

## What We Can Continue to Learn from Fred Rogers



### Happy Friday 13<sup>th</sup>!



This newsletter is going out on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, a date that somehow became known as an “unlucky” day. But in our *Neighborhood*, it was always a “lucky” day...a “happy” day...because it was the day we celebrated the birthday of the puppet King Friday XIII!

Fred always focused on the positives, and it was important to him to counter the negative superstition of Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. On and off camera, he applauded people’s strengths and appreciated their “gifts.” He made us feel “lucky” to be who we are.

So he named his royal puppet for that date -- and it was understood that every Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> would be his birthday. Of course we always celebrated with a birthday cake! Luckily for the King and for us, some years had more than one!

To turn around a negative connotation for the day and to honor the King on his birthday, here's a fun moment when Fred brought out some of his puppets and showed how he talks for them, giving special attention to King Friday and his delightful "large word" rendition of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."



While Friday 13<sup>th</sup> is really an adult notion, let's take Fred's approach and turn some other things into a celebration for our work with children:

**Find something to celebrate -- even a rainy or cold day**

Think about how helpful it is for children when you can find something positive to celebrate when the weather seems disappointing, like on a rainy day when the children can't play on the playground. Instead of focusing on the negative things about the rain, why not turn it around and help the children celebrate all the different reasons why we need rain. You can talk about what the rain does for the animals, plants, and the soil.

There are a number of books about the rain that you could read, like *James and the Rain* or *The Rainy Day*. Or you can all put on rain gear and take a walk in the rain -- maybe even to discover worms on the sidewalk.

On really cold days, you could read a book about animals that live in a frigid climate -- and how they survive the cold. Non-fiction books, especially those illustrated by photographs of animals and their habitats, are a great way to present science concepts and help children know that there are many things to appreciate in our world, even things that seem negative at first.

**Find something to celebrate -- even on challenging days**

We all know there are challenging days when it can be hard to find something to celebrate. On those days that may even feel “unlucky,” it can take some extra work to find something to celebrate.

Even a little moment can be something to celebrate -- maybe it’s a small kindness from one child to another, maybe a child who helped to clean up or joined in the search for something that was lost, or a proud look from a child who comes to you saying, “Look what I made!” And even a warm smile or pat on the back from you can feel like a celebration to a child.

At times like that, I hope you’ll celebrate yourself, too -- and that you’ll feel good about the support you’ve been giving and the warm atmosphere you’ve created that have made such moments possible.

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My wish for you, at this start of the New Year, is that you will find many moments in your days ahead to celebrate!

Thank you for being our neighbor,



Hedda Sharapan

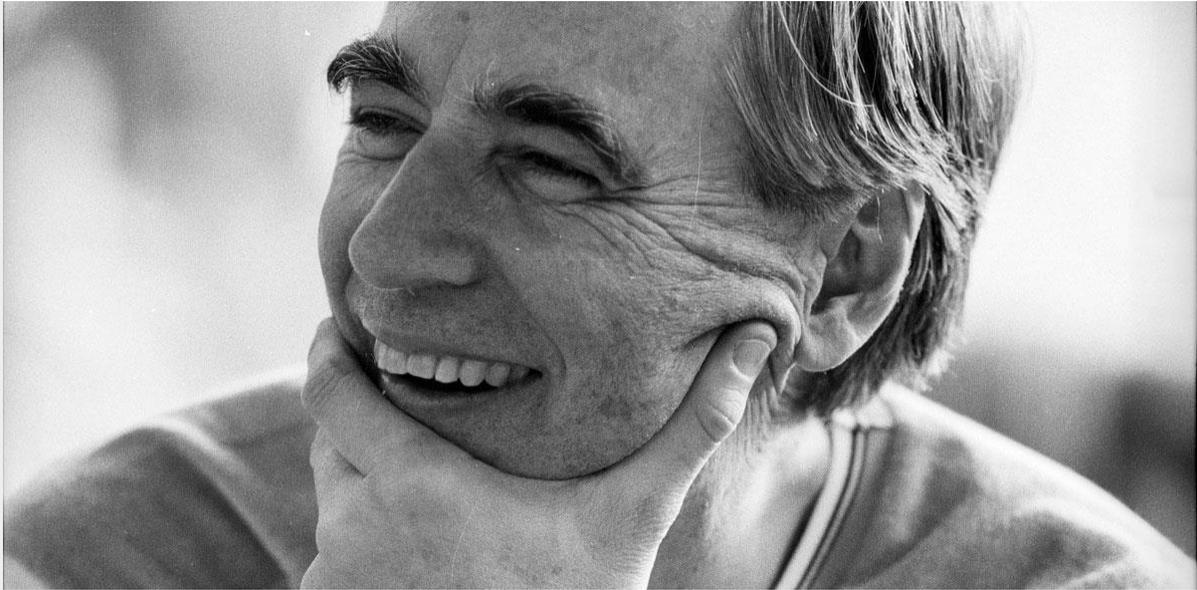
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## Timeless Wisdom from Fred Rogers



"Celebrate the small things that happen, like seeing someone help another person or noticing a flower blooming or an interesting stone....When we take the time to celebrate the little moments of everyday life, we are nourishing our children...and ourselves."

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