

Memo

To: All Employees
From: Alan Girling
Date: 6/24/2009
Re: Cafeteria Use

Just the Cup

Mornings I get coffee in the building cafeteria. I get a Medium Fair Trade with room for dairy, non-fat. Before applying the lid, I breathe in the aroma, a pleasure. I pay with the change I've prepared, and my day as a junior accounts manager begins.

This morning, a woman ahead of me grabbed an Extra Large cup, took it, empty, to the line. She was wide of hip, dressed well, jacket and skirt of muted maroon, an elegant necklace-bracelet ensemble, expensive-looking heels. I'd seen her before, around the lobby, in the local paper. She was CEO at McDonald-Loewy, a big financial firm in the building.

When it was time, she strode forward and, without pausing, said to Marla, the cashier, "Just the cup." Marla waved her through. I handed Marla my change - five quarters, four dimes, two nickels - and slipped the receipt into my wallet.

At the condiment stand, the CEO reached past a small man, picked up the Cream canister and poured, poured until her cup was full, then topped it off with a splash of Non-Fat. I looked once at Marla, then back at her.

She raised her head, beamed. I saw in her eyes the same satisfaction I feel each morning. I returned her smile, then got my own dairy. My cup cost a dollar seventy five, hers nothing. We'd soon both be at our desks doing our jobs. Mine? To account for all payables and receivables, make sure they are exactly right.

