



## **RANDOM KINDNESS & SENSELESS ACTS OF BEAUTY** **Community Resilience Project: the Book Comes Alive!**

To learn more about the Random Kindness Community Resilience Project, or to host a Workshop near you, please visit [www.RandomKindness.net/sponsor-an-event/](http://www.RandomKindness.net/sponsor-an-event/)  
Or Contact M. Paloma Pavel, (510) 652-2425 [PalomaPavel@EarthHouseCenter.org](mailto:PalomaPavel@EarthHouseCenter.org)

*Random Kindness and Senseless Acts of Beauty: 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition*

By Anne Herbert & M. Paloma Pavel Ph. D

Illustrated by Mayumi Oda

Foreword by Desmond Tutu

Published by New Village Press, September 2014

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# BREAKTHROUGH COMMUNITIES

*Growing Sustainability & Justice in Our Metropolitan Regions*

## The Random Kindness Community Resilience Project

### Background of the Book

*Random Kindness and Senseless Acts of Beauty* has become a classic phrase, born of a peacemaking project undertaken by Anne Herbert and M. Paloma Pavel in response to increasing concerns of racial violence and international conflict. *Random Kindness* was designed to be a spell reversal for breaking the cultural trance of systemic violence, and the phrase struck a chord and went viral, awakening moral imagination and providing a simple language for a profound and evocative call to solidarity and compassion on a distressed planet. In 1994, Herbert and Pavel expanded *Random Kindness* into a full length prose poem expressing the perennial longing to be our better selves, and to create collective impact toward a better future. The subsequent book featured the words of the poem combined with the celebrated brush painting of Mayumi Oda.

Oda illustrated the book using the graphic vocabulary of the Choju giga, a well known Japanese scroll painting dating to the 12th century Heian period. Communicating through these picture stories, people who did not read or write were able to organize themselves in a r/evolution, and take back power in their communities.

The book was widely praised, with Buddhist Scholar Dr. Joanna Macy calling *Random Kindness* a “fold-out, wrap-around sutra” and “all we need to know right now in order to let our lives count in building a sustainable world.” In this anniversary edition, we gather the wisdom and charm of the first edition with renewed focus and vitality. With the proposed anniversary edition we go global, in a full-color 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition with translations in Japanese and other languages, published by New Village Press.

### Foreword by Desmond Tutu

We are thrilled and humbled to include a foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in the 20th Anniversary edition of *Random Kindness and Senseless Acts of Beauty*, dedicated to community resilience and climate justice in the face of global warming. Nobel Laureate and social justice visionary Archbishop Tutu has provided a foreword to our book that connects the message of interdependence in *Random Kindness* to the South African concept of *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* is the conviction that interconnectedness is the very root of who we are.

Desmond Tutu's wisdom and leadership in the Truth and Reconciliation process in post-Apartheid South Africa have been a deep inspiration to activists and compassionate human beings around the world. His profound insight that forgiveness and *ubuntu* are key to resilience in the face of adversity is foundational for community resilience work in response to global climate change. We are indebted to Desmond's brilliance and moved by his life of service, and we are honored to be featuring his words of wisdom, strength, and hope.

### Description of the Random Kindness Community Resilience Project

The *Random Kindness* Community Resilience Project is intended as an inspiration and resource for community engagement, participatory planning and community organizing. We are passionate about building community resilience in the face of climate change, including aid to climate refugees and nuclear refugees from Fukushima. We have dedicated the Japanese translation of our book to survivors of this catastrophic event, and a portion of the book's proceeds are going towards community resilience

efforts in Japan. Mayumi has moved to a climate refugee camp outside of Kyoto and is dedicating the next stage of her life to transforming and rebuilding a peaceful and safe-energy Japan.

In the Bay Area, Paloma Pavel and Carl Anthony, co-founders of Breakthrough Communities, are involved with local climate resilience efforts including the “Mapping Our Future: Community Resilience” audit, which has been initiated as a grassroots-driven effort for vulnerable communities to assess themselves regarding affordable housing, water access and food sovereignty, addressing basic needs as well as reinventing and reimagining our institutions. The Random Kindness Community Resilience Project will integrate arts and culture with principles of community organizing and multiracial, intergenerational leadership development to equip the next generation of social, racial, and climate justice leaders for the great work of our time.

The message in *Random Kindness* is now more urgent than ever. In an age of climate crisis, this work is a call to community action to create the world we want, a world based on principles of sustainability with justice—including not only a call for collective visioning and power but also for beauty, imagination and creativity in the world we want to restore and grow.

### **About Anne Herbert**

Anne was born in the Midwest, but claimed by the Bay Area. She is an award-winning author and activist, and has served as editorial staff for the *Co-Evolution Quarterly* and the *Whole Earth Review*. She is the author of *Compassion 101* and the much-loved blog: *Peace and Love and Noticing the Details*, and co-author with Paloma Pavel of “Handy Tips on How to Behave at the Death of the World.” She is well known for the oft-quoted phrase, “Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no libraries.”

### **About M. Paloma Pavel**

Paloma is an educator, psychologist, and international consultant for healthy, just, and resilient metropolitan communities. She is President of Earth House Center, co-founder of the Breakthrough Communities Project, and former Director of Strategic Communications for the Sustainable Metropolitan Communities Initiative at the Ford Foundation. Her most recent publication is *Breakthrough Communities: Sustainability and Justice in the Next American Metropolis* (MIT Press). Paloma’s academic background includes graduate study at Harvard University and the London School of Economics. Her graduate activities and her subsequent life’s work have been deeply inspired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu: She was organizer for anti-Apartheid divestment on Harvard’s campus; and at the London School of Economics she conducted research on South African Economics in the pre- and post-Apartheid eras. Paloma went on to assist in Truth and Reconciliation processes in post-Khmer Rouge Cambodia.

Paloma was the first North American faculty to circle the globe on the Peace Boat, offering support and technical assistance in environmental and humanitarian hotspots around the world. She has taught and trained community resilience in Costa Rica and South America, and participated and presented at the UN Conference on sustainable development in Johannesburg, South Africa. She has presented internationally including the 50th anniversary of the bomb in Hiroshima. Paloma is currently visiting faculty at UC Davis’ Center for Regional Change. We welcome the opportunity to bring the Random Kindness Project to your community. Contact us. [www.randomkindness.net](http://www.randomkindness.net)

### **About Breakthrough Communities**

Breakthrough Communities currently conducts local, national and international projects in a variety of print and visual media. We work with a series of environmental sustainability groups in the Pacific Rim,

including Cambodia and Japan, and in the US supporting organizations working on issues of health, justice, education, legal services and metropolitan development.

Breakthrough Communities was co-founded with visionary African American community leader Carl Anthony. Anthony is an architect, author and urban / suburban / regional design strategist, and co-founder of the Breakthrough Communities Project. He has served as Acting Director of the Community and Resource Development Unit at the Ford Foundation, responsible for the Foundation's worldwide programs in fields of Environment and Development, and Community Development. His forthcoming book, the *Earth, The City, and the Hidden Narrative of Race* bridges urban communities of color with environmental initiatives while reviving vital environmental cultural traditions.

Our 10 year project researching and cultivating the metropolitan regional equity movement in the US: *Breakthrough Communities: Sustainability and Justice in the Next American Metropolis*, was published in 2009 by MIT Press.

### **About Mayumi Oda**

Known to many as the 'Matisse of Japan', Mayumi Oda has done extensive work with female goddess imagery. Born to a Buddhist family in Japan in 1941, Mayumi studied fine art and traditional Japanese fabric dyeing. In 1966, she graduated from Tokyo University of the Arts. Mayumi's unique apprenticeship dyeing fabric for kimonos influences the color and composition of all of her works.

### **About Desmond Tutu**

Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu, a Nobel Peace Laureate, is one of the greatest living moral icons of our time who was a key role player in the fight against apartheid in South Africa. He was also the first black South African Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa and primate of the Anglican Church of South Africa.

In 1995 President Nelson Mandela appointed the Archbishop Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, a body set up to probe gross human rights violations that occurred under apartheid. In recent years Tutu has turned his attention to a different cause: the campaign against HIV/AIDS. The Archbishop has made appearances around the globe to help raise awareness of the disease and its tragic consequences in human lives and suffering.

### **About New Village Press.**

New Village books serve the interdependent fields of social justice, participatory planning, community building, ecology, and community-based arts. The Press crosses boundaries between professional, academic and informal education with books that engage practitioners and community activists working together to rebuild neighborhoods. Most significantly, our books go beyond abstract policy and present the human story, the motivations that stir the soul to make a certain part of the world a better place to live.

Through illustrated stories, case studies, essays, interviews, educational tools, and guides, New Village publications celebrate the ingenuity and compassion of those people rebuilding society. We cover the creativity of community building, focusing on what works and what is culturally exciting. Our press is centered in the belief that inspiring alternatives are more useful than criticism, although we don't shy away from reporting the nitty-gritty challenges that social and environmental activists face.