

Southern friendly vs. Midwestern friendly

by Rev. Joe Dirt - Thursday, May 15, 2014

<https://curmudgeon-alley.com/southern-friendly-vs-midwestern-friendly/>

We were out with a group of folks a while back and I made a comment about southern folk being



friendly. It was not

meant to disparage Midwesterners, but one fellow did take slight umbrage. He replied that Midwesterners were friendly too.

All things are relative. Compared to folks in the northeast Midwesterners are extremely friendly. Having lived in all three areas I have some experience with the general friendliness of the denizens of each.

Perhaps the best example I can give would be the golf course. I have lived and played golf in the southern states of Arkansas, Oklahoma, Mississippi and Tennessee. It is not uncommon for me to go to a golf course by my lonesome. In the aforementioned states, I generally did not play by myself very often. Generally if you were a single someone would ask you to join their group. It was acceptable behavior to request to join a group that was smaller than a foursome. In a new area after going to the same course a few times, you tend to bump in the same folks. Pretty soon you have a group of golf buddies.

I've lived in the St. Louis area on two separate occasions now for a total of five years. I can count the number times I have been invited to join a group on two hands and not use all my digits. Considering that I golf an average of at least once a week and frequently twice a week if the weather will permit that is not a high hit rate. Perhaps it is because the most golfers in the St. Louis area take a cart rather than walk. I find this interesting as you would think the warmer climes would force more folks into carts, but walking is more common in southern areas. It was especially common in the Tulsa area and the Ft. Smith area. I will admit as I age if the temperature reaches much over 95 I will spring for a cart. However, I digress, or perhaps I am rationalizing the Midwestern behavior. I just chalk it up to them not being as friendly as Southerners.

Another example would be the workplace. I worked in large offices in Mississippi, Tennessee and Oklahoma. It was common for fellow employees not in the same area to greet each other in the morning, hold conversations, and be on conversational terms. In fact you would have been considered rude to not behave in that manner. When I contracted at Edward Jones here in St. Louis I initially went saying good morning to everyone. It did not take long for me to give up that habit due to lack of response. I finally got where I just came in and went to my cube. If I visited with anyone it was the few folks in my immediate group. At the time I chalked it to be a contractor versus an employee. The company I work

for now in St. Louis is smaller and folks are a little friendlier, but there are fellow co-workers on the same cubicle aisle I have never spoken to. Folks here will just walk by you with no recognition. That is not southern behavior. Maybe it is an urban behavior, but Memphis and Jackson, MS are not small towns.

Perhaps it is because I am not a gregarious person and not particularly outgoing that I notice the difference to the extent that I do. It has been my observation that most folks find me hard to get to know. So take my observations with a grain of salt.

I do find Midwesterners to be very friendly...once they get to know you a bit. I just do not find them reaching out to strangers the way Southerners do. That is what I meant by southern folk being friendly.

That is my story and I am sticking to it.

A little addendum to this post. The story below ran in the St. Louis Post Dispatch. Apparently I am not the only one that fills this way

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