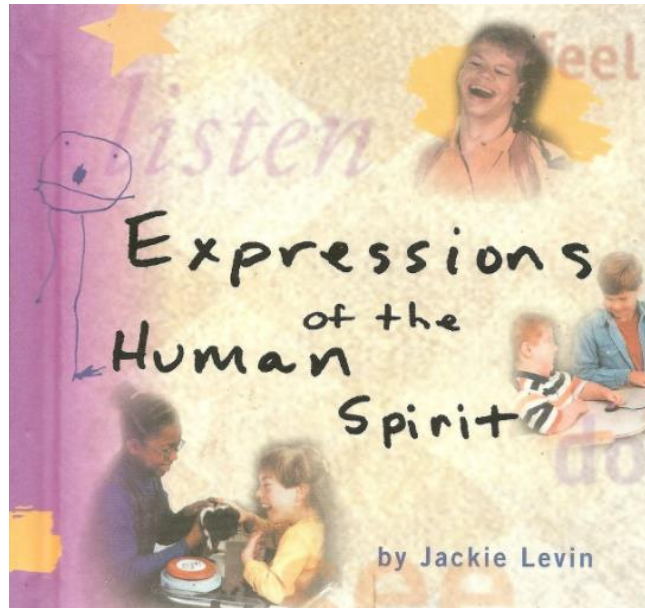




GRAVA 90 Journey:

Ninety ways to experience the Healing Power of Gratitude, Recognition, Acknowledgement, Validation and Acceptance



RECOGNITION FIVE: EXPRESSIONS OF THE HUMAN SPIRIT

I vividly remember beginning my first “real” job when I completed college nearly 22 years ago and entered a segregated school for almost 200 secondary age students with disabilities. As a novice speech and language pathologist with little clinical practice servicing such a population, I was awed and humbled by the experience.

My initial lack of knowledge, confidence and perceived abilities left me seriously considering whether it was I—rather than my students—who had the greater disability in that environment. I completed my first year with an incredible appreciation for the diversity in the abilities of human beings.

As the years progressed, our student population became even more challenged until my entire caseload consisted of learners with the most severe/profound cognitive and physical disabilities. Once again I was humbled, and once again my appreciation for the term “differing abilities” deepened.

Through my tenure, one of my most valuable insights was recognizing the importance of subtle human behavior...a glance of recognition when someone familiar entered the room, a gesture toward a toy that might indicate a preference or a grimace that really meant “I’m so happy you’re here.”

These and hundreds of other verbal and nonverbal “communications” helped me realize that although the “language” of my students was different from the traditional mode, the purpose and intent were the same...to have friends, to be recognized, to have fun, to be comforted, to learn.

--Jackie Levin, 1998

From *Expressions of the Human Spirit*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXxeYg2peB8>