



55 Ways to Love Our World

By Regina Cates



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This is an exciting time to be alive! So much is happening, and opportunities for positive change are everywhere. From the environment to how we treat each other and other forms of life, from rampant political corruption and global financial meltdowns to a seeming decline in social, decent, and honorable values, we are being forced to honestly examine issues that concern humanity's future and well-being.

You and I can view unending streams of negativity and conclude that the world is going to hell in a handbasket. You and I can also assign blame, argue the issues, shun accountability, jockey for power, maintain the status quo, or dread the end of the world.

Or, we can choose to be part of the ever-growing, worldwide collective of people who grasp this moment in time as their best chance to positively and peacefully address issues that will result in the evolution of our individual and shared consciousness. We courageously and responsibly become an active part of the solution to clean up our messes and protect our Earth home. We do what we can each day to be a catalyst of change and raise positivism from what appears, on the surface, to be a sea of negativity.

You and I can manifest the change we desire by finding an area of interest that makes our heart sing, where our skills are a good fit for making a constructive contribution. For example, join others who are evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of our political and judicial systems. Become involved at the local level to ensure the best education for all children, to help reduce illiteracy and equip them to deal with an ever changing world. Join a local environmental group and clean up our parks, cities, rivers, lakes, and streams. Assist in educating our community about recycling. Work with local animal shelters to bring the benefits of spaying, neutering, and adoption to the public. Get involved to end hunger and homelessness. Serve as a mentor to an "at risk" child.

At home, we are the positive change we want to see by remaining aware of what we allow into our mind and heart as entertainment. We search out programming that inspires our intellect and supports the productive and respectful behavior we desire to see in ourselves, our children, and our society. We send television and movie decision-

makers incentives to develop encouraging, inspirational, and intelligent programming by turning off anything that insults our intellect or offends our values.

We seek impeccable reporting from the news organizations we consult. We research the facts regarding current issues, rather than accepting editorial opinion and hearsay as truth. The time has come to use our brain and our heart because free speech comes with a great amount of responsibility for how words create real outcomes.

Also, we remember that beyond what advertisers want us to believe about what they think we want from life, the most valuable things are great relationships, having enough to eat, a roof over our head, a healthy body, clean water, clean air, a healthy planet, healthy pets, and, foremost, contentment. These desires are shared by countless people throughout the world. So, we live in alignment with what is truly important by no longer allowing media and advertisers to tell us what is valuable.

In addition, we have the courage to question and move away from any organization or doctrine that perpetuates abuse, control, domination, and fear. We separate ourselves from and stop supporting anybody whose agenda incites hate, negativity, blame, discrimination, ridicule, dishonesty, or rationalizations of those behaviors.

Yes, this is an exciting time to be alive. We are at a pivotal point in our development because the time is perfect to grow more connected to our wise, helpful, and intuitive heart; the part of us with the patience, discernment, and innovation necessary to help us have the best relationships with others, avoid problems, make life easier, and find the soundest solutions to what we face.

We are not here to wonder what the future may hold. We are here to create the future we want, moment by moment, day by day. We are a positive change agent by not waiting for someone else to go first. There are no other people to go first. We are it.

Our world is magnificently beautiful. Without a healthy Earth, we do not exist. It is not responsible to wait for some body of "knowledgeable people" to fix what is wrong with our planet. There is no government, policy, or law that can effect greater

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change than you and I doing our part each day. We are best qualified to be a good example for our children, end racism and sexism, stop overfishing our oceans, end a dependency on environmentally destructive fuels, and accomplish any of the other items on our universal to-do list.

Let's begin by viewing challenges as opportunities to make positive changes. Let's agree you and I do have something vital to offer. We are powerful to initiate positive change. The small actions we take daily do make a difference and will bring about the transformation we desire.

So, let's promise one another to care about the impact each of our personal actions have on Mother Earth and on one another. Let's join forces and clean up what we can of our planet. Let's vow to treat everyone as we want to be treated. And, together we will make a huge difference.

To get us started, here are fifty-five ways we can be the positive change we want to see in the world.

- ♥ Courageously separate ourselves from the people within society whose acts reveal their lack of devotion to facts, integrity, and empathy.
- ♥ Embrace new scientific and intellectual developments.
- ♥ Appreciate that education is lifelong and everything is designed to change and progress—the seasons, our planet, nature; scientific, technological, and cosmological discoveries; you and I.
- ♥ Refuse to conform to what society dictates is success—wealth; power over people; social, religious or political influence; physical beauty—to live aligned with the true definition of success: Being a person of empathy and integrity.
- ♥ Condemn bullying and exclusive behavior as unacceptable.
- ♥ Treat everyone equally no matter how rich or how poor.
- ♥ Care about the legacy we leave. Care that children learn by our example.
- ♥ Champion being authentic and speak up for what is right.
- ♥ Remove ourselves from any situation that feels wrong in our heart.
- ♥ Know we are genuinely worthy of love and belonging.
- ♥ Teach our children to be people of integrity who are patient, kind, forgiving, trustworthy, responsible, thoughtful, respectful, supportive, etc.
- ♥ Turn off biased news and don't listen to conspiracy theories or political attack ads that defame people.
- ♥ Talk about our feelings and experiences and express our needs, so we can create emotionally intimate relationships.
- ♥ Care about the impact of our actions, so we can create the most responsible (loving) outcome.
- ♥ Teach children that being gentle with themselves, other people, and all living things is one of the strongest things they can do.
- ♥ Refuse to follow those on social media who use it as a platform to denigrate or spread fear, lies, and disinformation.
- ♥ Set aside our differences with people to create a better, kinder, and more respectful future.
- ♥ Get to know our neighbors and people at the places where we do business. People who look out for each other are people who respect and care for each other.
- ♥ SMILE. A smile helps others feel good and lets them know they are seen. Smiling makes us feel great, too, because we are giving a bit of our heart to someone.
- ♥ Use cloth grocery bags and cut out as much plastic as we can. We have a serious problem with plastic in our oceans and environment. Let's not leave this situation to our children and their children.

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- ♥ Reach out to people who are lonely and feel unseen, unheard, unloved. Let people know they are cared for.
- ♥ Pick up trash in our neighborhoods, parks, and public spaces. We can take the lead and do what needs to be done to help keep our world clean.
- ♥ Donate our skills to a nonprofit organization.
- ♥ Use a bucket to collect the clean water that would run down the drain before the shower gets hot. Use it to water house plants or trees, flowers, and shrubs, or to fill a birdbath.
- ♥ Refuse to gossip—about ourselves, politicians, celebrities, anyone.
- ♥ Apologize when we make a mistake. We are not meant to be perfect.
- ♥ Refuse to patronize restaurants or stores that do not pay their workers a fair living wage.
- ♥ Listen to people with our heart, to understand them, not just hear them with our ears. Heart-listening creates intimacy and helps establish solid relationships by letting people know they are heard and understood.
- ♥ Listen with a quiet mind. That means not finishing someone's sentences, or interrupting, or thinking of a response while they are speaking.
- ♥ Refuse to get pulled into an argument while we are, or someone else is, upset.
- ♥ Give to give, without expectation of reward. Giving with conditions is not truly giving, as our ego wants something in return. Giving without attachment is loving unconditionally.
- ♥ Remember, the homeless people we encounter are men and women just like us. Treat all people with the respect and kindness with which we want to be treated.
- ♥ Help safeguard our beautiful forests. Conserve paper by not printing emails and by using our phone to make notes.
- ♥ Respect the beliefs of others. No religion has a corner on God. Those who live the Golden Rule love and honor God regardless of their religion.
- ♥ Understand there is no such thing as failure; there is always something positive to be gained from an experience. When we do not succeed, there is something about our behavior or goals that needs to change or grow. Focus on how to make the changes necessary so we eventually get the outcome we desire.
- ♥ Consider the positive that is gained through differing with other people. Just because we disagree with someone does not make them wrong or us right. Often, truth is what we find when we stop to consider another point of view.
- ♥ When we uncover a health hazard or waste of resources in our community, tell someone who is in a position to do something.
- ♥ Volunteer at a school to mentor a student in our field of expertise, or tutor someone in a subject at which we excel.
- ♥ Find every opportunity to walk rather than use our car. Carpool, ride a bicycle, or take public transportation.
- ♥ Realize gratitude is a very powerful emotion. Be genuinely grateful for what we already have in life.
- ♥ Practice anonymous acts of caring and kindness. Put a quarter in an almost expired parking meter. Pay for the order of the person behind us in line at the drive-through.
- ♥ Carefully choose what we allow into our mind and heart. Stay aware of music and lyrics, news and television programs, and the movies we watch. The more positive we allow in, the more positive we express.
- ♥ Think about the toxicity of the fertilizers and insecticides we put on our lawn or of the chemicals we put down the drain or on our head to dye our hair. Try plant-based hair dyes and environmentally friendly fertilizers and household cleaners.

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- ♥ Vigilantly monitor our children's use of social media. Purveyors of hate and disinformation actively recruit young people through both subtle and overt racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic messages.
- ♥ Rather than shame a child who repeats hateful language or ideas they learn from peers, the Internet, or social media, help them decode the harmful messages behind the memes, words, and posts.
- ♥ Check in with children about whether they are being bullied. Care if they are bullying other people or groups of people.
- ♥ Write a thank-you note when we receive a gift. Acknowledge a kind deed with a kind deed.
- ♥ Support the arts in our schools and communities to give children the opportunity to express themselves in creative ways.
- ♥ Remember, not everyone is at the same level of emotional awareness. This understanding will allow us to let go of ego-boxing as a solution to the challenges we may face with people.
- ♥ Be aware that the interactions we have with people and pets are more important than those we have with technology. Technology is a tool, not a substitute for quality time with others.
- ♥ Remember, love never hurts.
- ♥ Spend time outdoors each day. When we take time to immerse ourselves in the natural world, it humbles us with its magnificence and serves to remind us all life is connected.
- ♥ Teach children to be respectful, responsible, and honest.
- ♥ Accept that it is okay to get angry and frustrated at times. Use healthy ways to release those emotions.
- ♥ Instill the love of learning in our children. Participate in school activities and visit museums, libraries, and public gardens.

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