

The vibrations of the strings rang in my ears as I pulled my viola in harmony with the others' instruments. We were at our first ever performance in Rome, Italy. My classmates and I were ready to perform halfway around the world, but everything went downhill immediately. All of our strings went out of tune and there was no room to move. We were a jumble of overwhelmed musicians bumping into each other while waiting to perform. We felt immense pressure to play perfectly, but it was impossible with our overwhelming claustrophobia. We could practically taste the sour anxiety in the air. After an eternity of preparation, we began our first piece, "Canyon Sunset." This song was supposed to evoke visions of a beautiful sun setting into the canyon, but I could hear wrong notes coming from left and right; the whirlwind of a long trip and an over stimulating environment was getting to us. When the song finally ended, we all sighed with embarrassment. I heard echoes of "we sucked" and "what on earth happened?" around me.

The negative energy in the room was contagious. I was hoping that my positivity would be as well.

"Guys, it is okay," I insisted to our group. "This was our first performance abroad. So what if we messed up? The next one will be a hundred times better."

My own performance was lackluster too, but we had to focus on improving for our next one rather than dwelling on this one. Reluctant but grateful smiles emerged on their faces. Since that moment, I have relished the chance to offer positivity whenever necessary. When group projects get overwhelming, I delegate responsibilities. When friends fail assignments, I offer encouragement for future work. During soccer practice, I support teammates whose confidence is shaken. In fact, my school recently recognized me for this habit, bestowing the "You Make a Difference Award" upon me. I intend to continue as the light in the darkness however possible.

Imagine that you see someone on the side of the road because they are homeless. What would you do? Would you give them food and money or would you just ignore them and let them just sit there. Well I chose to give them money and food. After this experience I started to realize that there are a lot of people and animals who need help, don't know what to do or where to go so I decided to take action. I also realized there are a lot of things a kid like me can do to make the world a better place. I used the be kind pledge to help everyone who needs it and make the world a better place for everyone.

In the beginning of my journey, I was only 8 years old and I started off by getting a dog. This might not seem like I was helping the community but I actually saved two lives that day. I saved the life of my dog and by taking him home, the shelter got a space for another dog to be rescued. At the time I didn't know it but my dog was going to change the way I look at the world and how important it is to take care of it. In fact that day I paid close attention to just how many people and animals need help. A few days later when I was walking my dog I also realized that there is a tremendous amount of litter everywhere you look. Since then I have been taking an extra bag and a glove with me on walks and picking up all the litter. After about a year I decided I wanted to do even more than just picking up litter. I kept on brainstorming ideas for weeks until I found the perfect idea: a lemonade stand! I wanted to make as much money as possible so I made cookies and dog treats for dogs to enjoy a tasty treat with their human. After each sale I had a towering profit and of this money I kept 40% so I could keep doing more lemonade stands and I donated the other 60% to places who helped people and animals. I did lemonade stands a lot so I decided that I would save 60% of each sale until the end of the month and donate it then. Each month I change the place I donate to and in the winter I change to selling hot chocolate.

Even today I am so grateful I got a dog because he not only made me be a better person and help the community but he is also a great companion. I hope my story inspired you to do little things to make the world a better place for everyone.

Kindness isn't just doing nice things for people. It's composed of different values and actions that allow someone to not only help other people, but also help themselves become a better human being. The Be Kind Pledge contains ten important skills that I would like to utilize in my day-to-day life. These skills can help me improve my community and self-reflect on my actions.

Everyone has heard at some point in their life that the "world is mean." An example of this is an argument in school. Kids do not hesitate to voice their own opinions, exercising their communication skills. However, this can be done rudely, targeting and hurting others. To tackle this, I can be considerate of their side of the argument. Respectfully disagreeing, and appreciating their contribution to the conversation. Instead of being dismissive towards their opinion, encourage a positive resolution to the issue that everyone agrees with. Whenever met with rudeness or hate from the world, I want to strive to turn that into kindness and positivity.

Only one kind action shouldn't be an expectation, instead, I want to habitualize being kind. Being thankful for the opportunities and resources at my disposal will shed a better light on the world. I will be responsible for my actions, choosing kindness over ignorance or rudeness. For instance, helping others to gain knowledge I grasp easily, supporting and uplifting them. These skills will create strong habits that will help me spread kindness in my community.

By doing small acts of kindness every day, such as complimenting someone or picking up trash, they add up to a bigger impact on the world. The Be Kind Pledge will help me improve my community and become a better person.