

Creating Better Libraries and Stronger Communities through Kindness, Empathy and Love



The world is in desperate need of more kindness, empathy and love. Incorporating kindness, empathy and love into your daily life inspires others and creates stronger friendships, communities and familial relationships. Now for some editorializing: I feel strongly that the world is in the state it's in because there's an utter lack of kindness, empathy and love. All you have to do to know that I'm speaking the truth is watch the news. It breaks my heart. I ask myself, "why do we accept this?" and "what am I going to do?" What are you going to do to change that? Start with this — be kind. Be empathetic. Be loving. If each person makes that commitment, we can start a revolution. We can make kindness the new norm. We've accepted a level of behavior that's low and we need to raise the bar. We need to get back to caring about each other. We need to realize that everybody matters.

First and foremost, live your life with kindness, empathy and love. Share stories that celebrate these things, especially from the perspective of those who are on the receiving end and have had their lives transformed. People often get abstract ideas from communications and efforts that have no emotional handle. If you tell a story that people can't connect to emotionally, you might as well just save your breath. It doesn't do anything. But stories that are authentic and real — the stories that make your heart go thumpity-thump-thump — those stories matter to other people. Those are the stories we need to tell!

Our rapidly changing world has outpaced the old model of simply promoting library service and librarianship. We must take action. Libraries are often invited to the party but not asked to dance. Now is the time for us to turn up the music and ask others to dance!

So here's my "ask" of you:

1. Keep doing the good work! Your contribution to your community is extremely valuable,

especially service to those who are underserved.

2. Be a shining example of kindness, empathy and love. Our world needs this now more than ever and the best leaders lead by example.

3. Engage stakeholders. Be proactive with community leaders to cast a long-term vision that serves the greater good of your community.

4. Let your voice be heard in MLA and ALA. Voter turnout in association elections has historically been extremely low. A recent survey of ALA members shows a growing sentiment of questioning the value of membership and that individual voices are not heard. The solution is simple: Vote and vote for change.

We're not going to discover the future. We're going to make the future. Through the goals you set for yourself, by standing up for yourself and doing the things that are important to you, we can start a revolution. There's nothing we can't do together. We're a family, all of us, everyone in this industry and in this nation. And we need everybody to be strong. You only get one shot, and you've got to run – you've got to run hard and run fast.

[Back to news](#)