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## Opinion

# Kindness is the glue holding society together, and we humans are wired for it | Letter

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1 min read

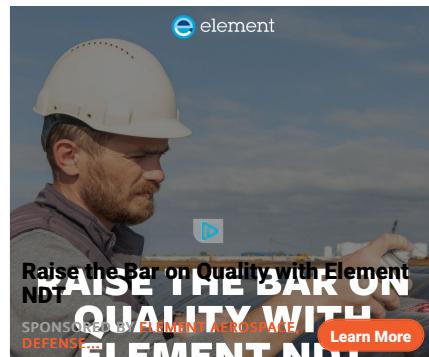
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A high school senior stops just before the finish line of her final race at the Arkansas State Cross Country Championship to help a fallen rival.

## Kindness beyond division

The shocking death of conservative activist Charlie Kirk at Utah Valley University underscores both the volatility of our public discourse and the humanity we often miss in the headlines. Kirk, founder of Turning Point USA, was addressing thousands of students outdoors as part of his "American Comeback Tour" when he was fatally shot. The final question posed to him concerned transgender individuals and mass shootings. Within a moment, tragedy unfolded.



The question itself highlights our cultural fault lines. For years, debates around gender identity have been weaponized to divide communities.

“  
I still struggle daily with the  
unintended consequences I  
conducted and witnessed for  
over a decade. Speaking with  
*Justify* is the first time I’ve

[Anthropologist Giovanni Rossi and colleagues studied](#) everyday interactions across eight diverse cultures — from Namibian villages to Italian cities. In more than 300 recorded exchanges, they found people overwhelmingly willing to help, whether passing a tool or sharing food. Refusals were rare, and when they occurred, they were awkward. The conclusion was simple but profound: Humans, across cultures, are wired for cooperation and kindness (Rossi et al., *Scientific Reports*, 2023).

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This research offers perspective. Even as violence captures the spotlight, most human encounters remain rooted in empathy. A smile in the grocery line, a moment of listening to someone whose politics differ from ours, or an unexpected friendship across social boundaries all remind us that kindness is the glue holding society together.

Kirk's death is a reminder of the fragility of public life in polarized times. But if we look away from the vitriol online and into the eyes of those around us, we find more common ground than division. The challenge — and the opportunity — is to let everyday kindness, not hate, define us.

*Alexia Georghiou, Knoxville, 37912*

*This article originally appeared on Knoxville News Sentinel: [Letter: Let kindness, not hate, define us](#)*

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