget our inborn worth. Meaningful recognition can be one way we are reminded that our essential dignity is showing up in the world. It reinforces that good is within us and is noticed.

Being seen can support our growth. We live our lives through the lens of our own perspective; we judge what we do with standards of our choosing. Meaningful recognition provides a fuller view of the impact of our life in community. We can discover more about the gifts we bring to the common good, and learn more about our unique place in the world.

Being seen is a gift of relationship. Meaningful recognition requires two things – first that someone sees us or what we do, and second that they tell us about who we are to them or what we've done around them. With the first requirement, others must pay attention to details. With the second, others must risk openness with us. They reveal themselves and offer us their gratitude. Their thanks is best when specific; their recognition most helpful when personal and heartfelt.

Meaningful recognition is a gift both received and given.

Who will I recognize today? What will someone see of me this week?