

# What is shaping culture? Kindness

By Brett Rogers

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What kind of world do we want to live in, and what kind of world do we live in?

For many of us, it is not a kind place. There are politicians and social commentators who sow division, and social media giants manipulate us to their whims. But much of what we have seen over the last few months, and in some respects years, is action against the tides of hateful rhetoric that have plagued us at a growing rate making the world a nicer place to be and perhaps finding a different route to contentment.

Our understanding of kindness is that it is a growing rebellious action against polarising global instigators; an action that not only does good for the receiver of kindness but also the person showing it.

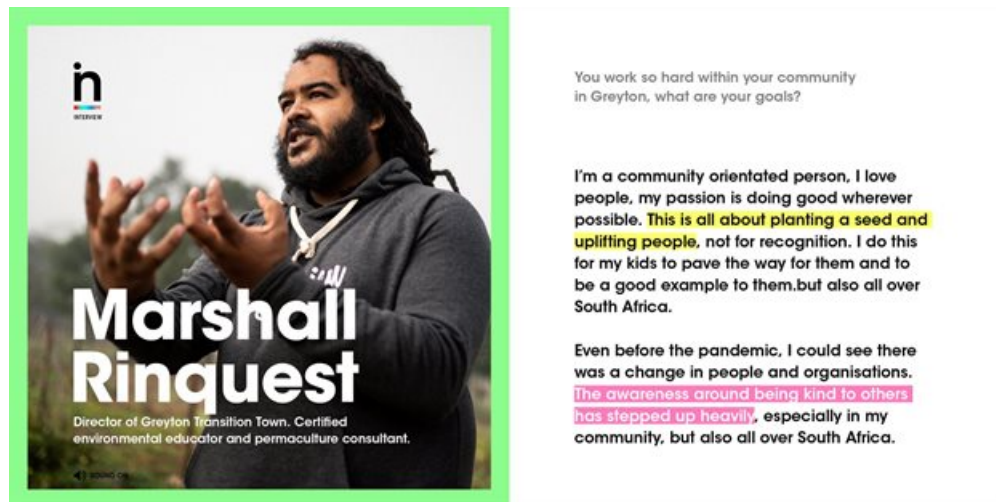


Someone who is showing us the way is Marshall Rinquest, recipient of the EcoLogic Young Environmental Leader Award in 2016. Marshall does a great deal. He is the director of GreytonTransitionTown, where he oversees all projects including, food security, waste management, humane education and environmental education. And, he is leading the bid for Greyton to become the first town to reject 'single-use' plastic. He is one of the most inspirational people we have met.

“ Kindness for me is seeing people as humans, as people. I don't see race or colour. I think kindness is putting every single person on the same level, treating people the same; it doesn't matter if you are rich or poor, there is no difference. Kindness is something that can uplift someone who is in a bad space, to inspire someone who is feeling down. I always teach my kids to be kind, to respect others.

*Kindness and respect go hand in hand, not just with people but with animals and the environment, too. This is the holistic kindness that drives me. - Marshall Rinquest ”*

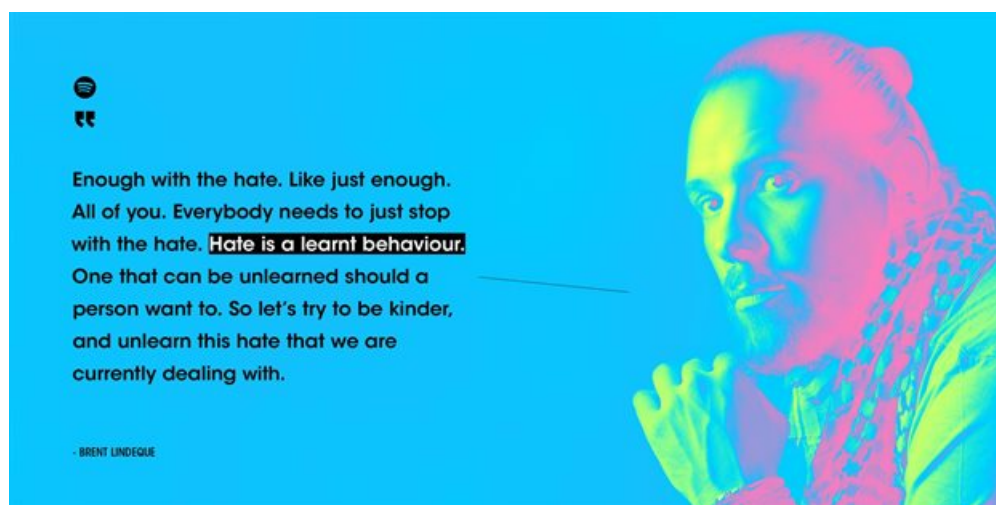
One of the projects headed up by Marshall is the Valley Food Gardens project. This is a food security initiative in the Genadendal, Berea, Voorstekaal and Greyton regions, which provides the education and tools necessary for people to become self-sustaining food growers. Those who are successful can provide for not only themselves but for the greater community, and earn an income, which many did not have before.



While delving into kindness we podcasted with Brent Lindeque of Good Things Guy, who has become one of the most inspiring voices in South Africa, creating a space for positive news to thrive in a country that seems to be under a constant weight of negativity.

What really stood out for us was what he said about each person's unique experiences in the world. He mentioned something that many of us forget ... each of us has our own demons that we are fighting in our lives, a seemingly endless list of hardships.

The challenge that we face is we seem unable to process that someone has lived a different life to what we know and experience ourselves. Lacking the empathy to understand that our actions have real consequences to others, we need to ask ourselves how our actions affect those around us, considering our words and how we use them.



Kindness might be the only way that we can get past what we are going through. We clearly have differences between us, and we seem unable to see beyond them. Empathy for others is how we can do it. Yes, we may disagree, but perhaps if we see one another with more empathy our lives and the future of the planet might have some hope.

PS: Kindness reduces stress and keeps you younger for longer. So, if you don't choose kindness for kindness's sake, do it to save money on beauty products.

There are numerous ways to be kind, here are a few suggestions:



## ABOUT BRETT ROGERS

Brett Rogers, culture lead at Cape Town advertising agency HaveYouHeard and content curator for In\_, a channel of content, which showcases cultural forces that are changing the world. It aims to inform, inspire and entertain the viewer and does so with multimedia posts, including podcasts, videos, google trends, mini Q+A's and more. In\_ talks to those interested in in-depth cultural exploration and those curious about the world we live in.

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