Creating a Compassionate Community

(Original)

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As Saint Basil said thousands of years ago, "A tree is known by its fruit; a man by his deeds. A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship, and he who plants kindness gathers love." Kindness is still a simple thing even today. An act of compassion towards another person. Living in a society riddled with hatred, selfishness and mistrust, simple things are often lost and misunderstood. We have pushed our society to the point that we may not even recognize an act of kindness as genuine. However, we can still bring our society out of this hatred; gather a little more love by planting kindness in the flowerbeds of the world.

To write this essay, I carried out ten acts of kindness to experience this firsthand. Not only did I make someone else's day, but I even felt better myself. I thought about doing this on a larger scale: what if everybody in our state, or even country carried out ten acts of kindness of their own, every day? That would make the world so much happier overall, and isn't that what so many of us strive for in life? To succeed, to get rich, get famous: so, in the end, you can get that payoff and feel happy. This all leads to the big question- how can we really do this? How can we make our society more kind? I think that I found a few ways we can truly achieve this more compassionate community.

Firstly, we should start with our children. Patty O'Grady, an expert in neuroscience says, "Kindness changes the brain by the experience of kindness. Children and adolescents do not learn kindness by only thinking about it and talking about it. Kindness is best learned by feeling it so that they can reproduce it." Kids can only learn kindness if they see and experience kindness. Households and schools therefore need to create an environment in which kids are encouraged to be nice and helpful and see others be kind, and keep that going throughout later schooling as well, kids will be less likely to be bullies and more likely to be compassionate for the rest of their own lives, and eventually teach their children to do the same. It may sound like a slow process, but if we begin now, we can achieve this

community in the next few generations.

Secondly, people should practice ways to feel more empathetic. Before you insult someone, think about them. Put yourself in their shoes, ask yourself, "is it really fair to say that?" and think about how they are humans, just like you, with feelings and thoughts and really think about whether they deserve the words you're about to throw at them. If we all think before we do anything hurtful to someone else, they are much less likely to retaliate with their own insults or actions. This can help us create a society in which we think before we act and are less likely to attack, in turn reducing the chance that the person you would've attacked will now attack you.

Finally, we need to come together as a society and become more accepting and tolerant towards all people, regardless of gender, race, religion, disabilities or personal choices. We cannot achieve a kinder community if behaviors like racism and sexism are tolerated by our society. Before everybody at an individual level can begin to be more compassionate, the public needs to accept everyone so no one feels as though people hate them for being themselves.

In the end, it will take a combination of these methods to create the compassionate community we still only dream of. We can bring those dreams into reality, as it has happened so many times before in history. We always hear tales of people who had dreams and worked hard and eventually achieved them. Imagine if the whole world came together and tried to fulfill this dream of having a compassionate society! If a single person can do it, our whole community should be able to do it easily. Personally, I like those odds.