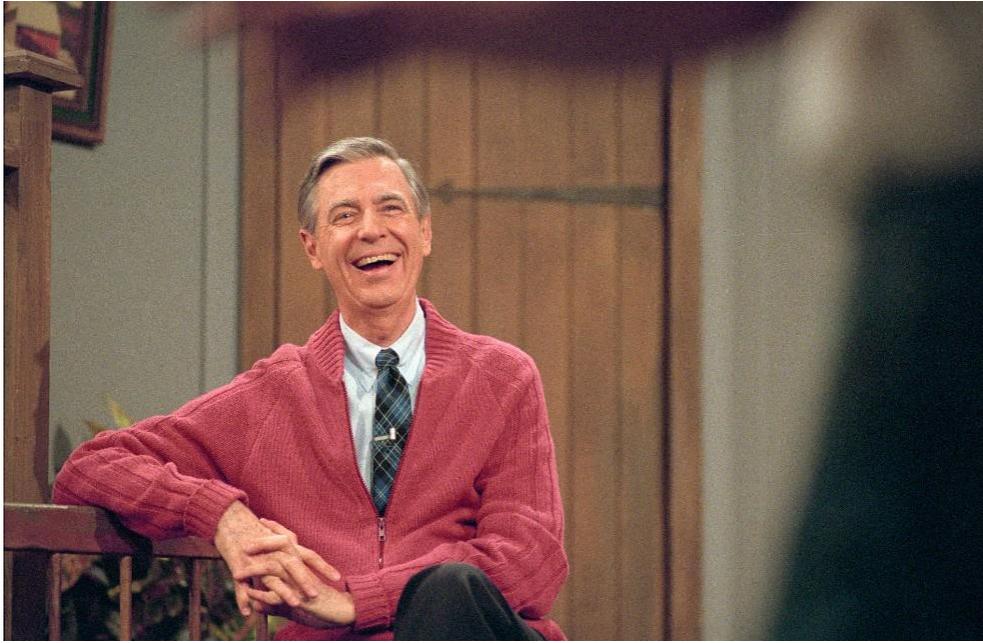




What We Can Continue to Learn from Fred Rogers



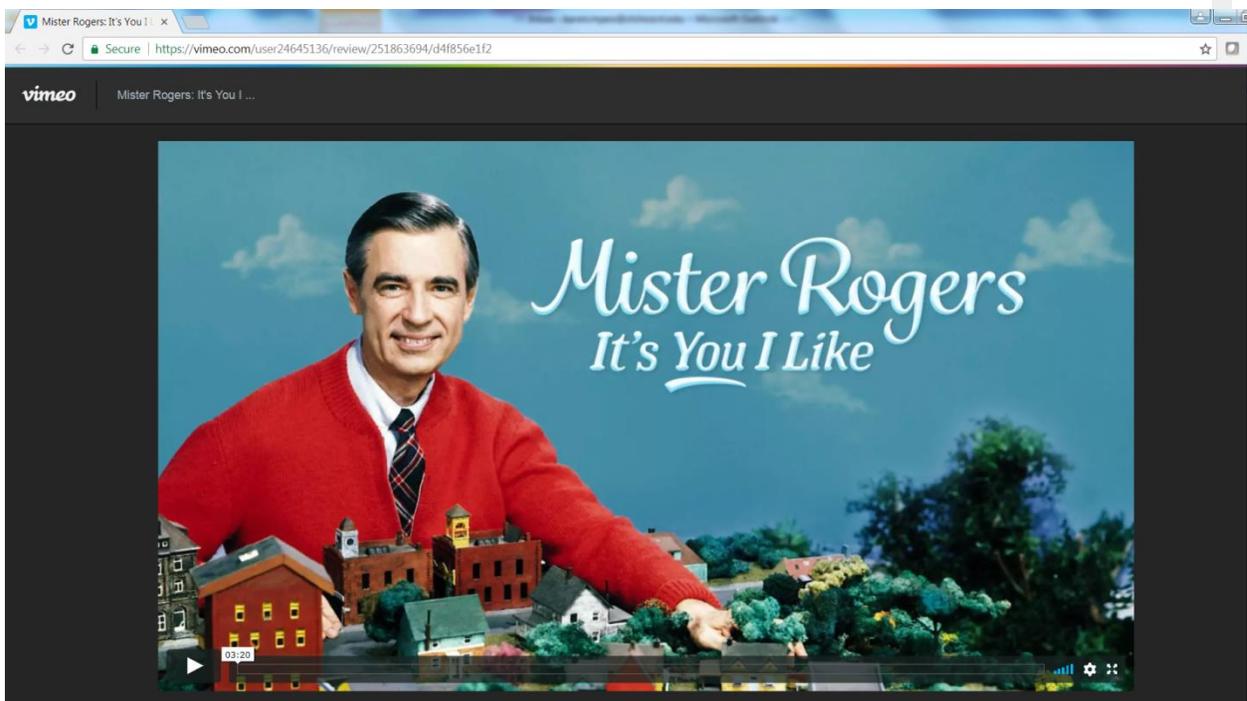
Life Lessons



You'll probably be hearing a lot about Fred Rogers this month – and this year. That's because February 19 marks the 50th anniversary of the first national PBS broadcast of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*.

As part of the celebration, during the week of February 26 PBS is pairing episodes of *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood* (inspired by Fred Rogers' legacy) with *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* episodes featuring the same life lessons.

And be sure to tune in to your PBS station on March 6 to watch *Mister Rogers: It's You I Like*, a heart-felt tribute to the *Neighborhood*. This 90-minute pledge special features treasured highlights from the archives, along with celebrity guests and host Michael Keaton sharing what they've learned from Fred (8 pm ET, 7pm CT, check local listings). Here's a sneak peek of what you'll see:



All of this national attention reminds us of how timeless Fred's wisdom is – and how much we all can continue to learn from him. As an 11-year-old fan wrote years ago, “Thank you, Mister Rogers. You helped me learn life.”

Some of you probably have your own list of Fred's “life lessons.” Here are some I thought of that have meaning for the important work you do with children:

Accept people as they are

When Fred opened each program with his song, “Won't You Be My Neighbor,” it was an invitation to all of us, no matter who we are, what we look like, what we can or cannot do, whether or not we've had a good day.

Think about how important your greeting is to each child (and parent or grandparent). It means so much to all of us, young and old alike, to start the day feeling welcomed, especially if it hasn't been a beautiful day in our neighborhood.

Look and listen carefully

Fred created the *Neighborhood* series with an intentionally slow and deliberate pace so that children had time to look and listen carefully. There were many long close-ups, few camera changes...and lots of silence.

I know you're under a great deal of pressure to “teach” children, but think about what it can mean when you slow down the pace, letting children take the time to look and listen -- to digest and integrate.

We all have feelings

Fred was especially known for his focus on emotional development. On the program he often talked, sang and created Make-Believe puppet stories about feelings -- feeling jealous, sad or angry...feeling proud or joyful. He was helping children know that feelings are natural and normal, and what matters most is what we DO with those feelings. In those discussions, he also offered one of his core life

lessons “Whatever is mentionable can be more manageable.”

It's a real gift to children when you acknowledge their feelings. You're letting them know feelings are part of being human and that it helps to talk about feelings. You have many ways to let children know that you care about their feelings -- and that you will help them work on healthy ways to deal with those feelings.

Be yourself

In the 900 programs in the Neighborhood series, there were times on the program when Fred wasn't at his very best. Some episodes are better than others.

Sometimes Fred was a bit awkward or clumsy. But he left those moments in. He wanted children to know that life is not about being perfect -- it's about doing the best we can.

Maybe Fred's most important life lessons was that you don't have to be perfect to be loved. What a gift for all of us, no matter how young or old we are!

Thank you for being our neighbor,



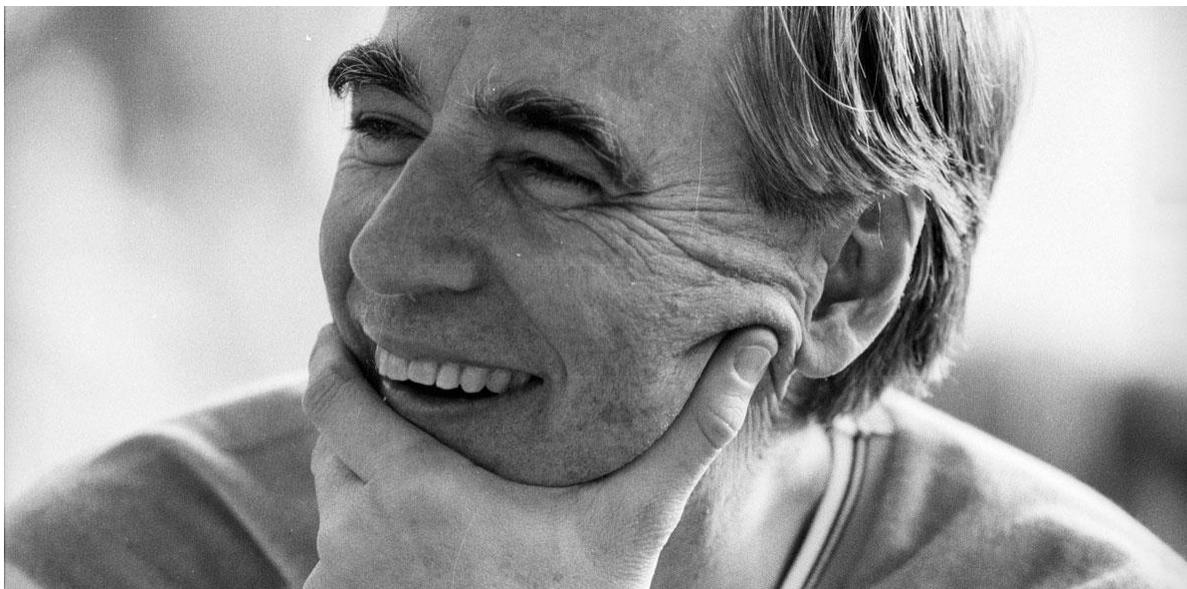
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Timeless Wisdom from Fred Rogers



"Deep within us—no matter who we are—there lives a feeling of wanting to be -

lovable, of wanting to be the kind of person that others like to be with. And the greatest thing we can do is to let people know that they are loved and capable of loving."

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