

REMEMBER KINDNESS? AMERICAN HALLMARK ALSO NOURISHES SOUL

Faith & Values

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Special to The Seattle Times

I remember a kinder and gentler nation, where folks always gave up their seat for a pregnant woman, came to the aid of a lost child, and never thought twice about checking on an elderly neighbor.



just one example of how we imparted our expertise, prosperity and compassion to the rest of the world.

I remember traveling to foreign countries as a child, and our family always found a welcome mat as Americans. Then, our nation was known for its humanity, more so than today.

The prophet Muhammed said:

Verily God is kind and He loves kindness and confers kindness which he does not confer upon severity and does not confer upon anything else besides it [kindness].

Hadith -Muslim

Performing acts of kindness can have a profound impact on the lives of everyone around us, and it helps our own mental, physical and spiritual growth.

How many times have you watched Oprah's latest give-

away or an "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" and your heart nearly ruptured with happiness, perhaps even causing you to shed a few tears?

Whether you are the provider or beneficiary of kindness does not matter because the benefit is the same for both parties. Each receives a sense of contentment and gratitude that nourishes the soul, and it always lasts longer than a few minutes.

Today's world has no shortage of envy, selfishness, arrogance and indifference, so finding it within ourselves to commit random acts of kindness when the opportunities present themselves becomes imperative.

Acts of kindness shouldn't be about recognition. They're about the genuine sharing of love, concern and inner self. Kindness transcends all our differences.

These acts connect us and

can have a domino effect, no matter our faith, culture or profession.

We all know someone who could use a dose of kindness.

Once you commit yourself to kindness, it gets easier, even becoming habitual. With practice, smiling, holding a door open or saying thank you without expecting anything back becomes part of who you are.

Let us revive the gentle practice of kindness and witness the cascading effect it can have on dozens — maybe even hundreds — of lives.

Start with those nearest to you: family, friends, then neighbors and ultimately society.

A world without kindness is a world we don't want to live in.

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Nowadays, it seems to me that our society is experiencing a kindness deficit. Showing concern or being thoughtful to one another isn't valued as it once was.

Performing acts of kindness is a cornerstone of being human. It's the God-given mercy and gentleness within each of our spirits exhibited through acts of compassion toward those around us.

I was taught by my parents early on to be willing to extend my hand to anyone in need of help, something I witnessed them do on countless occasions. Through them, I learned I could share — anytime, anywhere, with anyone — and it always felt good.

Back then, kindness was a defining part of the American character, and it was a safer world. The Peace Corps was