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Patricia has been a guest on Oprah, Today with Hoda & Jenna, Live with Kelly and Ryan, The CBS Early Show, CNN, Maury Povich, and many national shows. She is a Philadelphia area author, mother, grandmother and former teacher. She welcomes interviews and speaking engagements.

## **Kindness Is Contagious - my hope!**

I wish we could dub Philadelphia “Kindness City” and encourage every man, woman and child to do an intentional kind act every day for a year. This gesture would be a natural way to promote “brotherly love.”

In a city filled with stress, illness, pain, suffering, and sadness, someone needs your KINDNESS—now, more than ever! Look around and you will find opportunities for expressing generosity, appreciation, kindness, faith, and encouragement. You can make a difference—locally. No matter how big or how little—or how “out of the blue”—the ripple effect of kindness provides nourishment for the soul, and is long-lasting. Sometimes, the small things make the most difference in a person's day.

It can be something simple:

- hold a door open
- give a compliment
- let a car go ahead of you in traffic
- let someone have a parking spot
- give an extra tip, pay for a stranger's lunch anonymously
- send a note of appreciation
- text a kind message to an acquaintance
- send a greeting card to someone who is sick
- return someone's shopping cart
- say nothing negative for a day

Do anything that says SOMEONE CARES - a big or small kindness. I'll bet we would witness lots of “angel sightings” - not the heavenly type - but real proof of “earthly angel types.” Good, generous, sincere, life-sharing people are truly everywhere.

Not only Philadelphia residents could be a part of the “Kindness City” program but also anyone in the tri-state area. Kindness can be cultivated anywhere - no matter how small the deed. We are all droplets of kindness, forming a puddle, then a river, and finally an ocean of love that has the potential to wash away worry, hostility, and fear.

How wonderful it would be to create a conscious culture of compassion and kindness. It could be a grassroots, no -frills, humble effort. There would be no need for fundraising, strategic planning, hefty payrolls, or fanfare. Just church groups, teachers, senior centers, families, youth groups, and neighbors working together to promote brotherly love. The goal would be to “Do a good deed daily” for one year. This would help to change the trajectory of the bad things that are happening in the area.

By simply Loving Our Neighbors, we will make a conscious effort to make someone's day better.

What the World Needs Now Is Love was a popular song with lyrics by Hal David and music composed by Burt Bacharach. Although the sentiments were written in 1965, they are still relevant today. Extending loving kindness is the answer to many of our problems.

In a recent conversation with my 98-year-old aunt, I asked if she had a spiritual practice. She always seems serene. “Oh yes, I have a prayer that I have been saying all of my life. I made it up years ago. I

say it as soon as I wake up and several times during the day. ‘Lord, pick me up, dust me off, polish me and let me shine YOUR light on everyone I meet today’”

Start out with simple ways to shine light and love in your community.

As I reflect on the kindnesses shown to me in my own life, they were not extravagant acts of kindness: the neighbors created a meal-chain when a family member was ill; a stranger at church gave me a meaningful quote during a dark time in my life, and an anonymous gift was dropped off at my front door.

Jim Henson achieved worldwide accolades as the creator of the Muppets. He left us another legacy when he said, “When I was young, my ambition was to be one of the people who makes a difference in the world. My hope still is to leave this world a little better for my being here.”

The ripple effect will spread positive vibes! I have a dream.....I wonder how things would change if we blessed our neighbors and loved one another for a full year. Sometimes the little things mean the most for someone. Small kindnesses make the world feel better!

Patricia Gallagher (2023)

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