

What has caused the demise of simple human kindness in our society? Cruelty, thoughtlessness, disregard for the needs and rights of others—how have these undesirable qualities become part of our American culture?

It would be easy to blame it all on Donald Trump. He is, after all, the “poster child” for such behavior as he trods relentlessly and ruthlessly over the rights of others—of anyone who does not pander to his unending need for approval and loyalty.

But, it is more than just Trump who has trashed our standards of decent behavior toward others. I do not participate in social media activities, and I know many people who are careful and thoughtful in their use of these methods of communication. It seems to me, though, that there are many more who use these platforms to express ideas and opinions, especially concerning other people, in ways they would never do “face to face.”

I don’t know if it is more difficult to say unkind and cruel things about people when one is looking them in the eye or whether it is the anonymity of the internet that allows participants to type thoughtless opinions into the void, pounding the keyboard and working themselves up in the process.

It is evident, though, that a little kindness works—probably not with Donald Trump, but with our fellow Americans many of us seem to have no compunction about trashing on the internet. Might it help to envision a real person to whom one is spewing vitriol via the computer or phone keyboard instead of perceiving a disembodied being one sees only as words appearing on a screen? We do not all have to espouse the behavior of Trump or Congresswoman Greene. We can be better than that.