

# My "2019" New Year's Focus

*"This new year's I plan to focus on being purposed in my heart to be kind, displaying kindness and respect in whatever situation I am in."*

Each year I like to share my new year's focus and how I plan to implement it. This year it's kindness. Because in today's politically correct environment, kindness is still king when it comes to building relationships.



I can't remember a time when so many people are expressing so much anger and self-righteousness. We really do live in an entitled society. People feel entitled on so many levels, in so many areas. And if they don't get what they feel entitled to, they are angry.

How many times have you been in a situation where someone becomes totally unglued over a simple issue that is easily solved? Now, they might not be screaming on the outside, but you know they have a locked position and their heart is frozen on that point of view.

Perhaps you've heard this story of the child being disciplined by their parent. The standing child is made to sit down. The child looks up and says "I may be sitting on the outside, but I am standing on the inside."

I learned how to soften that frozen-ness from a saying in

the book of proverbs that says "a soft word turns away wrath." I have never seen anything de-escalate a situation as quickly as soft, kind words. But first, I find, I need to have the desire to be kind and not ENGAGE in the battle. And for me, the guts or backbone of the desire to be kind is thanksgiving.

A few years ago I shared a story about Janet Kaplan the author of "The Gratitude Diaries" and how she changed her marriage, her relationships, her health, really her entire life by focusing on gratitude in one year. And since then I have been reflecting or contemplating on the power of gratitude and thanksgiving. To me, it is one of the strongest forces of change we possess. For example, when we are meditating on the blessing we have, it is so much easier to forgive those who offend us.

Societal forces are quick to remind us about what we don't have. Advertising and social media alike paint this picture that if we had more, we would be happier. More stuff, more friends,

more fame, more power, more sex, more order in our lives, the list goes on. But a close look at the people that have more, we realize they are just as unfulfilled perhaps even more frustrated, because they have reached what society paints as the goal.

For me, when I am dwelling in a spirit of thanksgiving, I am able to release or at least suspend my position and realize the person in front of me is experiencing real pain and it's that inner pain that is behind their behavior. And when I can show kindness and offer a soft encouraging word, it softens the situation for me and whoever I am communicating with.

I am not talking about being weak, passive or even placating another person. Rather, I find I can communicate clearly with purpose but still display kindness and respect whatever situation I am in if I am purposed in my heart to be kind.

Try kindness next time you are in that weird awkward situation, I think you will be surprised, I know I was. Happy New Year.