



My country's name is Kindness



Where has all the kindness gone? This is the question that Community Chest CEO Lorenzo Davids asks South Africans.

How did this massive ship called South Africa go drifting onto the rocks of unkindness? Why does it feel like we are marooned in a sea of angry, violent sewage?

How is it possible that in 1994 we stood side by side in awe to give birth to a great country, and in 2020 we stand on opposite sides, close to destroying the country that we birthed?

My wife and I take regular walks across various parts of the city and country - whenever we have spare time. We are regular greeters of fellow walkers, and we often notice how some choose not to greet us. But the kindness of a greeting is the entry level to what builds a great country.

Kindness is the pathway that takes

us to the country we always imagined we would one day live in. That pathway consists of cobblestones called generosity, forgiveness, trust, and the joy of believing the best of each other.

I have been shown kindness by so many people in my life, such as the teacher at my school who one day took me aside and gave me a horribly straight talk about my putrid performance. It ended with: "I believe in you - and always know I won't give up on you." No one had ever said that to me, and I made sure he never regretted believing in me.

Kindness is seeing yourself in the other and being who the other would want you to be. It is paying for an extra cup of coffee and telling the barista to give it to the next person who might

need it but can't afford it. It is standing in line in a supermarket and paying for the bread and tin of fish that the person in front of you is buying.

It is taking every grain of soil of this country and making a pledge that it will never experience our anger, our violence or our abuse again. The power of kindness moves us away from the rotten sewage of abuse and violence.

We must all be courageous enough to resist caving in to fear and anger. One step of kindness heals far more wounds than many marathons of anger. It is how we set the kindness free in others - by being to them who we expect them to be to us.

I want to live in a country filled with generous greeters practising brave kindness. That's my kind of country. □