

# Twin concepts of kindness and respect serve as building blocks for our future

Random Act of Kindness Day will be celebrated on February 17. In many respects, it should become a sacred holiday to be marked on a global scale from this point forward.

Author Anne Herbert is widely credited with coining the phrase “practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty.” She reportedly penned those immortal words on a placemat at a restaurant in Sausalito, Calif. in 1982, inspiring her to write a book by a shortened version of that phrase in 1993, recounting in vivid detail real-life examples of profound acts of kindness.

Her work would later lead to the creation of the Random Act of Kindness Foundation, a worldwide phenomenon that is driven by the spirit of so-called “Raktivists,” those who have made the endearing practice part of their daily lives.

The concept of kindness, not surprisingly, has the potential to become contagious, possibly spreading goodwill across age, race, religious, cultural, political, and socioeconomic lines. Such a mindset aligns seamlessly with a shared set of values based upon a sense of respect for others.

Respect, which the late Aretha Franklin so neatly spelled out in her signature song, can be granted and earned, but never demanded. In its most enduring form, it is given to others by way of kindness, understanding, tolerance, and compassion.

Those measures are a sure-fire way to build a better world, one we long to see after continuing to witness assorted acts of evil in recent days.

On January 27, the commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day was shattered by a mass shooting at a synagogue in Jerusalem, a terrorist attack that claimed seven lives and served as an unsettling reminder of the World War II genocide in which more than 6 million Jews perished during the reign of Nazi terror.

The horrors of war currently can be seen all across Ukraine, which has been under Russian siege for the past year following an unprovoked invasion sparked by yet another dictatorial madman. The handiwork of Vladimir Putin already has cost hundreds of thousands of lives, while sending millions of Ukrainian refugees streaming across neighboring borders in desperate quests for safety.

Ironically, Putin has long fancied himself as a student of history, but yet he turns a blind eye to what happened during World War II when the 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union was eventually repelled nearly four years later at a staggering loss of more than 15 million Soviet lives.

Evil, of course, knows no bounds. That fact was in evidence on the streets of Memphis last month when five police officers used a routine traffic stop as pretense to brutally beat 29-year-old Tyre Nichols to death, a gruesome murder that was caught on body-cam footage for the world to see. The horrific attack was reminiscent of the 1991 police beating of Rodney King in Los Angeles, and has revived nationwide calls for police reform.

Senseless acts of violence stand in



stark contrast to increased calls for kindness, the latter of which we hope will multiply in the year ahead.

In the legal community, we began marshalling those forces for the greater good in 1992 when we created Primerus™. Back then, our original focus was to highlight the important role that lawyers play in upholding the rule of law and in peacefully resolving conflict. We set out to restore honor and dignity to the legal profession, and to help rebuild the public’s trust in lawyers and the judicial system. Our mission was framed within a trademarked phrase, “Good People Who Happen to Be Good Lawyers™.”

Last year, upon our 30th anniversary, we began the work of forming the Primerus™ Foundation with a broader mission in mind. Its central purpose is to elevate the public service profession in an effort to promote global peace and understanding. We can do this by first identifying and then supporting

## Twin concepts of kindness and respect serve as building blocks for our future

political candidates who are persons of good character and high capability, and will serve as true fiduciaries to those they are privileged to represent. Accordingly, they also must embrace the fundamental concepts of freedom, liberty, justice, and equal opportunity for all.

Those concepts, in recent years, have come under attack from right-wing extremist groups who have expressed – sometimes in violent fashion – a total disdain for the truth and the rule of law. They have fomented conflict and chaos where none should exist, threatening the very existence of civilized society.

Hate groups such as the Proud Boys, the Oath Keepers, and the white supremacy movement itself have demonstrated their willingness to sow division and to take the nation hostage in furtherance of their own self-serving ambitions.

Which is why we must take a stand for honesty and integrity in public office, while simultaneously sending a message that we are committed to fighting the good fight for the defense of democracy in countries big and small.

Best regards,

**Jack Buchanan, President**