MINDFUL ENGAGEMENT

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The promise of a more kind, just, and safe global society requires us to show up in the best possible way. Navigating complex challenges and responding skillfully to both internal and external threats and concerns requires personal tools to find solutions that are meaningful and helpful. Rather than be swept away by fear and instability, it is imperative to remain balanced and discerning while building clarity and wisdom for the tasks that may lie ahead. To act in times and circumstances when we feel burdened by powerlessness and despair takes deliberate, conscious awareness of the ways in which WE are engaging in the world.

Despite the 'isms' tearing at our social fabric, change typically comes through strategic nonviolent action and civic engagement. We must also possess the skills, ability, and willingness to create an understanding of what it means, individually and collectively, to participate in ways that support a just and civil society. If we are going to actively work to secure a kind and just world, we must learn to lead from our hearts and minds, as well as from a place of balanced determination. There is a selfless, virtuous quality when we consider others' desires to be happy first and foremost. We must be open and receptive to other ways of thinking and doing things—a willingness to change our minds without regret. We need to understand what drives our actions and motivations and recognize possibilities and hope in others.

The world is in need of a new kind of diplomacy and social sensibility. We must be equipped to transform our heartfelt intentions into altruism—compassionate actions which support the common good. These actions will reflect a collective social responsibility—a solidarity with others—and the intention of creating meaningful change, helping to build a world that is safe and secure for generations to come. There is a social and universal responsibility to act, for both enlightened self-interest as well as for the benefit of all. We must include regulating and rewarding interactions so that people do not feel marginalized, stressed, or become disengaged. The importance of understanding issues of inequality and the need to engage responsibly when power and privilege differentials arise is also imperative. We must try and create circumstances and space that allow those with whom we engage to demonstrate competence. People's vulnerabilities and strengths must be recognized and nurtured. We must strive to create the sorts of relationships with others which we would like to have for ourselves.

A single interaction that is mindful and compassionate has the potential to bring a sense of hope and provide motivation to find solutions that may not otherwise have been discovered. If we can maintain an attitude of doing our best amidst the flux and confusion of daily life, we come to realize that this is what virtually everyone else is trying to do. We must remain open to possibilities and embrace our responsibility to ensure that we take good care of each other.

Being part of a community that intentionally encourages collective responsibility and a genuine sense of belonging can be a source of strength and purpose. For meaningful change to happen we must take on the tasks together. We are being asked to come together, not for self-interest, but for the benefits we gain through cooperation and a willingness to make a contribution to the well-being of humanity. The

awakening of an open, kind, and good heart helps us find the way toward right actions with the purest of motivations for the good of others and ourselves—a common good.

Congressman John Lewis once wrote, "Real leaders are not appointed. They emerge out of the masses of the people and rise to the forefront through the circumstances of their lives. Either their inner journey or their human experience prepares them to take the role. They do not nominate themselves. They are called into service by a spirit moving through a people that points to them as the embodiment of the cause they serve."