



Earlier this year, I wrote a letter to the editor at the Palm Beach Post calling for a return to civility and decorum in the midst of a contentious election season.

If we are to Change The Odds for our children and families, we must learn to care for one another. As the holiday season approaches and family and friends gather together, it is even more vital that we treat each other with dignity, civility and kindness.

Right now, our nation is undeniably restless, irritable, and discontent.

Despite the negative connotations, this can lead to good. After all, America was born of noble revolution and we are still the only nation whose founding was born out of principle, ideology and then, on a tertiary level – emotion.

The same cannot be said for the modern era when mindless anger reigns and tempers flare.

It seems we have lost civility.

In the field of addiction, people in recovery use the acronym RID – "Restless, Irritable, Discontent"– to be aware of warning signs and potential danger. In recognizing these signs, the person in recovery is to take action, addressing this inner discomfort in a healthy way, prior to the increased likelihood of a self-destructive eruption.

Inner peace is essential to anyone in recovery.

And it seems fair to say that we have some strange new addictions as a country – technology, social media, 24-hour news. Just look at where we spend most of our time, energy and money (with an increasingly sharp rise over a short period of time).

That is how addiction works. Read any "comments" section for a stiff drink of restless, irritable, and discontent.

Maybe recovery wisdom has something to offer our current state of affairs.

Shorter attention spans, short-term memory problems and growing irritability – also known as early warning signs of dementia – define 21st century America, as we navigate the age of exploding, rapid information.

And with this onslaught, it seems the ship of civility has sailed for safer harbor.

The only way to get it back is to act civilly toward one another within our own circles of contact, no matter how remote.

I acknowledge that doing so is often easily thwarted by a one-two punch – our radical individualism and the contagious spread of outrage – but we the people? We get to choose whether we abandon our principles or whether we promote the common good. It will take courage. Thankfully, America has no shortage of courage. It won't be impossible, but it will be difficult.

If you, my friendly reader, can relate to this, then please consider learning and committing to what you can do about it. Indeed, we are the only ones who can.

Local solutions are often the best solutions, and they are within our reach.

Begin practicing dignity with every person you encounter, no matter the mode of engagement.

Practicing dignity at home, with neighbors and at work. Learning to care for each other is a worthy goal and our best hope. We have too much at stake for each other and for our children to be reckless.

Setting this path is up to us – not our politicians, media personalities or billionaires. We the people in our daily lives are the ones who can recognize and honor our shared humanity. One of the best means to do so is through authentic encounter and dialogue with one another.

Too often our 21st century views can become cast into a false choice between either power or love. We do well to remind ourselves that we flourish when we have both love and power. Martin Luther King Jr. offers essential wisdom for us:

Power without love is reckless and abusive, and love without power is sentimental and anemic. Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice, and justice at its best is power correcting everything that stands against love.

I'm certainly open to being wrong on my observations. If I am wrong, and you can give me a more clear understanding that differs from mine, then I would dialogue with you. And I'd be grateful for what that does for us.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Pat McNamara
CEO
Community Partners

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I Am The Change

Community Partners' Director of Targeted Case Management Cleveland Wester changed the odds for himself and has dedicated his life to doing the same for our children and families.

Read the story of Cleveland's journey [here](#).

Tea at the Taj

The first annual Tea at the Taj fundraiser was held on Saturday, November 5 in downtown West Palm Beach. Bedecked and bedazzled in their boho and Bollywood best, guests came out to enjoy samosas and mimosas and learn more about how they can join us in Changing The Odds.

See pictures from the event [here](#).

Thanksgiving Celebration – BRIDGES at Highland

BRIDGES at Highland recently hosted a Thanksgiving feast for their families. In addition to enjoying a delicious meal, families also got to express their creativity with an arts and crafts activity.

Learn more about the celebration [here](#).

Do More.

[Volunteering](#) – We believe in agency and efficacy. Everyone has something to offer and everyone can help to Change The Odds. Join us and we can work together for Palm Beach County's children and families.

[Donate](#) – We believe in building resilience, cultivating promise and working with families to build the skills to achieve self-sufficiency, stability and success. By supporting our programs and services, YOU help families Change The Odds for their children.

Join the Movement.

[CP Storytellers](#) – Everyone has a story to tell. Here are ours.

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Learn More. Do More. Join the Movement.