

Civility: Do Unto Others

By Bruce A. Broillet

We are all familiar with the Serenity Prayer written by Lutheran theologian Reinhold Niebhur. But I saw a version recently that applies to the concept of civility: “God, grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one that I can, and the wisdom to know that it is me.”

Each individual act of civility sends out what Robert F. Kennedy would have called a ripple of hope – a hope that civil conduct by one will breed civil conduct by others and, ultimately, civil conduct by many. Below are various quotations that capture the effect that one’s civility can have on themselves and on others.



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The Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

What goes around comes around.

“Strange isn’t it, George, how each man’s life touches so many others, and when he isn’t around it leaves an awful hole.”

– The Angel to George Bailey, *It’s A Wonderful Life*

“What people say behind your back is your standing in the community in which you live.”

– Edgar Watson Howe

“Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of the events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation. It is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope. And crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

– Robert F. Kennedy

Promise Yourself

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best, and to expect only the best.

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear, and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

– The Optimist Creed from Optimist International

The concept of karma, no matter what term it goes by, is indelibly part of the human psyche. If we are going to reap what we sow, then civil conduct should be the order of the day.

And it all starts with ...

Me. ...

And with you. ...

And with each one of us individually. ...

And with all of us together. ■