I often tell people that I am the best all around janitor in these parts; Maybe the state. I say it with a smile. I don’t mean to be cocky, but I do mean to be proud of my work, and I do mean to challenge my coworkers and supervisors. For all around efficiency, knowledge, quality, and safety; when it comes to maintaining a building environment, I think I am it. Extraordinary, What?!

Often, the reaction mimics that attitude; smiles to my smiles. A “yeh, yeh” from friends and co-workers who hear me all the time. A shake of the head, maybe; from those who don’t know me. No arguments though. Outside of the trade, the reaction is more along the lines of, “… and what’s that get ya?”

I have to reply, “Not much, What!
Less than $30 grand a year, for sure!”

Therein lies the dichotomy all custodians experience; the usefulness of our job, with the regard, and reward, it is given in the outside world. We directly impact the lives of the many citizens who work in, or entrust their children to, our public buildings. We provide an environment that allows them to be productive. We provide the tools and opportunities that enable our citizens, and their children, to succeed. We allow hundreds of people to interact for success, every day, without harm, injury, or detriment to their health. That is our duty and our success. Their success is our success. What can possibly be more useful than that?

I know I directly impact the lives of many people. Late at night, when the building finally empties, I am like the ventilators. I am maintaining the environment, readying it for the next round of success. Unlike the ventilators though, I have choices. These choices are my responsibilities and are many; their limits are my time and opportunity. My job cannot be outsourced, because these choices have to be made. That is what makes me the best. I know my role. I know what I can and cannot do in the time allotted. I know how to get it done. I have learned in each environment, what is the best choice for the people who use that environment. I am efficient. Those decisions make me useful and professional, and those are good things to be. They are why I say I am the best. My challenge, always; is

Why don’t you?

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