

‘Editorial: Hospitality in Universities...’ ماهنامه صنعت گردشگری

I am delighted to have the opportunity share my thoughts with you in this magazine as the New Year begins. As we are all students of Hospitality and Tourism Management I thought it would be a good idea to reflect on the idea of hospitality in university. As you know I have a strong personal interest in the history of and philosophy of hospitality and tourism; during my time in Iran I have the opportunity to discover many of your profound hospitality traditions. I have learned a lot from them. It has been an incredible education for me; the opportunities to visit Esfahan, Yazd, Shiraz and Persepolis have been enlightening. My experiences in this country have been amongst the most hospitable and welcoming that I have received anywhere in the world. I hope that it is self evident that I thoroughly enjoy the time that I spend in Iran.

In University, hospitality should be the creation of a free and friendly space where teachers and their students can communicate openly with each other. University teaching requires “first of all the creation of a space where students and teachers can enter into a fearless communication with each other and allow their respective life experiences to be their primary and most valuable source of growth and maturation. It asks for a mutual trust in which those who teach and those who want to learn can become present to each other, not as opponents, but as those who share in the same struggle and search for the same truth” Nouwen (1986, p. 78). Hospitality is required in university: Students should be able to question their teachers and what they are being taught without fear of competition, rivalry or concerns about punishment or rewards.

However, hospitality is not a one sided process it requires both a ‘host’ and a ‘guest’, the host could be a teacher and the guest at student or vice versa, it does not matter. What is important is that for true hospitality to take place there is the requirement that the host and the guest, to be open, welcoming and hospitable to each to other:

“The very precondition of hospitality may require that, in some ways, both the host and the guest accept, in different ways, the uncomfortable and sometimes painful possibility of being changed by the other” Rosello (2001, p. 176).

However hospitality must be carefully balanced between two extremes, as explained by King Menelaus nearly 3000 years ago:

“I would condemn any host who, receiving guests, acted excessively hospitable or excessively hostile; all things are better in due measure. It is as blameworthy to urge a guest to leave who does not want to as it is to detain a guest who is eager to leave. One must grant hospitality to a guest who is present and grant conveyance to a guest who wants to leave”
(Homer, Odyssey 15:69-74).

In the case of a university a good host is the one who believes that their guest is carrying a promise that they want to reveal to anyone who shows genuine interest. Through mutual support we encourage each other to reflect on life and develop a vision for our own journey through it. As this year begins let us hope for the peace that will allow us to continue to show true hospitality to each other.

Ad multos annos! Plurimosque et gloriosque annos vivas!

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Nouwen, H. J. M. (1986). *Reaching Out, The Three Movements of the Spiritual Life*. London Doubleday.
Rosello, M. (2001). *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.