Kindness Starts from a Simple Belief that Kindness Exists in Every Single Person

(Original)

Jiho Yun
(Age 13, South Korea)
Cheongshim International Academy, Gyeonggi-do

Creating a kinder society seems like an easy task at first glance. People have a common belief that we could make a kinder society by simply performing good deeds onto others. I, however, have a different understanding of this due to my research for this essay. The possibility of a kind act starts from believing that everyone has kindness within themselves.

Last year, our P.E. teacher had divided our class randomly into groups containing eight members each. These groups were formed in order for students to work together in the four tests that would follow. We would have to show our teamwork by practicing taekwondo and matching our performances. My group was filled with ordinary students, except for one boy, who was a reluctant addition. He had a bad attitude, didn't want to participate, and he even didn't care about his grades. Despite this, our team was always the first to pass the tests.

What I learned in that semester was that the attitude of a person is altered according to the characteristics of the society he or she belongs to. In this instance, his society, our group, was encouraging. When said boy was in a different society, such as another class or group, he was usually the one to be blamed. He was excluded from the team discussion, and there was a sense of gloom whenever he joined. In contrast, the society of our group created an implicit consensus that we should never blame anyone for their mistakes. We decided to be inclusive and promote him as the head of our group. We wanted him to also be able to do well. When he wasn't able to memorize the material, we all practiced together. Every time we failed, we failed together, but we kept trying while saying, "It is okay. We can practice harder." The change I saw in him was hard to believe. We wanted to create our own society, a kind society in which he could put forth effort without being judged, as he had in the other societies. One person in our group created this idea and we all worked hard to achieve it together. During the first few tests, we worked to understand

the boy and tried to help him participate by being patient and by praising his effort. Towards the end of the semester, the boy was able to feel unburdened in our small society and began to project similar kindnesses as were given to him onto others in larger groupings of society.

The reason that I share this story is because our world is just a larger version of the eight-membered society group in my P.E class. Everyone has kindness, but it is society's role to help them achieve it. The experience of being trusted, such as in the idea that 'they have the ability to be kind,' becomes a strong motivating factor in revealing others' kindness. In addition, the experience of helping someone better themselves becomes solid proof that an act of kindness could be meaningful to that person, the societies that they are a part of, and even the world.

The idea of kindness for people who are not treated well by society is almost nonexistent. Kindness is often deeply hidden, too tiny to be found, and the negative views would potentially make them forget that they have the ability to be kind themselves. In order to create kinder societies, we must trust that everyone has the ability to be kind, and treat them with such kindness ourselves. If we do not do this, people such as the boy in my P.E. group, will continue to live without knowing kindness and with the idea that it doesn't exist.