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As an **American**, as a **neighbor**, as a **mother** of two **Black** sons, and a **Black** daughter; as a mother of children with **military** experiences and a family whom are in **law enforcement**, and as a **human** with emotions and thoughts like **everyone** else, I feel compelled to speak on the sadness and anger that is forefront in our country at this time ~ after the killing of **Mr. George Floyd**. I know that I am not alone in my profound sorrow and worry over the current conditions in our country.

I wish I could fix it. I wish anyone could fix it. I know that systemic fixes like this take time and they take persistence. We need to continue to be persistent in this dialogue. To really repair our country, we need to all try to open our minds and our hearts and try, really try, to be kind in our thoughts, our judgements, and our actions. People should want to be good. People should want to be kind ~ but what is the virtue of kindness really?

Kindness requires that we talk to each other. Both law enforcement and the African American communities and others ~ have important things to say right now. They should communicate ~ whether by peaceful marches, by meetings, or by structured discussions. Let's be kind and give them and each other room to speak.

Kindness requires that we truly listen to each other. So, while we must make room for all sides to talk, talk is meaningless unless someone hears what is said and constructive actions follow. I hope that law enforcement is listening to what the protesters are taking to the streets to say. They are delivering an important message. An absolutely critical message. They deserve to be listened to. I hope the protesters are listening to those in law enforcement who share a common concern with them. They are agreeing with much of what the protesters say. This is a cause for us to rally for change, peace and understanding.

Kindness requires that we are gentle with each other. Violence is the opposite of gentleness. It is an insult to the very thing that gives us souls. I wish the violence would stop.

Kindness requires that we try to put ourselves in the place of others. We are all more alike than we are different. No matter your skin color, your gender, your sexual orientation, your national origin, or your religion, we all want to feel safe. We all want to feel that we will be treated fairly. We all want to be acknowledged as important and contributing. I wish these common basic desires were more in the front of our minds ~ more of the time. If we are willing to put ourselves in the place of others and if we are listening, then we will be willing to change. We will be willing to meet each other in our decisions and actions such that we honor our commonalities instead of our differences.

I'm praying for kindness and progress by and for all of us.

Councilwoman Marlo Alston