

CHAPTER 13

“The Reconnect”

*I*n the early 90’s, when I owned American Pro-Video Productions, I directed a series of programs for News Line, an organization that produced daily newscasts for national associations during their conventions around the country.

The programs were aired in that convention city in all the major hotels, as well as the shuttle busses running to and from the convention center. I provided all the cameras, production equipment and crews and directed the programs. I later anchored the programs called, “Shuttlelevision”.

One series of programs we produced was for the American Academy of Pediatricians at their annual convention in Dallas, Texas. One of our first shoots was the keynote address and the speaker was Dr. Fred Rogers - most people knew him then as “Mister Rogers” - from the long running PBS program, *“Mister Rogers Neighborhood”*.

We lost a national treasure in 2002, when “Mister Rogers” passed away. He literally raised

several generations of children through his PBS program, and was probably the kindest man I've ever met. In person, he was just like he appeared to be on the "Neighborhood." He had his Doctorate of Divinity Degree, was a Presbyterian minister, and an Honorary Diplomat in the American Academy of Pediatricians.

He stood up there at the podium for his keynote speech in his khakis' and sweater - just like on the "Neighborhood", and you expected at any moment to see "Mr. Postman" come out of the wings. He was talking to about 2,500 men and women pediatricians in the audience.

The huge grand ballroom was packed for his address, but you could have heard a pin drop, as "Mister Rogers" quietly talked to this select group of physicians about kids. It wasn't what he was saying exactly, although he was using the simplest of words to describe the wonderful service these pediatricians provide, it was *how* he was saying these things. It was as if he was talking to kids on his program, and this audience was mesmerized.

I swung the camera around the get some 'head' shots of these doctors listening to his speech so that I would have some "B-Roll" to edit with later on. As I zoomed I saw more than a few doctors with tears streaming down their cheeks.

What Fred Rogers was doing hit me like a thunderbolt. He was "reconnecting" those physicians with the real reason they became pediatricians in the first place - because they love kids! And, they love *well* kids. And, they had forgotten.