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# MOTIVATED

THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

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Change the world

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Both the news and the internet are filled with heartrending human interest stories. Just scrolling through my *Facebook* feed I come across post after post that bring tears to my eyes. Stories about children with special needs being bullied, elderly people not having their needs met, war and conflict causing devastation in too many regions around the globe, poverty and outbreaks of fatal diseases, and the list goes on.

We all want to live in a better world, but sometimes we feel overwhelmed or powerless, and that we lack the ability or influence to make a difference. When we feel like that, it's good to remember that through the generations, the world has been transformed by the actions of individuals like you and me, who understood that if they didn't like something, they could change it.

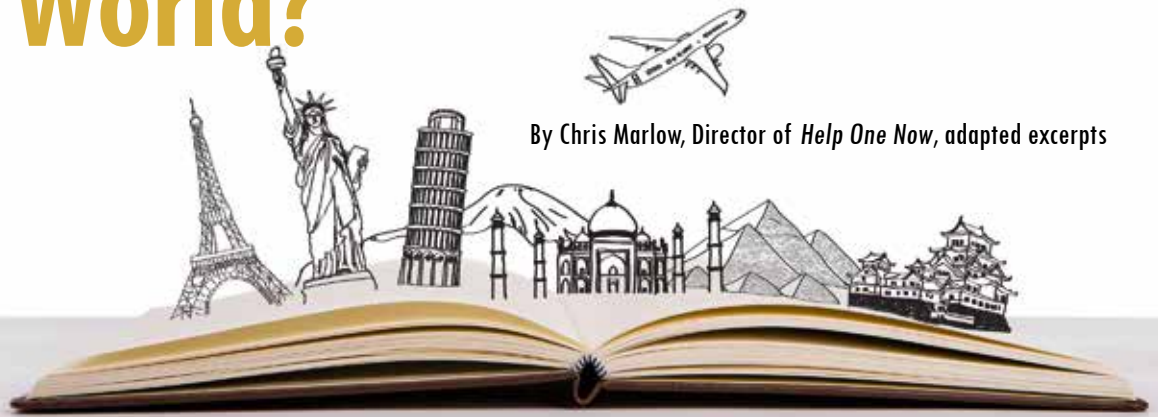
When we read their stories, it encourages us that we, too, can bring about a positive change in our world—each of us in our own way and in the place we find ourselves. We may not be able to change the whole world, but we can change our part of the world.

The stories in this issue of *Motivated* are powerful reminders of what can happen when we take that first step towards making a difference. I hope they will inspire you to take action, and will contribute to social change.

Together we can improve our world.

Christina Lane  
For *Motivated*

# Can Stories Really **Change** the **World?**



By Chris Marlow, Director of *Help One Now*, adapted excerpts

One of the greatest dangers in our world is apathy. I've dealt with my fair share of it, as have most people.

Through that experience, I've learned that compassion isn't something that comes naturally to most of us. We have to learn to do good, seek justice, and right wrongs.

And stories play a critical part in that process.

How do we vanquish this foe? With stories. Storytelling can crush apathy.

I know the power of a story firsthand. I remember watching a video from *Invisible Children* in 2007 and weeping bitterly over the story of Emmy.

For the first time, the plight of the poor had become real to me. After watching the 11-minute documentary, I wanted to jump on a plane to Africa and help Emmy and her mother (who was dying of AIDS). A few months later, I did.

When I arrived in Africa, I didn't find Emmy, but I found hundreds of starving orphans in Zimbabwe. And I didn't stop there. It launched me headlong into my calling, my life's work.

Because of one single story, thousands of lives have been changed through *Help One Now*, the nonprofit I helped found. And it continues to guide me in my life as I seek to live a good story.

We are most alive when we live in the midst of great stories. Reality can be painful, but stories can point us forward. They give insight to our indifference and compel our hands and feet to move towards action.

Many artists and storytellers are stepping up to tell stories that matter. But there is a whole world full of suffering and injustice out there that needs our help.

Somewhere in you, there is a story waiting to be a told. But there is also another story waiting for you—out there in the world where people don't have access to the tools you and I take for granted.

It may be a story of poverty or injustice or incredible suffering. This is a story that needs to not only be told but transformed. And someone needs to start the change. Will it be you? ■

# 4 Totally Realistic Ways to Make a Difference



By Leigh Newman

**W**ant to make a difference but don't know where or how to start? Consider these unexpected but realistic ways... from a man who's spent his life giving back.

Moved by the poverty he'd seen on his travels, Jim Ziolkowski gave up a lucrative career in finance to start *buildOn*—a nonprofit that runs after-school programs in disadvantaged areas of the U.S., and builds free schools for children around the globe. His new memoir, *Walk in Their Shoes: Can One Person Change the World?*, details his experiences in the South Bronx, Mali,

Haiti, Nepal, and Detroit, and chronicles the lives of the kids and adults he met along the way. Last week, he sat down with Oprah to explain how each of us can pitch in, in large, measurable ways—without quitting our jobs, giving up everything we own, and moving across the ocean.

## 1. Start with your own family

So many of us think that we have to go out into the world to serve, but as we search for that nearby soup kitchen or nursing home, we forget how many isolated, needy members of society

exist in our immediate circle. Is there a nephew in your life without anyone to take him to (or pay for) his school? Is there an elderly aunt whose car needs an oil change? “Compassion,” says Ziolkowski, “isn’t just for strangers.”

## 2. Rethink your birthday

We all want to volunteer regularly, but when our calendars start exploding with to-dos, we often forget to schedule the hours—or can’t even find them. Instead, consider celebrating your birthday with eight hours of service. It’s easy to remember; whether you like it or not, that particular day happens without fail.

The idea Ziolkowski credits to Rayia Gaddy, a teenager in his Detroit after-school program. Three weeks before her 15th birthday, Gaddy’s big brother Vandel was killed, shot in the back by an AK-47; she was devastated. “She couldn’t talk to people,” he says, “She couldn’t come out of her room.” When her birthday arrived, she knew she didn’t want to throw a party. Instead, she headed to a homeless shelter and spent the day serving meals and playing board games, an eight-hour stretch that inspired her to become a permanent helper at the facility. How many of us moan and groan about our own birthdays? What if, instead, it was the day that most inspired you? In Gaddy’s case, that one “celebration” prompted her to complete 700 hours of life-changing work—while she was still in high school.

## 3. Be you. Even the not-so-chipper you

“Nobody really brings this up,” says Ziolkowski, “but we sometimes feel

as if we have to act differently when we’re helping people—pulled together, positive, and cheerful at every moment.” But take the case of Gaddy. During her first day at the homeless shelter, she tried to smile, to fake her way through it, until several people asked her what was the matter. “They had been through trauma themselves,” Ziolkowski says, “and they could sense that something was wrong.” When she told the truth about why she had come, they formed a connection, which helped her as much as them. “That’s the secret of service,” says Ziolkowski, “it’s about both people receiving.”

## 4. Start a chain reaction

Feeding and providing shelter for children is crucial, but so is teaching kids—not just to fish or to farm or to read—but to help others. “This is especially true with underprivileged children,” says Ziolkowski. By donating their time and efforts, they realize that even if they don’t have an Xbox, a car, or in some cases, a house, they can contribute something, be it time, kindness, or experience. This is why the participants in Ziolkowski’s Detroit-area after-school programs are sent to Africa to build schools. “If you teach a child to serve,” he says, “there’s a chain reaction.” Gaddy, for example, after volunteering at her local homeless shelter, traveled with *buildOn* to Nicaragua to build schools in developing villages; now she runs her own volunteer programs at college. “All told,” says Ziolkowski, “the people she’s influenced are in the thousands.” ■

# World Changers

**By serving others and putting others' needs before oneself, only then can anyone truly impact the world with change.** —Abraham Lincoln



**Iftikhar Hamdani**

General Manager at *Ramada Hotel & Suites*, Ajman, UAE

When Iftikhar took over the management of the *Ramada Hotel & Suites* in Ajman, UAE in 2009, one of his responsibilities was to make sure the hotel was making a profit. After some time, he realized that the hotel was using a lot of electricity, and produced around 1000 kilos of waste per day. This was wasting both energy and money.

He began a campaign to encourage guests to turn off their air-conditioning when they were not in the room. He also began recycling the hotel's waste.

Through the advice of a friend and environmental specialist, he bought a compost machine to turn the hotel's kitchen garbage into plant fertilizer. Then he started an urban garden in a part of the hotel's parking lot.

Soon, he had cut down on 50% of the hotel's energy bill, and the hotel was recycling 90% of its waste.

Other hotels from around the region started hearing about his efforts and visited the hotel to learn about the methods they were employing. The hotel staff also talk to the guests about their initiatives, and encourage them to participate.

Iftikhar also spearheaded the *Go Green Art Competition* for thousands of 2nd to 5th grade students throughout the Northern Emirates. Bringing together many sectors of the community and creating a greater Green awareness.

*The Ramada Hotel & Suites* Ajman has since won many local and international awards for its efforts to conserve the environment.



**Jadav Payeng**

Buffalo farmer in Asia

When he was 16, Jadav experienced destructive flash floods that killed many animals. The floods happened because

of the deforestation in the area. Jadav decided to do something to stop the destructive cycle. Taking some saplings from the village elders, he chose a bare river island to begin planting his forest.

From the beginning, he faced problems with the plants dying because of lack of rain. He invented clever irrigation systems to bring water to the plants, and continued to replant. Soon, Jadav's forest began to grow, and the wildlife returned.

He worked for over 35 years, and his forest now covers hundreds of acres, providing a home for thousands of animals and preventing flooding.



### **Betty Williams**

Housewife in Belfast, Ireland

In the 70s, Northern Ireland was experiencing a deadly civil war. While driving one day, Betty Williams witnessed the death of three children from an explosion. She decided she had to do something to stop the violence.

In two days she had gathered 6000 signatures for a petition demanding peace. She organized a protest with 10,000 people from all sides of the conflict to ask for an end to the violence. The march faced a lot of opposition,

but she didn't give up. By the next week, she had a crowd of 35,000 people joining her to ask for peace.

Her efforts eventually led to peace in Northern Ireland, and she went on to win the Noble Peace Prize.



### **Noura Galal**

Student and fashion designer in Cairo, Egypt

Since childhood, Noura dreamed about becoming a fashion designer. However, her family needed her to finish her studies so she could get a job to support herself. As soon as her studies in English were over and she landed a job, she bought a sewing machine and began using her free time to follow her dreams.

At the same time, she began noticing many young and unemployed women in the Konayessa neighborhood where she lived. Many of them knew how to sew, and this gave her an idea. She launched her own online fashion company, and employed women from her neighborhood to sew her designs.

"I want to create a space where they can feel in control and invest in themselves. They will have shares in each product they produce, so their income will increase," Noura explained. ■



# How to Instill Compassion in Children

By Marilyn Price-Mitchell PhD

**H**ow do children learn to care? How do they feel connected to their communities and know they can make a difference in the world?

The answer isn't as complex as it might seem.

Developing compassion in elementary and middle school-aged children is akin to developing muscle strength. The more you use your muscles, the stronger they get. Children learn compassion through many experiences, including caring for the family pet. But children who participate in programs that teach kindness, respect, empathy, and compassion and who have families that reinforce those strengths at home develop the muscles they need to become civically-engaged adolescents and adults. During the teen years, they reach deep within themselves, access these muscles, and develop social and civic identities that last a lifetime.

Regarded as one of the greatest human virtues, compassion is an emotional response and attitude toward others that is deeply empathetic. It enables us to connect to human suffering with care and understanding, acting in ways that brings comfort to those around us. Compassion causes us to remain charitable, even if others behave negatively. Research shows that compassion plays a key role in helping children develop into engaged, caring, and optimistic adults.

## **Children practice compassion through involvement**

Research on the positive effect of class projects and after-school activities that develop compassion continues to grow. Scouts, volunteer opportunities, and special programs provide excellent ways for children to learn skills and practice compassion in their communities.



Resources abound for adult leaders and classroom teachers to help implement meaningful hands-on service projects, locally, nationally, and globally. I encourage you to access this material and help your child, classroom, or after-school groups transform compassion into action to benefit others.

### **Three ways to instill compassion at home**

Developing compassion in children involves all adults stepping up to do their parts—families, teachers, and community leaders—but we know from research that one of the most important places that compassion is learned is in the home. Ways families can instill compassion include:

#### **1. Provide opportunities to practice compassion**

Compassion cannot be learned by talking about it. Children must practice compassion in their daily lives. Difficult encounters with family members, classmates, and friends present opportunities for kids to put themselves in another's shoes—to practice empathy. They also learn compassion when they practice giving without the need to gain anything in return, when they are with people who are suffering, and when they experience the internal reward of feeling appreciated.

#### **2. Help children understand and cope with anger**

Anger is one of the greatest hindrances to compassion because it can overwhelm children's minds and spirit. Yet there are times when anger yields energy and determination. The Dalai Lama, in his

article *Compassion and the Individual*, suggests we investigate the value of our anger. We can help children by asking how their anger will help solve a problem or make their lives happier. We can help them see both the positive and negative sides of anger, and how holding onto anger leads to unreliable and destructive outcomes.

#### **3. Teach children to self-regulate**

Antidotes to anger come through compassion and self-regulation, the ability to stop or delay an action rather than behaving impulsively. Children should understand that regulating their anger is not a sign of weakness. Instead, a compassionate attitude is an internal strength. Praise children when they regulate themselves, making sure they understand the power of their calmness and patience. Always encourage elementary and middle school children to talk about their anger with a supportive adult.

Teaching compassion doesn't mean turning a blind eye to aggression in others. We all know that children get bullied and are often not treated fairly by peers. If remaining calm only encourages more aggression, then we must also help children take a strong stand without retaliatory anger.

Inspiring a spirit of volunteering in elementary and middle school helps kids develop their compassionate muscles—muscles they will use over and over again as they reach adolescence and adulthood.

Once you help your children begin this process, make sure they get lots of practice. The world can never get too much compassion! ■

# Amazing Kids Who Made a Difference

Web Reprints

Something odd happens when you research kids who are saving the world; you become filled with hope. The future looks not troubled, but brilliant. Reality television and social media make oversharing a rite of passage in modern life, yet sometimes the important moments get lost in the process.

Take for example these child visionaries—boys and girls who have changed our world through their good actions or examples. Some have mobilized millions for a good cause. Others have moved us simply by their generous and hopeful view of humanity. Here are the stories about some amazing kids and their supportive parents who have made an impressive mark on our world.



**Ryan Hreljac**

In 1998, 6-year-old Ryan Hreljac was shocked to learn that children in Africa had to walk many kilometers

every day just to fetch water. Ryan decided he needed to build a well for a

village in Africa.

By doing household chores and public speaking on clean water issues, Ryan's first well was built in 1999 at the Angolo Primary School in a northern Ugandan village. Ryan's determination led to *Ryan's Well Foundation*, which has completed 667 projects in 16 countries, bringing access to clean water and sanitation to more than 714,000 people.



**Katie Stagliano**

In 2008, 9-year-old Katie Stagliano brought a tiny cabbage seedling home from school as part of the

*Bonnie Plants Third Grade Cabbage Program*. As she cared for her cabbage, it grew to 40 pounds. Katie donated her cabbage to a soup kitchen where it helped to feed more than 275 people. Moved by the experience of seeing how many people could benefit from the donation of fresh produce to soup kitchens, Katie decided to start vegetable gardens and donate the harvest to help feed people in need.

Today, *Katie's Krops* donates thousands of pounds of fresh produce from numerous gardens to organizations that help people in need.



### **Louis Braille**

Louis Braille was born in 1809 in Coupvray, France. At the age of 3, an eye injury left him blind.

Studying at the

*Royal Institute for Blind Youth* in Paris, Louis invented a system of reading and writing for the blind involving raised dots, which today is known as Braille. At age 19, Louis became a full-time teacher at the *Royal Institute*, where he remained until his death at age 43.

Today, Braille is a universally used tactile method of writing and reading for the blind. Studies have shown that congenitally legally blind adults “who learned to read using Braille had higher employment rates and educational levels, were more financially self-sufficient, and spent more time reading than did those who learned to read using print.”



### **Riley Hebbard**

In 2009, 4-year-old Riley saw a news report about a school at a Darfur refugee camp.

The images inspired her to help the young students by sending her own toys to Africa. She recruited her preschool friends to do the same, then asked a local business to collect toys as well.

Three years later, 8-year-old Riley (with Mom’s help) has formed *Riley’s Toys Foundation*, created 10 donation centers, and shipped more than 23,000 toys to children in Africa through partner *World Vision*.

It all started with two questions: “Why don’t they have toys, Momma? Can I send them mine?”



### **Cassandra Lin**

In 2008, 10-year-old Cassandra and some friends created a business plan. They had two concerns:

global warming, and local families in need of heat for the winter. The friends put global and local issues together to form *Project TGIF: Turn Grease into Fuel*, a program to recycle cooking oil, convert it to biodiesel, and donate it to organizations that provide heating assistance. They got restaurants on board, created collection points for residents, rallied neighboring communities, and today, based on a bill they introduced, Rhode Island businesses are required to recycle their grease.

Next up: Connecticut! Cassandra says, “If a group of concerned 10-year-olds can make a difference in the world, so can you!” ■

# Change the World

NOTABLE  
QUOTES



My friends, love is better than anger. Hope is better than fear. Optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful and optimistic. And we'll change the world.—Jack Layton

No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.  
—Robin Williams

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.—Harriet Tubman

Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time. Vision with action can change the world.—Joel A. Barker

I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.—Mother Teresa

You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and

achievement. You are here to enrich the world.—Woodrow Wilson

Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.—William James

Love people who hate you. Pray for people who have wronged you. It won't just change their life...it'll change yours.—Mandy Hale

One person can do unbelievable things. All it takes is that one person who's willing to risk everything to make it happen.—Sam Childers

If we change our thoughts from “it's too late” to, “there's still hope”, we might see some change in the world.—Kellie Elmore

A small change can make a big difference. You are the only one who can make our world a better place to inhabit. So, don't be afraid to take a stand.  
—Ankita Singhal

You really can change the world if you care enough.—Marian Wright Edelman

