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Hello dear community,

For much of history, our myths and movies have celebrated the lone hero—the one who leaves home, faces a great trial, and returns transformed. Whether it's Frodo on the road to Mordor or a nameless knight entering the forest where no path exists, this “Hero's Journey” has shaped our idea of courage: a solitary quest, fueled by personal will, pitted against a tangible foe.

But today's greatest challenges—climate change, systemic injustice, deepening divisions—are too vast and intertwined for one person to vanquish alone.

A new kind of heroism is emerging: collective, often anonymous, and grounded in values traditionally considered feminine— cooperation, inclusivity, compassion. It resists the old script of conquest and instead works to heal systems, bridge divides, and protect the web of life. It's as likely to be expressed through creativity, listening, growing food together or holding space for grief as through protest or resistance.

In this new story, victories belong to everyone. And what was once the endpoint of the journey—returning to the community—may now be our new beginning.

This shift toward shared wisdom starts early, as research shows even young children can recognize the value of humility over unwavering certainty.

Compassion Science: Children Prefer Adults Who Express Doubt



A [new study](#) published in *Greater Good* found that by age five and a half, children tend to prefer adults who admit uncertainty over those who project absolute confidence. In experiments with more than 200 children, researchers presented two

conducted in experiments with more than 200 children, researchers presented two adults giving answers—one humble and open to other possibilities, the other certain and dismissive of alternatives.

Older children consistently rated the humble adult as smarter, kinder, and more worth learning from, a preference that strengthened with age and held regardless of gender.

Lead author Shauna Bowes notes that modeling intellectual humility early—at home or in school—could help foster openness, respect, and more constructive dialogue later in life.

Good News: Creating Sidewalk Joy

In Portland, artist Rachael Harms Mahlandt has transformed her front yard into a hub of “sidewalk joy”—whimsical, free-to-use exchanges like a Dino Exchange, a pollinator seed library, and tiny art galleries. Inspired by the little free libraries she and her children discovered while exploring neighborhoods during the pandemic, she began creating her own installations and mapping similar projects across the city.

Her [PDX Sidewalk Joy Map](#), launched in 2023 with artist Grant Brady, now lists around 130 locations, from wishing trees to vintage candy machines, and has inspired a **Worldwide Sidewalk Joy Map** with entries as far away as Puerto Rico and the Netherlands. Harms Mahlandt hopes the idea will spread, encouraging people everywhere to bring small moments of delight and connection to their own communities.

Sidewalk joy may not sound heroic, but it’s a reminder that collective acts of care and creativity can quietly transform neighbourhoods into thriving communities.

Save the Date!



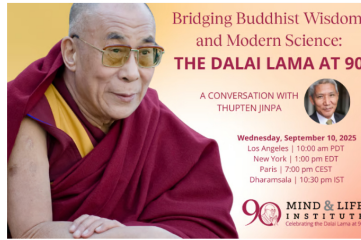
What happens when a world in crisis remembers to care?

The [Festival of Compassion](#) invites participants into a global homecoming – a return to what truly matters. Held under the theme "Come Home", the festival weaves together story, science, and spirit in a collective journey toward wholeness.

This is not a conventional conference. It’s an immersive gathering shaped by shared meals, creative practice, deep listening, and local ritual, set to take place in beautiful Cape Town. You can also participate online in a curated series of talks and workshops.

Who is it for? Artists, scholars, educators, clinicians, movement builders, policymakers, and anyone eager to share three days of deep reflection, connection, and action to build a better world. [Learn about the program and save your spot!](#)

Bridging Buddhist Wisdom and Modern Science



On September 10th, join our friends at the Mind & Life Institute for "[Bridging Buddhist Wisdom and Modern Science: The Dalai Lama at 90.](#)"

Mind & Life President Suzanne Bond will be in conversation with Buddhist scholar, author, and longtime translator for the Dalai Lama, Thupten Jinpa — a member of the GCC's Advisory Council — to honor the Dalai Lama and his profound legacy of bridging science and contemplative wisdom.

The program will feature inspiring stories, along with archival images and footage from people and events that shaped the modern mindfulness movement. Learn more & register [here](#).

Take a Stand: Civility Over Consensus



[Braver Angels](#), a cross-partisan, volunteer-led movement to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen democracy in America, reminds us of a hard truth: bridge-building isn't about persuading others to agree with us—it's about learning to live, work, and thrive alongside those who see the world differently.

Too often, we mistake harmony for sameness, thinking civic life will flourish only when everyone shares our views. But disagreement is not a flaw in democracy—it's its very proof.

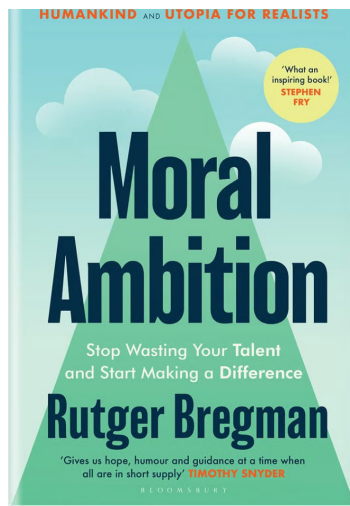
Civility is not politeness: it's the moral commitment to treat others with dignity, even when we believe they're wrong. It doesn't require watering down convictions, but rather equips us to face differences honestly, sharpen our thinking, and strengthen our civic fabric.

Call to action: Braver Angels invites anyone—of any political stripe—to put civility into action by forming a local alliance in their community. Gather people from across the spectrum, build trust, and create spaces where disagreement becomes a path to understanding. You can start [here](#).

Have You Read It?

THE INTERNATIONALLY BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF

This month's pick is [Moral Ambition](#) by



Dutch historian Rutger Bregman — a call to unite an activist's heart with an entrepreneur's mind.

Blending history, philosophy, and inspiring stories, Bregman explores how ordinary people have come together across cultures and eras to create lasting positive change.

His main argument: that idealism without strategy can burn out, and strategy without idealism can lose its soul. The sweet spot? Harnessing both to tackle the world's biggest challenges.

He asks us to imagine what would happen if we brought the same level of talent and daring that fuels high-powered careers into solving humanity's urgent problems — not as a side project, but as the central mission of our lives.

💡 Try This!

This week, identify one skill you already have that could be a lever for positive change — then take one concrete step to put it to work for someone or something that matters.

A Question for You



When have you experienced the power of people coming together to solve a problem, create something new, or offer support? What made that moment possible?

Please respond by replying to this email, and we'll choose an answer to highlight in our next edition!

In response to the question we posed in the last newsletter—*What is an act of compassion, big or small, that you have received, offered, or witnessed lately?*—one reader sent this beautiful story, which she chose to share anonymously:

"I've been creating, colorful paper hearts with encouraging words, laminated to last. With my husband's help, more than 1,300 "Kindness Ninja" hearts have found their way into store shelves, café takeout orders for a local LGBTQ+ community, rehab centers, and the hands of friends—reaching at least five states. Each one is sent out with the hope that it will arrive exactly when someone needs it most."

Let's Practice:

The following practice helps us embrace collective heroism, and open space for others to bring their gifts forward.

Notice moments when you instinctively want to take charge, solve a problem alone, or be the one with the answer.

Pause and ask yourself: *Who else could bring something valuable here?*

Then, make space for others to step in—whether by asking for their perspective, inviting them to co-create a solution, or simply listening without rushing to respond.

Reflect on one thing you learned, felt, or gained from letting someone else's insight guide the way.



The challenges before us ask less for solitary heroes and more for circles of courage and care—people willing to listen, share, and act together.

Whether it's planting seeds for pollinators, sparking joy on a sidewalk, or developing a sense of moral ambition alongside others, every act of collective heroism helps weave the fabric that holds us all.

Here's to your next brave adventure—may it be shared, surprising, and full of heart.

With gratitude,
Fabiana Fondevila
Editor, *Coming Home*



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