

Dignity and respect all the time for all the people

By Linda Wilk

I teared up as I watched the national news story Sunday morning showing a 5-year-old black girl crying amidst a protest where police were cracking down. A white police officer is shown kneeling down beside the little girl, with his arm around her, comforting her and reassuring her that the police were just there to ensure there was no violence.

In an interview with the little girl’s father, her dad commented how the officer told the little girl that he also had a young daughter and he wanted to make sure he was safe and able to go home to his daughter. He also assured the little black girl that she would be safe.

That is really what this is all about. And I pray that is what all of us want. For everyone to be safe. For everyone to be treated with dignity and respect all the time.

There has been much said about police brutality, about eliminating choke holds from police department tactics, as well as other police



A SLICE OF LIFE

Linda Wilk



experts saying kneeling on a defendant’s neck has never been a trained police tactic. Then each day more and more incidents of black men being constrained by police officers with officers kneeling on that man’s neck while “I can’t breathe” can be heard.

It is demoralizing. It is embarrassing and I pray we are truly listening and learning from these travesties of justice.

As we see more and more peaceful protests across the nation and across the world, maybe this is the year real change will take place.

Maybe this is the generation that will see racism eliminated.

I just ask that as we truly focus on change, we make it a wholistic change, that in addition to looking at racism, we look at the core of what is going on. We look at systemic change where all respect the differences of each other. We look past skin color to the core of why we treat others as we do.

I believe we must stop dehumanizing each other, which includes looking at some as less than us, which goes beyond racism to sexism and oppression.

As an advocate to stop all forms of violence, including domestic violence, I would ask that we start with ourselves and our attitudes and beliefs. I ask that we work on what we believe is acceptable behavior.

This is not an easy task. Seven years ago, I was given the opportunity to work with the Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to focus on behavioral change.

The goal was to change

the thinking about relationships. To put an end to domestic violence, which at its core focuses on power and control.

And to do that we focused on systemic change. We worked to change the narrative from talking about the types of domestic violence, to how can we show love and lifting others up in all that we do. We focused on respect. Did we make change? We saw some small changes, yet there continues to be so much work that needs to be done.

We know through research that the first two years of a child’s life is when most of their brain develops. We also know that domestic violence is a learned behavior, just like racism and sexism.

Children are not born with attitudes of violence – they learn that from those around them, as well as what they see on social media and in various other venues.

If we are going to truly make change, we must accept that we all must take stake in the change. It is powerful to gather and protest. It is powerful to

march the streets and speak about the injustice, however if we are to make true change we must sit down and talk about what we will do through policy and training. And for training, it does not just mean once a year webinar about diversity, it means having ongoing conversations and trainings across systems.

We must start in our own families by educating ourselves on how we can be inclusive, on how we can stop dehumanizing one another. If we see each other as God’s children, we will not so easily be able to dismiss those who are different from us.

That includes those who not only do not look like us, but those who we do not understand because they grew up differently than us. If you only surround yourself with those who are just like you, you will never know how someone else has lived and you will be less able to empathize with others. This in turn will make it more difficult to assist your children with learning how to treat others with the dignity and respect all deserve.

And, going one step further, it is those children who will become police officers and others in authority who we wonder why they act as they do. Again, it goes back to what they learned when they were little. What biases they have brought to their jobs. It is possible to change the narrative in adults and I believe working together we can, it is however, much easier to change the narrative in children who do not have all the baggage we as adults have.

So, as we watch the national news about the protests against racism or view on social media all the comments about the need for change, let us be the ones who stand up and say, I am ready to make the change. I will reach out to those different than me and start the conversation. I will work in my circles of influence to ensure that this is the last generation that knows what the word racism, oppression, domestic violence means. Let us put those words in the history books and replace them with words like equality, respect, oneness and true justice.



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Deaths

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celebrate Hall’s life will begin at 1:00 pm with Pastor Lucas Binkard officiating. Entombment will take place at Gardens of Memory in Marion.

Adean Combs
1948-2020
Funeral services were held at Needham-Storey-Wampner, North Chapel, on Saturday, June 6 a 11:30 am.

Estella R. Ricker
1919-2020
Funeral services were held at Armes-Hunt Funeral Home, Fairmount, on Thursday, June 4 at 5 pm.

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Stay healthy.
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