

**At-Home Sunday School
For Sunday, February 18, 2024**

In Defense of Kindness, by Bruce Reyes-Chow: Week 25

We are at the end of the lesson series from the book *In Defense of Kindness: Why It Matters, How It Changes Our Lives, and How It Can Save The World*, by Bruce Reyes-Chow. I will be giving you the whole last chapter in this final installment. His wrap-up to the book is just how I want you to feel about the series. Next week we will begin a new series on a yet to be chosen book!

Kindness Week 25 – Won’t You Choose Kindness?

In closing, Bruce circles back to the Rev. Dr. Fred Rogers, who prompted him to write this book. At the beginning of every episode of *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*, Fred invited us to be part of something bigger than ourselves. His refrain of “Won’t you be my neighbor?” requires us to acknowledge the invitation and to join him in the adventure that it is to be neighbors, to be part of the community of humanity.

Kindness is not a journey for the meek and mild. For those of us who have been steeped in ways of being that are not kind, it takes tremendous energy to purge ourselves of patterns and behaviors that are not kind. Every day we have to choose to commit to live out kindness that day.

Yes, choosing kindness will be exhausting and overwhelming. Yes, choosing kindness will draw mockery and dismissal. Yes, choosing kindness will create tension, conflict, and discomfort.

But... Choosing kindness is an act of courage that challenges a worldview driven by hatred, dishonesty, and dehumanization. Choosing Kindness is about living a life of integrity in which we daily work at resisting the seductiveness of wealth, success, and self-preservation. Choosing kindness is life-giving. For when we choose to see and respond to the human dignity of any one person, we are all given a little more hope. And finally, if we do not continue to choose kindness together, can you imagine how much worse the world will become? The least we can do in response to and in gratitude for all those kindness giants who have paved the way is to do the same for the generations to come.

So Bruce hopes that we will join him in choosing and defending kindness in all that you do and in forms that are both incredible and incremental. Be a champion for kindness in the institutions in which you work, in your families of birth and choice, amid your faith or social communities, in the hallways of your school, at the café where you are reading this book right now, and wherever there is a chance to extend human dignity to the other.

There is never a bad time to be kind.

It's a matter of choosing to do so.

For Reflection: What are three ways that you can commit to kindness in the next week? Think of a community of which you are a part. How might the group make a commitment to kindness?

Try This: for one week, think back at the end of each day and note moments of kindness, either your own or others'.