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For Immediate Release

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“Make Civility COOL in D.C.” Campaign for New Civil “Rites”... is Launched at Independent National Convention in Austin, TX


What would happen if Americans holding “opposing” viewpoints stopped fighting one another, and used their different perspectives to work together for mutual benefit? Can a new “civil rites” movement get us off the battlefield and onto a new playing field of communion, cooperation, and collaboration?

At a time when political incivility seems at an all-time high, 12 Habits for All of Us, founded by social-change pioneer Elaine Parke, is announcing a national campaign to “Make Civility COOL in D.C.” during Parke’s talk at the 2023 Independent National Convention in Austin, Texas, April 3-5. Elaine’s latest book, *The Habits of Unity, 12 Months to a Stronger America... One Citizen at a Time* (2021), is a handbook for civil “rites” as monthly rituals for practicing 12 habits of civility, one monthly habit at a time.

The initiative, driven by a cost-effective plan to engage public service advertising, Parke says, “is an audacious, never been done before *‘giant civility reminder system’* to focus on neighborhoods in Washington, D.C. that have suffered from high-crime and poverty. By transforming neighborhoods like these – just a short distance from the Capitol and White House, we seek to inspire all of America to shift away from hostility and towards more unity and kinship.”

Political Scientist, Steve Bhaerman, describes the 12 habits message system “as a powerful, year-round counterforce to remind citizens of 12 qualities ALL OF US have in common – regardless of our political perspective.” As examples, March’s reminder is “*Resolve Conflicts.*” January’s reminder is “*Help Others.*” September’s reminder is “*Do Your Best,*” and October’s reminder is “*Be Patient & Listen.*”

Steve Bhaerman is co-author with Bruce Lipton of *Spontaneous Evolution: Our Positive Future and a Way to Get There from Here.* He adds, “When I discovered Elaine Parke’s 12 Habits, I FINALLY found an



evolutionary practice to shift us from the culture of separation to the culture of connection. The next phase of human evolution is not about artificial intelligence. It's about using the intelligence of the Golden Rule's time-honored wisdom to impact the world at large by improving the 'world at small' – the people and situations we encounter daily.”

Dr. Bobby William Austin, Ph D., a sociologist, author, and President of the Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, Neighborhood Associates Corporation, is on board as a leading anchor for the launch of “Make Civility COOL in D.C.” In a recent TED talk, Dr. Austin introduced the concept of “Public Kinship” as a strategy to bolster democratic and civic values in everyday life.


In learning about Making Civility Cool, Dr. Austin shared that he and his senior staff “...envision an organized effort of broadcast and print media messaging that has a strong potential to reach many D.C. neighborhoods quickly, effectively and build Public Kinship through the 12 Habits 4 All. The public service campaign is unique in that it is both evidence-based and yet approachable. Its inclusive approach is elegant and holds great promise in repairing the breach in the nation's capital.

20 years ago, Parke says, starting with support from KDKA-CBS-TV, this 12 Habits reminder system positively changed attitudes and behaviors in several hundred Pittsburgh regional communities. University-sponsored surveys consistently reported that in less than two years, nearly 72% of the citizens polled, felt more kinship and connection with one another.

Nearly 39% also reported, “they had been reminded to improve their behaviors, at least once.” One young survey respondent exclaimed, “this is COOL!” Another wrote, “*I am now nice to the people I used to be mean to.*” In 2006-07, with support from Rotary International, Parke took the 12 Caring Habits to post-genocide Rwanda to help educators there promote peace among Rwanda's youth.

According to Parke's strategy, each month of the year becomes a colorful “brand name” for one aspect of unity, civility, and citizenship. For decades, public service advertising has been motivating grassroots changes for good in America. We've learned to buckle up, just say no, and not to pollute.

Parke's mission is to now engage creative marketing to create a flagship program to help us shift from the current culture of separation to a culture of connection, communication, cooperation, and kinship. Each month offers a simple core, Golden Rule habit to practice – sort of a “do-it-yourself” mental health routine. Some of the 12 habit actions are personal empowerment habits, and some, like March's habit to “Resolve Conflicts,” are geared towards healing relationships.



Can engaging an organized 12-month, year-round system of messaging, connect us all with reminders that unity, civility, and kinship are the backbone of a thriving America? Parke, argues that “The D.C. experiment is a ‘win/win’ challenge to begin to make civility and good citizenship COOL. Can practicing 12 simple, colorful, and even playful habits, all together, month by month, across America, restore civility and “re-
hearten the heartland”?

Let's Find Out!

To become part of the growing community of people who are partnering to mobilize civil “rites” by practicing the monthly habits of unity visit 12habits4allofus.org. On the third Monday of each month, visitors who join, are invited to a participative Zoom party, with a celebrity guest, where we discuss and share stories about each month’s habit.