

Be Cool To The Pizza Dude

Sarah Adams - Port Orchard, Washington

As heard on NPR's *All Things Considered*, May 16, 2005

If I have one operating philosophy about life it is this: "Be cool to the pizza delivery dude; it's good luck."
Four principles guide the pizza dude philosophy.

Principle 1: Coolness to the pizza delivery dude is a practice in humility and forgiveness. I let him cut me off in traffic, let him safely hit the exit ramp from the left lane, let him forget to use his blinker without extending any of my digits out the window or towards my horn because there should be one moment in my harried life when a car may encroach or cut off or pass and I let it go. Sometimes when I have become so certain of my ownership of my lane, daring anyone to challenge me, the pizza dude speeds by me in his rusted Chevette. His pizza light atop his car glowing like a beacon reminds me to check myself as I flow through the world. After all, the dude is delivering pizza to young and old, families and singletons, gays and straights, blacks, whites and browns, rich and poor, vegetarians and meat lovers alike. As he journeys, I give safe passage, practice restraint, show courtesy, and contain my anger.

Principle 2: Coolness to the pizza delivery dude is a practice in empathy. Let's face it: We've all taken jobs just to have a job because some money is better than none. I've held an assortment of these jobs and was grateful for the paycheck that meant I didn't have to share my Cheerios with my cats. In the big pizza wheel of life, sometimes you're the hot bubbly cheese and sometimes you're the burnt crust. It's good to remember the fickle spinning of that wheel.

Principle 3: Coolness to the pizza delivery dude is a practice in honor and it reminds me to honor honest work. Let me tell you something about these dudes: They never took over a company and, as CEO, artificially inflated the value of the stock and cashed out their own shares, bringing the company to the brink of bankruptcy, resulting in 20,000 people losing their jobs while the CEO builds a home the size of a luxury hotel. Rather, the dudes sleep the sleep of the just.

Principle 4: Coolness to the pizza delivery dude is a practice in equality. My measurement as a human being, my worth, is the pride I take in performing my job — any job — and the respect with which I treat others. I am the equal of the world not because of the car I drive, the size of the TV I own, the weight I can bench press, or the calculus equations I can solve. I am the equal to all I meet because of the kindness in my heart. And it all starts here — with the pizza delivery dude.

Tip him well, friends and brethren, for that which you bestow freely and willingly will bring you all the happy luck that a grateful universe knows how to return.

Sarah Adams has held a number of jobs in her life, including telemarketer, factory worker, hotel clerk and flower shop cashier, but she has never delivered pizzas. Born in Connecticut and raised in Wisconsin, Adams now lives in Washington where she is an English Professor at Olympic Community College.