



eBay Feedback: My Lord And Savior

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Last year about this time, I really felt like it was all about to end. I had been unemployed for three months. My girlfriend had been cheating on me for four. I had twenty-five bucks in my checking account, thirty in the wallet that mugger stole. My roommate died of leukemia. And my Apple Jacks were stale. Rock bottom.

I'd laid my options down in front of me: rope, aspirin, Swiss army knife, my grandfather's Walther PPK, the oven range my Auntie Moley won on the *Price Is Right* in the late 80's. It was a tough choice.

I had decided to write a note. Seemed like a nice enough thing to do. I had a mother. She's probably wonder, "Why, son? Why, God?" I sat down at the computer to type it. Figured it would be legible that way.

First I checked my e-mail though. Nothing. I hadn't gotten an e-mail in months. Not even junk mail. As my misery turned in my stomach, I closed my eyes. I wondered what Heaven was like. Or Hell. Either would be fine really.

Then my eyes opened. Framed on the wall was my eBay Turquoise star achievement award. I had become an eBay seller years earlier and sold a bunch of my stuff when I was strapped for cash. I had hung the award up as a reminder of my hard work and dedication to the online auction site. It read:

"Congratulations on achieving a Feedback Profile of 100. You have earned your Turquoise Star! eBay thanks you for your participation within the eBay community. Your business is sincerely appreciated, and we look forward to your continued success. You're a star!"

It had been months since I'd read that certificate, and briefly, my sadness and grief turned into pride. I had

done it. Not only had I reached 100 feedback comments, but my positive feedback rating was 100%.

A hundred percent! They loved me.

I typed in the address for my feedback page and began to read the comments.

"Item is great, RIDICUOUSLY FAST DELIVERY."

"GREAT SELLER!!!! THANKS A BUNCH!"

"good job - keep up the good work sweetie ;-)"

"Smooth Transaction!"

"This transaction had the quickest reply and shipping ever -- A+++++++ Thank you!"

Holy crap. That was ten plusses on that A. For the first time in I-can't-even-remember-when I started to feel good about myself. I wasn't a worthless human being, doomed to a sad and depressive life. I made a difference in people's lives. I shipped them quality goods purchased through an online auction in a timely manner. That was something.

I decided not to kill myself.

For the rest of that night I read my one hundred and nine feedback comments over and over again. By the next morning I was walking through walls.

When I found out later that week that my girlfriend had not only cheated on me but cheated on the guy she cheated on me with, I was okay with it. Even when I found out it was with a Chocolate Labrador Retriever. You know why I was okay with it? eBay feedback. I sat down, read a few comments like *"Quick service. Product as described,"* and *"You rule! A++."* It calmed my soul.

It was there for me all along, but I finally found something I could turn to after each of life's "challenges." My dad beat the shit out of me? How about "*Great transaction and fast shipping*"? Find out I got the clap? Try "*WOOOHOOO! Superfast payment and delivery!*" Get pulled over for a DUI? Not so fast. You can't get your license taken away for driving under the influence of positive feedback.

Over the past year I've discovered that not only is eBay feedback all I really need in life, but there are no downsides either. You can access it from anywhere that has a working internet. And let's be honest, these days that's pretty much anywhere. You also know that once it's there, it's there for good. Nobody can take it away from you. And you can go to it freely, especially in times of need.

Most importantly, I've found that the spiritual connection between the buyers and sellers I've crossed paths with along the way is, to put it bluntly, overwhelming. And I think of them—I can feel them—sitting in their homes, reveling about the feedback that I left them and that others left them. And this feeling perpetuates itself to every buyer and seller on eBay, connecting us all, working toward the common good. There is *happiness* in the products that are bought and sold. There is *love* in the feedback expressed toward one another. It motivates you in the best of times, and picks you up in the worst of times. I'm sure it's no coincidence that this is a lot like the poem "Footprints."

I know it sounds crazy to think about, but it's surprising how applicable positive feedback is in life. As I recently sat, staring at CNN for hours upon hours, watching the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and saw all those people in Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama crying and pleading and desperate, I thought to myself, they wouldn't think this was so bad if they had the kind of eBay feedback that I had. The kind of feedback that gives you hope and strength in the toughest of circumstances. The kind of feedback that looks like "*Wow! Great eBayer. Highly recommended. A++++*" but really means "We will live to fight another day."

Later, when I began to feel selfish for thinking such a thing, I decided that I would donate my feedback to some of the less fortunate victims of the disaster. It was the least that I could do. I was the fortunate one, and now I could give back and save someone the way I had been saved.