

David Dusek: 'Are You Drunk?'

"Are you drunk?" I asked him over the phone. "No," he replied.

Thank God! It was my neighbor, Andy, and he had finally called me back. I had gone over to his house and banged on the door, but he didn't answer. I called his landline and even texted him that I was going to the beach to see if he wanted to go along. Nothing. I didn't get an answer until I was at the bank, a few miles from home.

His first reply came in the form of a text. It was in two parts. His first text read, " problt." The second text simply said, "Lrmd." What the heck did that mean? Then it hit me! "I have problems." So he had missed a few keys, which had propagated my question about his level of sobriety.

So, why the urgency, you ask? First, you need a little background on Andy. He's that guy who always loans me his trimmer when I have to attack our hedges. My wife has frequently delivered baked goods to his home to build a neighborly bridge. He's the watchdog who always blows the whistle on anything suspect at our house while we are out of town. He's quiet, unassuming and a genuinely nice man.

Andy grew up in church. However, once he married his second wife, a woman from Thailand, he abandoned Christianity for Buddhism. He followed the god of his wife and even had a Buddhist shrine in their third bedroom. They have been married for four years, and on this particular day, she had packed up and left.

The day before, Andy's wife had called the sheriff's office, citing that her husband was suicidal. After 20 hours, he was released. My wife had noticed the police cars, and after briefly polling the women in the neighborhood (these ladies know everything), she found out what had happened. She was concerned. I was not.

As my wife left our house that day, she called my cell from the end of our driveway. "Honey," she said, "I don't mean to be Mrs. Kravitz, but can you spy on Andy?" You old guys remember Gladys Kravitz, right? You young guys can Google her. Obediently, I went to check the mailbox and saw Andy's wife packing her car.

An hour later, my wife returned home and alerted me that Andy was now mowing the grass. "Go talk to him," she urged. But by the time I managed to get out the door, Andy was back inside. He had mowed half the yard. Now I was beginning to get worried, since he had just mowed three days ago.

Altering my plans for the day, I decided to stay close to home, in case Andy returned my call. And he did. After he denied being drunk, I asked him if everything was OK.

"No, not really," he slurred, "I have problems. My wife left."

Fearing that the suicidal tendencies were legit, and knowing that his wife was gone, I asked if I could come over.

I let my family know the plan. Earlier, my wife had wanted to knock on his door herself. I said, "No way," recalling that suicidal people frequently take others out with them. "Andy would never hurt me," she said, "I bring them cinnamon rolls." Fortunately, he had called, and I was on my way over.

I stopped at home to grab our daughter's friend, Justin, to tag along (mostly for my safety). When Andy answered the door, I knew that he was a) heartbroken and b) hammered. So much for not being drunk.

Once inside, the old sales guy in me took over. I always had one more question. The topics were all over the map, including his wife, his ex-wife, his kids, employment and his drinking. Justin just hung out behind me on the floor while I assessed Andy's condition.

Then the topic of God came up.

In less than three minutes, Andy went from “Why would God care about me?” to “How do I get God in me RIGHT NOW?” We prayed the prayer of salvation together, and the party in heaven commenced. In one day, Andy went from a suicidal Buddhist whose wife left to a forgiven son of the Most High God.

Time is short. Intentionally build relationships with your neighbors and co-workers. Your mission field is right next door. It’s not a question of if, but when God will call them. Their eternities hang in the balance.

Remember, “Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Pet. 3:15).

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