

kindness

as a key to **humanity's**
future

by Dame Anita Roddick

3rd Annual Frank K. Kelly
Lecture on Humanity's Future

A Project of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

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“Rhythm, beauty and heroism in conflict, forgiveness in the face of atrocity, and kindness practiced tenaciously – to me these are the curious and heart-stopping acts that have the power to change the world. “

- Dame Anita Roddick



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The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation initiates and supports worldwide efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, to strengthen international law and institutions, to use technology responsibly and sustainably, and to empower youth to create a more peaceful world.

Founded in 1982, the Foundation is comprised of individuals and organizations worldwide who realize the imperative for peace in the Nuclear Age.

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation is a non-profit, non-partisan international education and advocacy organization. It has consultative status to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and is recognized by the UN as a Peace Messenger Organization.

Vision

Our vision is a world at peace, free of the threat of war and free of weapons of mass destruction.

Mission

To advance initiatives to eliminate the nuclear weapons threat to all life, to foster the global rule of law, and to build an enduring legacy of peace through education and advocacy.

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Frank K. Kelly Annual Lecture On Humanity's Future



The Annual Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity's Future was established by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in 2001. The lecture series honors Frank K. Kelly, a founder and senior vice president of the Foundation. In February 2002, Frank himself gave the inaugural lecture at Santa Barbara City College.

Frank Kelly has had a remarkable life. He has been a science-fiction writer, a journalist, a soldier in World War II, a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, a speechwriter for Harry Truman, the assistant to the US Senate Majority Leader, vice president of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions and a leader in the campaign to create the US Institute for Peace. He is author of nine books and uncounted articles.

Beyond all of his achievements, Frank has a remarkable faith in humanity and its future. He has lived with a spirit of optimism and hope. He has been a visionary advocate for humanity and has inspired many people through his writing and teaching to take action on behalf of humanity.

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, along with many of Frank's friends, sought to honor him by establishing the Frank K. Kelly Annual Lecture on Humanity's Future. The lecture will be given annually by a distinguished individual and will be widely distributed by the Foundation.

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Introduction

by David Krieger
President, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

The future will be shaped by the values, attitudes, beliefs and actions of each of us. What we think and do matters not only to our own futures, but to the futures of beings yet unborn. The lives of those to follow us on the planet will be shaped by the vision, wisdom, compassion and concern of the decisions we make today.

We are the creators of humanity's future and its guardians for the duration of our time on Earth. It is an immense and challenging responsibility. It is to help meet this responsibility that the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation exists.

The Frank K. Kelly Lecture on Humanity's Future, a project of the Foundation, is an annual lecture by a distinguished individual to explore the contours of humanity's future and what we can do today to help shape a more positive and promising future for our planet and all its inhabitants.

The 2004 lecture in this series was given by Dame Anita Roddick on the subject "Kindness as a Key to Humanity's Future." The lecture was delivered on February 17, 2004 at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Dame Anita Roddick is the founder of The Body Shop, which began with its first store in 1976 and a mission of pursuing social and environmental change. She describes the founding of the company as "entrepreneurship as survival." Today there are some 2,000 stores with over 77 million customers in 50 different markets across 12 times zones.

More important than her business success has been her unwavering commitment, in her business and her life, to social justice, fair trade, and corporate responsibility. She is the author of five books and has received numerous awards for her work, including being named a Dame Commander of the British Empire. She serves as a trustee to a number of international organizations, including the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

Dame Anita's speech, published in this booklet, calls for a "revolution in kindness." "Kindness should not be passive," she says. "Kindness applied with focus and determination can be a revolutionary force." She asks us to imagine what our institutions would look like – businesses, schools, health care systems, legal systems, churches – were there to be a revolution in kindness. She calls for forgiveness as "essential for the health of society."

Her perspectives are straightforward and decent. She envisions a future in which people care for each other and live with compassion. She invites us to explore with her such a future for humanity and the means to attain it.

We hope that you enjoy Dame Anita's lecture, and find her ideas valuable and inspiring. We invite you to learn more about the Kelly lecture series and the work of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation by contacting the Foundation or visiting its web site at www.waging-peace.org.

Kindness as a Key to Humanity's Future

I come here today, not in the guise of a successful businesswoman, but as a renegade business leader, an activist for peace, trade justice and human rights.

Business is now center stage. It is faster, more creative and wealthier than governments, more powerful than any other social institution like politics and religion – but if it comes with no moral sympathy, or honorable code of behavior, God help us all.

We need business to be accountable. We need business to base its international behavior on the sustainability and human rights charters and treaties – so happily signed by governments the world over, but just as easily ignored by them. We need business to put the belief in human rights at the center of every trade relationship.

We need to recognize the rights and contributions of indigenous peoples, who bring vital leadership to the task of conserving the Earth and its creatures, in creating a new life-affirming global reality. We need to understand that indigenous wisdom constitutes one of human society's most important and irreplaceable resources.

We need to embrace the fact that gender balance is also essential to sustainable development. We need to accept that women's roles, needs, values and wisdom are especially central to decision-making on the fate of the Earth. We need to involve women at all levels of policymaking, planning and implementation on an equal basis with men.

And, we need to also realize how many billions of dollars are spent annually on humanitarian aid, peacekeeping operations, reconciliation and reconstruction, when preventative activities cost less than one percent of post-conflict expenses.

At the same time, it means that we have to seriously accept our responsibility to develop positive options for creating alternative, honorable livelihoods for the millions of workers who are employed globally in the armed conflict and weapons industries.

In case after case where commercial and human rights interests compete for attention, you can bet your bottom dollar that commerce prevails. Economic concerns are the driving force behind arms policies, taking precedence over human rights abuses. Profits are more aligned with private greed than public good. This is the stuff I take personally.

The Past as a Prologue to the Future

In preparing for this lecture I kept looking into the past as some sort of prologue for the future and I realized that we are all, every one of us, shaped by the landscapes, peoples and experiences we have encountered. We remain attached to those places by the threads of stories which then shape the geography of our minds. Each of us carry an inward map on which is inscribed the places, events and people that are known to us.

My geography starts with Joan of Arc. She gave me moral imagination. My first heroine stood up for something in a way that caught my imagination: she fought the God of conformism and apathy, always, always questioning herself.

Learning about the holocaust gave me moral outrage and kick-started me at an early age into the belief that, everyone must stand up to something, and keep their mouth open.

And poets like Walt Whitman gave me the language of affirmation, wonderment and awe:

“This is what you should do: love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men...re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss what insults your own soul and your very flesh shall be a great poem.”

John Steinbeck took journalism into the realm of social justice, a writer passionately engaged in the social currents of his time. Photographer Edward Steichen curated the photographic exhibition for the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in the mid 1950s entitled “Family of Man” – an amazing extensive collection of human anecdotes. These examples taught me about the dreams and aspirations of the flaming forces of love and truth and the corrosive evil inherent in the lie.

They taught me that whatever society tries to diminish, it is the family or community that keeps pushing up like flowers in the cracks of the pavement. I learned that love, labor, community, service and land are connective and integrative.

“Myths and stories are the reflection of the human soul. They remind us of our potential, and the divine possibilities of our existence.”

If you consider life, you’ll probably find that you are most fulfilled when you are doing that which you love, are with someone you love, or when you somehow see the higher purpose of your life and are able to even love the drudgery connected with it.

I have always held the belief that journeying provides insight. These insights are garnished by sharing experiences through storytelling. Myths and stories are the reflection of the human soul. They remind us of our potential, and the divine possibilities of our existence. Without an awareness of your emotions you are not able to experience reverence. Reverence is not an emotion. It is a way of being, but the path of reverence is through your heart, and only an awareness of your feelings can open your heart. Let me explain with a story.

Several years ago, I spent time in Rosebud, arguably, the most disadvantaged Native American

Reservation in North Dakota. I was invited by the tribal colleges to see if I could come up with any creative solution to any one of their huge social problems.

I noticed that in the Badlands sage bush grew wild. Gather the sage bush, extract the essential oil and convert into personal care products. Easy. They had the plants and I had the technology. No. Not easy. They said first we must ask permission from the plant nation. We must do a sweat. Then, maybe. What that experience, the ritual, the sweat lodge told me was simply this. I was not on top of nature, I was part of nature. It taught me not respect; it taught me reverence.

Journeying Provides Insight

Living in communities, whether they are indigenous or local, allows me an experiential education. I'm able to humanize the issues and share what I've found and what I've been told by grassroots communities in the majority world. Journeying provides insight.

My insight is that poverty is the catastrophe out there. If Western governments are to help, they have to put the poor first as active participants, advisors and leaders. All governments must mobilize their grassroots because the only true experts on poverty are the poor.

It's poverty that drives the catastrophe when desperate people, over-exploit their resource base. Nothing incites people to deplete forests, soils, or water supplies more than the fear that they will soon lose access to them.

When I visited the Wodaabe Tribe in the Sahal they had never heard of the word desertification, but they knew better than anyone that their soil was exhausted. They, too, were living out the experience.

Women on the banks of the Ganges may not know what the infant mortality rate is but they certainly know the agony of holding a child who is dying of diarrhea.

Forest dwellers in the heart of the Amazon may never have been told about the mass extinction of species, but they know far better than any research biologist what it is to watch their primeval homeland go up in smoke before advancing waves of migrants and developers.

All these experiences taught me that a poor man shames us all. When you experience their lives, live with their communities, you care. Care is another one of those four-letter words, like love, that cages power. Care is an oil that lubricates the entire mental, emotional and physical system.

Through compassionate service, caring with passion, true spiritual correctness can be experienced. I have found it to be one of the most regenerative, productive and powerful frequencies for health and well-being.

I have found that people become motivated when you guide them to the source of their power, and that anything that changes your values changes your behavior.

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Community Trade

I am a dogged believer in small-scale economic community initiatives which keep the community together and the culture intact. Increasingly we are developing such initiatives.

Viewed in isolation these grassroots initiatives are modest – ten women planting a tree on a roadside, a dozen youths digging a well, an old man teaching neighborhood kids to read – but from a global perspective their scale and impact are monumental.

These micro-enterprises, these organizations out there are a ragtag frontline in the worldwide struggle to end poverty and environmental destruction.

We need trade that respects and supports communities and families. We need trade that safeguards the environment. We need trade that encourages countries to educate their children, heal their sick, value the work of women and respect human rights.

We need to measure progress by human development, not gross national product.

The people I work with are mostly under 40, mostly female, whose ethics are care. All are in search of present day heroes or heroines. Their work is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor.

They see the state as defined in power – inherent in tax reviews, in barrels of oil, in miles of road. These young people define power as the power inherent in dreams, in curiosity, in music, in the reach for the human spirit. They have a secret ingredient called enthusiasm. Enthusiasm created from the heart guides your whole system, so there's no resistance, everything flows and seems possible.

People who harbor dreams of a more responsible and compassionate world feel alone and unsupported, except when something occurs to bring their feelings out in the open. Then they find that others have also harbored these same seemingly subversive thoughts and feelings.

They believe those that are now in control – the politicians and business people – will drive us off the edge. Global planning institutions, like the World Bank, the IMF and especially the World Trade Organization, are ignoring mounting evidence of impending social catastrophe that will leave widespread and dangerous inequality and insecurity. These institutions aren't working for the majority of humanity. The roots of conflict aren't found amongst the dispossessed and the poor; they are found within global policies that lead them to retaliation.

“Enthusiasm created from the heart guides your whole system, so there's no resistance, everything flows and seems possible.”

I Am Tired of a World Where...

We don't like living in a world where there is no predictable future – a world in which governments offer control and terror in place of “pursuit of happiness” and war criminals are called leaders. I am tired of a world where our media lie, day after day, urging masses of us, driven by fear and greed, to swallow the lies and turn on each other, seeking “the enemy” on whom we can vent our rage.

I am tired of a world where there is no sense of shared interest or shared belief. It seems to me there is no moral, altruistic or spiritual center to our culture.

This country is falling apart. My country is falling apart. Men are prepared to commit the crimes of pre-emptive war under the guise of imposing “law and order.” They fail, because the young know they have the right to power, they are numerous and they are directly affected by what is going on.

“It is time to declare that trade lacking justice, equity, decency and compassion is no longer acceptable.”

The law is suspect and disorder is built into the system. The courts are revealed as agents of control, not justice. Corporate globalization and capitalism are engaged in never-ending social and economic warfare. Profit is now seen as a form of theft. War profit is a form of murder. Land, water and air are polluted for profit. Police take the law into their own hands, using terror to crush the spirit of dissent that offends their own mechanical lives. They will fail.

Change will never come about by our governments. They are economic governments and do not measure their greatness by how they treat the weak and the frail.

Change will always come about by moral dissenters and by the persistence of small committed groups of people willing to fail over long periods of time until that rare wonderful moment when the dam of oppression, indifference and greed finally cracks and those in power finally accept what the world's people have been saying all along: *There has to be a revolution in kindness.*

It will be a lifetime's work to clear away all the fatuous fantasies and false promises that have been painted in our minds layer after layer, year after year, on the millions of billboards, in print and electronic ads, in a language of myth and persuasion. If we still accept what we are told by the media and our political leaders as they market the future to us as apparently inevitable, then we become merely the audience of our own demise.

It is time to declare that trade lacking justice, equity, decency and compassion is no longer acceptable. Economics, efficiency perceptions and brutish power calculations no longer suffice; the bottom line has bottomed out.

What Is Needed Now Is a Revolution in Kindness

Words like kindness, compassion and reverence may sound foreign, but it is their very qualities that are providing a new economic agenda.

I have been quoted as saying “What we need now is a Revolution in Kindness,” and I still believe it, now more than ever before. There is coldness, meanness, a lack of humanness in our world now – when we speak of dead Iraqi children as “collateral damage,” and dismiss passionate dissenters as “terrorist sympathizers.” Even without war, the world’s priorities are shifted out of whack. Perhaps war is just a symptom of this.

“Kindness can – and should – be practiced tenaciously, deliberately and even aggressively. Kindness should not be passive. Kindness applied with focus and determination can be a revolutionary force.”

Everything now has an economic value. This value now overrides every other human value. Kindness, compassion, humanness, they are all pretty conspicuous in their absence. Power and money trump everything else, ultimately even humanity. Only in a world where power is the ultimate goal could a man like George W. Bush – who has mocked a woman on death row and can rationalize killing thousands of civilians in order to “liberate” them – call himself “compassionate.”

Like you, I have heard the expression, “Practice random acts of kindness.” But something about this has always struck me as wrong. Kindness doesn’t have to be random, squishy, new-agey, or feel-good. In fact, it can – and should – be practiced tenaciously, deliberately and even aggressively. Kindness should not be passive. Kindness applied with focus and determination can be a revolutionary force.

We need to redefine the concept of kindness, to flip it on its head. What if kindness were a prerequisite for many of the things we take for granted in the world, like our institutions? I have been quoted as saying “Corporations need to show more developed emotions than fear and greed.” Among the emotions they need to show, the top-most is a sense of kindness. The need for kindness is just as desperately needed in other institutions, including our schools, our health-care systems, our legal systems, our governments, our cultures and our churches.

What would these institutions look like if kindness trumped profit and power, if humanity superseded bureaucracy? Matthew Fox, a spiritual theologian, says provocatively:

A kind religious world – now there lies a radical idea. Can we imagine a world where Jews and Muslims are not fighting over a holy land that supposedly was left exclusively to each by a confused god who is the god of both?

Can we imagine a world where Hindus and Muslims are not killing each other in India and Pakistan and Kashmir? A world where Jerry Falwell and company are not calling hell and damnation down onto homosexuals and others made in the image of god? And where inquisitions and crusades are outlawed and apologies are made by Popes for anti-Semitism, witch burnings, crusades and inquisitions of the past?

And where the gold stolen from the indigenous peoples of Americas that still adorns the churches in Rome might be returned to its poverty-stricken owners? Yes, a kind religion would be a revolution.

The word kindness, after all, comes from the word for kin. It is about how we treat those who are nearest us. It is a family word. If religion were required to be kind it would have to find kinship with other religions, or better still, other spiritual traditions.

A reconstruction of religion on the basis of fierce kindness and real kinship would require a deconstruction as well.

Are we capable of deconstructing our religious attitudes to make room for this reconstructive kindness to emerge? I would hope so, and I suspect that Jesus and Isaiah, Buddha and Muhammad, Martin Luther King Jr. and the Dalai Lama would concur. In fact, is it so strange a suggestion to propose that this is what they taught in their lifetimes?

Imagine a news media that refuses to exploit the grief of victims for entertainment value. Imagine a legal system not stacked against minorities, where rehabilitation and generosity of spirit outweigh the impulse towards revenge.

On the issue of forgiveness, imagine a world in which we all resisted the impulse to lash out at each other in frustration. In our troubled 21st century where violence, confrontation, conflict and war are rife, forgiveness offers a means of laying aside the hatred and blame, breaking the chains that shackle us to the past and moving on. Oh, this marvelous F word!

“Forgiveness offers a means of laying aside the hatred and blame, breaking the chains that shackle us to the past and moving on.”

The F Word: Forgiveness

Forgiveness is an inspiring, complex, exasperating subject, which provokes strong feeling in just about everyone.

One hears of extraordinary stories – stories of victims who have become friends with perpetrators, murderers who have turned their mind to peace building.

When you study it, you begin to see that for many people forgiveness is not a soft option but the ultimate revenge – a liberating route out of victimhood, a choice, a process, the final victory over those who have done you harm. As Mariane Pearl, wife of murdered journalist Daniel Pearl, said, “The only way to oppose them is by demonstrating the strength that they have taken from you.”

Camilla Carr, a friend of mine, was held hostage in 1997 with her boyfriend, Jon James, by Chechnyan rebels. Her boyfriend said he survived only because he’d learned from practicing martial arts “that to overcome your opponent, you should meet hardness with softness.” Their ordeal lasted 14 months, during which Camilla was repeatedly raped by one of her captors, but they have come through it remarkably. For them – like for many others – forgiveness is about seeking to understand the enemy.

Someone else I’m in awe of is American-born Linda Biehl, whose 26-year-old daughter Amy was beaten and stabbed to death in a black township near Cape Town. She now employs two of the youths convicted of Amy’s murder, who were later given amnesty through the Truth

and Reconciliation process. Having visited the townships herself, Linda realized, “We all share basic human desires. It’s just the context that’s different. I’ve even asked myself if I’d grown up in a township, could I have behaved like that.”

“Not only is forgiveness essential for the health of society, it is also vital for our personal well-being.”

It’s a funny thing this F word. You begin to notice two very different reactions when you talk about this subject. There are those who see forgiveness as an immensely noble and humbling response to atrocity and those who simply laugh it out of court. For the first group, forgiveness is a value strong enough to put an end to the tit-for-tat settling of

scores that has wreaked havoc over generations. But for the second group, forgiveness is just a cop-out, a weak gesture, which lets the violator off the hook and encourages only further violence.

I’m far more moved by stories of forgiveness than revenge. In fact, revenge scares me. I don’t understand logic that advocates the settling of scores because it just creates an interminable cycle of attrition.

Gentle people attract me more than resolute ones, vulnerability more than strength. I believe there are very few truly malevolent people in the world. As Father Michael Lapsley says, “All people are capable of being perpetrators or victims – and sometimes both.” Lapsley runs the Institute for Healing Memories in Cape Town, despite – or probably because – he had both hands blown off in 1990 when he received a letter bomb in the post.

If one can understand why people behave as they do, then the road to forgiveness will often be opened. Not only is forgiveness essential for the health of society, it is also vital for our personal well-being. Bitterness is like a cancer that enters the soul. It does more harm to those who hold it than to those whom it is held against.

Yet, for some rare people, forgiveness is the most constructive way forward, one that has immense rewards for victim and perpetrator, as well as society. As Archbishop Desmond Tutu has said, “Forgiveness does not mean condoning what has been done. It means taking what has happened seriously and not minimizing it; drawing out the sting in the memory that threatens to poison our entire existence.”

I’ve recently funded an exhibition called *The F Word – Images of Forgiveness*. Forgiveness for me is as mysterious as love. I’ve never understood how people who experience pain through violence can see any light or any freedom from the obsession of why or how? I’ve never really believed that I would forgive, but then again I have never really understood the cage into which anger locks you.

Take it Personally

Rhythm, beauty and heroism in conflict, forgiveness in the face of atrocity, and kindness practiced tenaciously – to me these are the curious and heart-stopping acts that have the power to change the world. It is time we reclaim these values, apply them with focus and determination, and practice them deliberately, boldly and aggressively.

We must get informed. We must get outraged. We must get inspired. We must get active.

About the Speaker

Dame Anita Roddick is founder of The Body Shop and an eminent author, speaker and human rights activist.

Since founding The Body Shop in 1976 with the mission "To dedicate our business to the pursuit of social and environmental change," Dame Anita has become an icon for corporate responsibility and social justice practices. She believes that "businesses have the power to do good." Regarding her work and beliefs, she states, "For me, campaigning and good business is also about putting forward solutions, not just opposing destructive practices or human rights abuses. One key area where my business and personal interests naturally combine is through The Body Shop community trade initiatives."



Dame Anita Roddick is a graduate of Newton Park College of Higher Education, Bath. In 1997, she helped launch The New Academy of Business, a Master's degree course at Bath University with the aim of reforming business education for the new century.

She is the author of five books including: Body & Soul (Ebury Press, 1991); Business as Unusual (Thorsons, 2000); Take it Personally (Thorsons, 2001); Brave Hearts, Rebel Spirits (Anita Roddick Books, 2003); and, A Revolution in Kindness (Anita Roddick Books, 2003).

Dame Anita has received numerous awards for her work, including most recently being named Dame Commander of the British Empire. She serves as trustee to a number of international organizations, including the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation.

For more information regarding Dame Anita Roddick, please visit: www.anitaroddick.com.

Contributors to the Frank K. Kelly Annual Lecture On Humanity's Future

In order to ensure the continuity of the Frank K. Kelly Annual Lecture on Humanity's Future in subsequent years, the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation has set up a permanent endowment fund to support expenses associated with the Lecture. The Frank K. Kelly Annual Lecture Fund will allow the Foundation to invite a distinguished individual to present the lecture each year and to disseminate its publication broadly.

The Nuclear Age Peace Foundation would like to thank the following individuals who have thus far contributed to the Frank K. Kelly Annual Lecture Fund in support of Frank's vision of a hopeful future. If you are interested in receiving information about helping to sustain the Frank K. Kelly Annual Lecture on Humanity's Future through an endowment gift, please contact the Foundation at (805) 965-3443.

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