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Hello dear community,

Heroism may sound like a daunting word — something reserved for extraordinary people or moments. But what if we could reimagine it as a daily act of courage? As the quiet willingness to step forward when others hesitate, to protect someone more vulnerable, to act from love in the face of doubt, fear, or confusion.

Psychologists call one of the main obstacles to this impulse the “bystander effect”: our tendency to freeze when others do, to wait rather than be the first to act. We look around, uncertain what’s right or whether it’s our place to intervene — until someone, often an ordinary person, moves. Then something shifts. Courage ripples outward. The simple act of one becomes the strength of many.

Sometimes, the most heroic act is an act of defiance: the simple refusal to comply when conscience says otherwise. As psychologist Sunita Sah explains, in an article in *The Conversation*, defiance often begins in small, uneasy moments — a pause before obeying, a question raised, a quiet “no.” These gestures may seem insignificant, yet they can break the spell of conformity and awaken moral courage in others. When one person resists the pull to go along, they open space for collective bravery.

Researcher Rutger Bregman found that many who acted heroically during the darkest chapters of history — like those who hid Jews in Nazi Germany — did so not because they saw themselves as brave, but because someone asked them to. An explicit appeal breaks through hesitation and transforms moral impulse into action.

That’s why, in times like these, the invitation matters. Whether it’s to organize help at the scene of an accident or to rally together against injustice, a simple plea — “Please, help me.” “Come with us.” “Will you stand here?” — can make the difference between paralysis and shared courage.

Let's Practice! A Small Act of Defiance

The next time you feel uneasy about going along with something, pause. Notice the signal in your body — the tightening, the hesitation — and give yourself a breath’s space before responding. Then, instead of complying automatically, ask a simple question: “Is this right for me?” or “Why are we doing this?”

That brief pause, that gentle question, is where defiance begins. Each time you practice it, you strengthen the muscle that lets you stay true to your values — even

when it's uncomfortable to do so.

Based on Dr. Sunita Sah's book "[Defy: The Power of No in a World that Demands Yes](#)".

Board Spotlight: Mandar Apte



This month we shine a light on [Mandar Apte](#), Founder and Executive Director of [Cities4Peace](#), Producer and Director of [From India With Love](#), and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts. A long-time peacebuilder and meditation teacher, Mandar has dedicated over two decades to cultivating compassion and nonviolence within communities and institutions around the world.



As millions around the world celebrate Diwali — the festival of light — Mandar invites reflection on its timeless message: the triumph of light over darkness. In a world marked by turmoil and division, Diwali calls us to rekindle the inner flame — to choose kindness over cynicism, hope over despair, and action over complaint.

To help others do so, he offers *An Introduction to Mindful Leadership* — free monthly online sessions that share practical tools to reduce stress and build resilience. To join, RSVP [here](#). A beautiful way to keep the flame of awareness and compassion alive.

Save The Date!

Amplifying Youth Voices for a Compassionate Future
Charter for Compassion Global Youth Conference
October 28–30, 2025 | Virtual Event



GLOBAL YOUTH
Conference
COMPASSIONATE LEADERSHIP
FOR ACTION & IMPACT



OCTOBER 28, 29, 30, 2025

FEATURING SPECIAL PROGRAMMING
ON OCTOBER 30 BY



Our friends at the Charter for Compassion will host the second annual **Global Youth Conference**, a global virtual gathering celebrating the power of youth to lead with empathy, courage, and compassion. This year's theme, "*Compassionate Leadership for Action & Impact*," highlights young changemakers turning compassion into solutions for the world's most pressing challenges.

Across three transformative days, participants will engage in youth-led dialogues, skill-building workshops, and global networking sessions designed to cultivate leadership that unites heart, intellect, and action. A special highlight on October 30 features KidsRights Foundation and its State of Youth Program, sharing inspiring stories of advocacy and action for human rights, climate justice, and peacebuilding. [Click here to register to attend online](#) (you can either select a free ticket or donate \$10).

World Peace Forum — South Africa **November 13–16, 2025 | Cape Town**

Hosted by The Hague Center in partnership with the Desmond & Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation, the **2025 World Peace Forum**, "*Coming Home to Ubuntu*," will be a living gathering of heart, wisdom, and action.

Over four immersive days, participants will explore peace through Ubuntu—reclaiming our shared humanity and interdependence—while engaging in embodiment and healing arts, indigenous wisdom, and co-creative innovations in peacebuilding and collective transformation. Open to all seekers of connection and renewal, the Forum invites a shared journey toward compassion in action.

From our Friends

Epidemics of Care: Making Compassion Contagious



The Compassion Corps, friends and Founding Supporters of the GCC, are doing vital work to accelerate a global movement of kindness and care. A compelling illustration of that ripple can be found in [a recent conversation](#) between Compassion Corps Director Margaret Cullen and social scientist Nicholas Christakis.

[In this clip](#), they explore how emotions travel through social networks like contagions, showing that compassion, too, can spread widely when cultivated with intention and become a force for systemic change. Other key insights: the leverage of networks (amplifying positive influence through highly connected people), the role of intention (compassion flourishes when deliberately modeled, even in small settings), and the reinforcing nature of care (when compassion takes root, it strengthens both giver and receiver).

You can watch the entire talk [here](#).

The Trumpets of Jericho: Honoring Brother David Steindl-Rast



We joyfully celebrate our Founding Supporter, Brother David Steindl-Rast, who has been awarded the *Trumpet of Jericho 2025* by the Austrian Church Reform movement. The award takes its name from the ancient story in which the walls of Jericho fell — not through violence, but through the power of sound and hope. For seven days, the people circled the city, not with weapons, but with music. On the seventh day, the story goes, the walls collapsed of their own accord.

As the award committee writes, “Violence threatens and builds walls. Nonviolence makes music and builds bridges.” Few lives embody this truth more fully than Brother David’s — his decades of teaching gratitude, joy, and compassionate action have sounded a trumpet for peace in our time.

To honor this spirit, enjoy [Mahalia Jackson's stirring rendition](#) of “Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho” — a timeless hymn to the power of courage and song to bring walls down.

From our Founder: Compassion in Conflict

Compassion in Conflict

with Dr. Rick Hanson

Practical skills for moving through conflict and challenging relationships with compassion, clarity, and decisiveness.

From Sunday 16th November

More details coming soon!



WORKSHOP

Compassion can come more naturally when we like someone, or when we judge their problems to be caused by an obvious injustice. But what if you don't get along? Or they've mistreated you? Or they are a significant cause of their own suffering?

In these circumstances, it takes courage, wisdom, and strength to act with compassion. And doing so can be hugely beneficial. Finding your compassion in these circumstances can help to overcome conflict, cultivate resilience, reduce stress, heal wounds, and can address the root causes of suffering. Your compassion for yourself strengthens you. Your compassion for others strengthens you.

If you're ready to cultivate this powerful strength, join GCC Founder, Dr. Rick Hanson, for a three-hour workshop in November. More information coming soon!

A Question for You

When have you felt compassion from someone else change the course of your day?

Last time, we asked: “What story are you choosing to live by in these turbulent times?”

Jane Wairimu, a Community Health Promoter and leader from Kiambu County, Kenya, shared this inspiring response: “I work closely with families and community members to improve health, strengthen relationships, and bring care closer to those who need it most. Over time, this work has taught me that compassion is not only part of health — it is health itself. This is the story I choose to live by.”

Heroism doesn’t always appear in headlines. Most days, it looks like listening when it’s easier to turn away, asking a question when silence feels safer, or keeping the heart open in a world that can feel uncertain, perilous or unkind. Each act of courage — whether expressed through care or defiance — adds to the invisible architecture of hope we are building together, one choice and one gesture at a time.

In kinship,
Fabiana
Editor, *Coming Home*

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