

"This instructive, funny, utterly relevant book reminds us that the simple act of paying daily attention can make a profound difference—to the world around us, and to our very selves."

—Dani Shapiro, author of *Devotion: A Memoir*

"I was afraid when I read *One Good Deed* that it was going to make me feel guilty or lazy, but it didn't. It made me feel there were little things I could do to improve the world. Erin McHugh is one wise, funny, smart woman, and her book is a blast to read!"

—Julie Klam, author of *You Had Me at Woof*



Erin McHugh had spent many years doing her share of community work, but eventually, the minutiae of daily life kept her busy and away from those higher impulses. Then one day she learned a distant relative was actually going to be canonized. Was this a sign to reevaluate her priorities? What followed next was Erin's wish to recapture a sense of charity, and so she set out on her birthday to do one good deed every day for an entire year. Maybe she wouldn't be saving orphans from burning buildings or raising enough money to erase the national debt, but she wanted to take one small, daily detour and make someone else's life just a little bit better. *One Good Deed* is the inspiring, smart, and frequently funny chronicle of a year when Erin tried to reclaim the better part of herself, with the hope of inspiring others to do the same.

For more information (and further good deeds), visit onegooddeedbook.com

ABRAMS IMAGE
An imprint of ABRAMS

115 West 18th Street
New York, NY 10011
www.abramsimage.com
Printed in USA

U.S. \$18.95 CAN. \$21.95 U.K. £11.99
ISBN 978-1-4197-0417-8



9

McHUGH

ONE GOOD DEED



One Good Deed

365 DAYS OF TRYING TO BE
JUST A LITTLE BIT BETTER

ERIN McHUGH

ABRAMS IMAGE

do-
pr

ly save him? I felt like I had, that someone else
st turned the corner and plowed right into him.
-al, dreamy experience? Oh, yes, it surely was.

AUGUST 29

Hashtag! #considerothers!

It's all about the hashtag.

For all of you non-Tweeters: What we used to know as the number sign, or the pound sign (#), is frequently used on Twitter as a means to help the user do a search. Or at least, that's what it was supposed to be for. Now it's become sort of a gag, and one of the more amusing parts of the tweeting experience. Let me explain.

Now, the hashtag was originally used so that you could see what folks worldwide were saying about something you, too, were interested in; this way, you could see what people were saying globally about a certain subject. So, if no one you e-consorted with cared about esoteric Olympic sports, you might comment:

WOW! Did you see that awesome run? #luge

Get it? Anyone in the entire world searching "#luge" could see your comment. And vice versa. Cool. But not as cool or funny as when folks started using it as a pretend search tool, that is, one that is likely used only once, and

typed in jest. For example, as the writer and chicken raiser Susan Orlean wrote:

*In a daring move, I just opened the divider between
my old chickens and my new chickens and the baby
turkeys. #peaceinourtimehope*

Another Tweeter I know posts:

*The secret of life? The Hokey Pokey.
#thatiswhatitisallabout*

See? So the hashtag thing has gotten so popular that some of the Twitter Greats make it funnier or more interesting than the tweet itself.

Where am I going with this? you wonder. Tonight on my long bus ride back to New York, I was seated toward the back with some . . . well, let's call them revelers. They were a gang of friends, probably in their midtwenties, who had been partying all weekend on the Cape and were evidently determined, judging from the amount of wine they brought on the bus, to continue the funfest. As the miles went by, they got drunker and louder; they were a good enough bunch, but now it was heading toward eleven on a Sunday night, and plenty of people wanted to snooze.

So here's where the hashtag thing comes in—and actually, it was, for a while, kind of a funny sort of parlor game. This gang would start every comment in their conversation by saying "Hashtag!" as in, "Hashtag! #youaresoskanky!"

Or "Hashtag! #ihatemyjob!" and "Hashtag! #whosgotthewine?"

Then it got old. Really old. So I thought about my manners, but not for very long, and I turned around and yelled, "Hashtag! #shutthehellup!"

Oh, yes, the passengers did applaud, and the wee party broke up at last.

AUGUST 30

Take one for the team.

Today the impossible happened.

I received two servings of ice cream, and I gave one away.

I went to a restaurant known for its special revolving array of frozen custards—they change monthly, and there are seasonal flavors that are delightful and surprising. Tuesday is s'mores day. This I was not going to miss.

I ordered a small cone (chocolate with marshmallow and crushed-up graham cracker, if you were wondering), and when it was delivered to me, it was in a cup. "Not for nothing," said I—very nicely, let me add—"but I ordered a cone, and this is the third time this has happened to me."

The server told me to hold on, and in a minute I had my cone and, with a smile, the original cup of ice cream, too.

Well, it would have been impolite to say no.