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Daily Actions For Modern People Of Faith

By **Regina V. Cates**

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I am deeply spiritual, but not religious. It was a long journey for me to arrive at the deep faith I have today, one I describe in detail in my second non-fiction book. I share the following with the desire it inspires you to join me in being the positive change we want to see in the world.

As spiritual beings on great human adventures, we are charged by our creator with being ambassadors of love, which means we help establish a positive and peaceful world for ourselves, our children, and their children's children. To accomplish our soul mission, we were given one simple and universal direction that is the foundation of all world religions/spiritual philosophies:

Whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them. ~ Christianity

What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. ~ Judaism

Not one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. ~ Islam

One should not behave towards others in a way which is disagreeable to oneself. ~ Hinduism

Hurt not others with that which pains yourself. ~ Buddhism

This is not a complete list, as I have only included the world's top five religions/spiritual philosophies. Yet the Golden Rule is the foundation for other world religions and provides proof our creator was instrumental in the establishment of all religions and spiritual philosophies.

When you and I honestly look at the challenges we face, it is evident we, as people who love God and truly desire to be part of the solution, have work to do. We need to accept that until we rise in energized harmony to productively address these challenges, we will remain disappointed by the legacy we are leaving. But in addition to our discontent, unless we get our act together, we will also not be viewed kindly in the eyes and hearts of our children, who are pleading with us to lead the way to a better future.

To love our creator and one another, let's care about the legacy we are leaving for ourselves, other people, and the generations to come. Let's lead a movement of love and seek out and join with like-hearted people, regardless of religious or political affiliation, who are actively working to create the positive change we all want to see. Let's join with people who are setting a responsible, kind, and respectful example of what it means to be a good global citizen.

We set aside our differences to focus on the common goal of doing everything within our power to create a better world than the one we are currently leaving to our descendants. It is not too late to make ourselves and our children proud. God would remind us it is by choosing to advance the soul we are, that we will create a peaceful, respectful, and sustainable future for our children and theirs.

So how do we build this new world?

We act, today and every day, as the superheroes God created us to be.

We set the example of the good that is possible when we lead with our heart and:

- ♥ Appreciate that education is lifelong and everything is designed to change and progress—the seasons, our planet, nature; scientific, technological, and cosmological discoveries; you and I.
- ♥ Refuse to conform to what society dictates is success: wealth, power over people, physical beauty, and social, religious or political influence. Instead, live aligned with Jesus' definition of success: being a person of empathy and integrity.
- ♥ Confront the judgmental and limiting dogma we are exposed to in our religious experience that makes no sense to our heart, our soul.
- ♥ Develop a process of continual, honest self-reflection to determine if we are mirroring Jesus' logic and love.
- ♥ Refuse to be influenced by people who mistreat others, including those who do so in the name of God.

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- ♥ Become anti-racist. Speak out against ideas and all policies that promote inequity between people of different races.
- ♥ Read books on racism.
- ♥ Become informed about the U.S. history of slavery and the continued unequal treatment of people of color in many aspects of society.
- ♥ Take Debby Irving's 21 Day Challenges at DebbyIrving.com.
- ♥ Courageously separate ourselves from the people within religion, politics, and society whose acts reveal their lack of devotion to Jesus' integrity and empathy.
- ♥ Embrace new scientific and intellectual developments that improve the state of the world.
- ♥ Appreciate the responsibility of school systems to teach an accurate and responsible history of enslaving Black human beings, the Holocaust, women's rights, and the LGBTQ2+ community's struggle for their human rights.
- ♥ Condemn bullying and exclusive behavior.
- ♥ Treat everyone equally, no matter how rich or poor.
- ♥ Address sexual misconduct with open and frank conversations. Create an atmosphere that encourages discussion about how we are to be responsible for our sexual nature.
- ♥ Redefine masculinity so that dominance over women, being physically tough, or being emotionally indifferent are no longer considered manly.
- ♥ Value within men and boys inner strength, focusing on honesty, respect, and responsibility.
- ♥ Assist men and boys in establishing self-confidence and humility rather than arrogance and the desire for dominance.
- ♥ Help raise young men who respect women. Men who don't buy, demand, extort, or condone any woman's subservience.
- ♥ Care about the legacy we leave. Care that children learn by our example.
- ♥ Engage in conversation about Jesus' heart and how the religion created in his name too often does not align with his love.
- ♥ Champion being authentic and speak up for what is right.
- ♥ Overcome self-centered ego to lead with the selfless soul we are.
- ♥ Remove ourselves from any situation that feels wrong in our heart.
- ♥ Know we are genuinely worthy of love and belonging.
- ♥ Test our current beliefs about LGBTQ2+, gender equity, women's rights, etc., against Jesus' heart.
- ♥ Accept that someone who casts blame when confronted about their behavior has something to hide.
- ♥ Know that Jesus would be responsibly informed when voting up and down the ballot in every election, whether national, state, or local. Be informed and VOTE!
- ♥ Subscribe to and read informative blogs on Substack, like Robert Hubbell's *Today's Edition*, Dr. Heather Cox-Richardson's *Letters to an American*, Robert Reich's blog, *Civil Discourse* with Joyce Vance, and others.
- ♥ Discourage women from playing dumb to make men feel smart.
- ♥ Call out misogyny, sexism, racism, and anti-Semitism when we see them.
- ♥ Model Jesus' integrity and teach our children to be people who are patient, kind, forgiving, trustworthy, responsible, thoughtful, respectful, supportive, etc.
- ♥ Turn off biased news and don't listen to conspiracy theories or political attack ads that defame people.
- ♥ When talking about politics and religion, be respectful and informed to fact.

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- ♥ Talk about our feelings and experiences and express our needs, so we can create emotionally intimate relationships.
- ♥ Care about the impact of our actions, so we can create the most responsible (loving) outcome.
- ♥ Be aware that infatuation is blind, but love (integrity in action) is not.
- ♥ Teach children that being gentle with themselves, other people, and all living things is one of the strongest things they can do.
- ♥ Refuse to follow those on social media who use it as a platform to denigrate others or spread fear, lies, and disinformation.
- ♥ Be aware that hateful, slanderous, divisive speech is not free speech. Words have power because they create real outcomes.
- ♥ Set aside our differences with people to create a better, kinder, and more respectful future.
- ♥ Get to know our neighbors and those at the places where we do business. People who look out for each other are people who respect and care for each other.
- ♥ SMILE. A smile helps others feel good and lets them know they are seen. Smiling makes us feel great, too, because we are giving a bit of our heart to someone.
- ♥ Use cloth grocery bags and cut out as much plastic as we can. We have a serious problem with plastic in our oceans and environment. Let's not leave this situation to our children and their children.
- ♥ Become educated about LGBTQ2+ people and refuse to support businesses, individuals, and religious or political leaders who discriminate against them or anyone.
- ♥ Reach out to people who are lonely and feel unseen, unheard, unloved. Let people know they are cared for.
- ♥ Pick up trash in our neighborhoods, parks, and public spaces. We can take the lead and do what needs to be done to help keep our world clean.
- ♥ Get to know someone from a different religious or cultural background or different sexual orientation. When we learn about other people we find how similar we are.
- ♥ Donate our skills to a nonprofit organization.
- ♥ Educate ourselves about governmental legislation that may not impact us personally but is detrimental to others' human rights.
- ♥ Make thoughtful and informed decisions about whom to support for positions of authority. Ensure their consistent behavior is aligned with the core values of Jesus-like integrity.
- ♥ Demand that our local officials deal with the problems we see in our communities, such as homelessness, infrastructure, teacher salaries, environmental regulations, etc.
- ♥ Help make our town or city the best place to live for everyone by caring about and helping our neighbors.
- ♥ Refuse to gossip—about ourselves, friends, politicians, celebrities, anyone.
- ♥ Apologize when we make a mistake. We are not meant to be perfect.
- ♥ Refuse to patronize restaurants, stores, or on-line companies that don't pay their workers an acceptable living wage or treat them fairly.
- ♥ Listen to people with our heart to understand them, not just hear them with our ears. Heart-listening creates intimacy and helps establish solid relationships by letting people know they are heard and understood.
- ♥ Listen with a quiet mind. That means not finishing someone's sentences, or interrupting, or mansplaining, or thinking of a response while they are speaking.
- ♥ Don't get pulled into an argument while we are, or someone else is, upset. Assure them we'll discuss it at another time.
- ♥ Protect and respect the natural world and all animals. We honor the God of our belief by seeing ourselves as part of all that has been created.

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- ♥ Set healthy boundaries in all our relationships. It is healthy to say no to hurtful behavior.
- ♥ Understand that violence, domination, injustice, etc., are born from a lack of self-love, self-control, and self-respect. Love is caring and affection, always displayed as positive behavior.
- ♥ Challenge the perception that those who live a spiritual life are submissive and must turn the other cheek regardless of how they are treated. While patience and forgiveness are behaviors of living aligned with soul, so is standing up for what is right.
- ♥ Give to give, without expectation of reward. Giving with conditions is not truly giving, as our ego wants something in return. Giving without attachment is loving unconditionally.
- ♥ Remember, the unhoused people we encounter are men and women just like us. Treat all people with the respect and kindness with which we want to be treated.
- ♥ Help safeguard our beautiful forests. Conserve paper by not printing emails and by using our phone to make notes.
- ♥ Respect the beliefs of others. No religion has a corner on God. Those who live the Golden Rule love and honor God regardless of their religion.
- ♥ Understand there is no such thing as failure; there is always something positive to be gained from an experience. When we don't succeed, there is something about our behavior or goals that needs to change or grow. Focus on how to make the necessary changes so we eventually get the outcome we desire. Be willing to unlearn in order to grow.
- ♥ Consider the positive that is gained through differing with other people. Just because we disagree with someone does not make them wrong or us right. Often, truth is what we find when we stop to consider another point of view.
- ♥ When we uncover a health or safety hazard or waste of resources in our community, tell someone who is in a position to do something.
- ♥ Volunteer at a school to mentor a student in our field of expertise, or tutor someone in a subject at which we excel. Educating future generations is key to building a better world.
- ♥ Find every opportunity to walk rather than use a gasoline powered car. Carpool, ride a bicycle, or take public transportation to reduce your carbon footprint.
- ♥ Realize that gratitude is a very powerful emotion. Be genuinely grateful for what we already have in life.
- ♥ Practice anonymous acts of caring and kindness. Put a quarter in an almost-expired parking meter. Pay for the order of the person behind us in line at the drive-through.
- ♥ Carefully choose what we allow into our mind and heart. Stay aware of music and lyrics, news and television programs, and the movies we watch. The more positive we allow in, the more positive we express.
- ♥ Think about the toxicity of the fertilizers and insecticides we put on our lawn, or the chemicals we put down the drain or on our head to dye our hair. Try plant-based hair dyes and environmentally friendly fertilizers and household cleaners.
- ♥ Attend an opera, ballet, symphony, and play. Expose children to a wide range of art and music to encourage their artistic expression.
- ♥ Be aware of what we eat and where it comes from. Avoid products grown in places that don't adhere to humane treatment of animals and the environment.
- ♥ Carefully weigh our financial investments. Think about how we may be profiting at the expense of people and the planet.
- ♥ Vigilantly monitor our children's use of social media. Purveyors of hate and disinformation actively recruit young people through both subtle and overt racist, sexist, and anti-Semitic messages.
- ♥ Rather than shame a child who repeats hateful language or ideas they learn from peers, the Internet, or social media, help them decode the harmful messages behind the memes, words, and posts.
- ♥ Check in with children about whether they are being bullied. Care if they are bullying other people or groups of people.

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- ♥ Question the inequity of paying sports and entertainment figures exorbitant sums while teachers must have two or more jobs to make ends meet.
- ♥ Challenge the inequity of paying women less than men in any field of work or sports.
- ♥ Consider the evidence about dangers associated with participating in some sports.
- ♥ Embrace and accept our LGBTQ2+ children. Remove ourselves and our children from anyone or any organization, school, or religion that does not foster acceptance and condemn bullying.
- ♥ Write a thank-you note when we receive a gift. Acknowledge a kind deed with a kind deed.
- ♥ Support the arts in our schools and communities to give children the opportunity to express themselves in creative ways.
- ♥ Remember, not everyone is at the same level of emotional awareness. This understanding will allow us to let go of ego-boxing as a solution to the challenges we may face with people.
- ♥ Be aware that the interactions we have with people and pets are more important than those we have with technology. Technology is a tool, not a substitute for quality time with others.
- ♥ Remember, love never hurts.
- ♥ Spend time outdoors each day. When we take time to immerse ourselves in the natural world, it humbles us with its magnificence and serves to remind us all life is connected.
- ♥ Teach children to be respectful, responsible, and honest.
- ♥ Accept that it is okay to get angry and frustrated at times. Use healthy ways to release those emotions.
- ♥ Instill the love of learning in our children. Participate in school activities and visit museums, libraries, and public gardens with them.
- ♥ Drop the male gender we use for God. Instead of “He,” speak of God as God.
- ♥ Remember, you and I look at the world and think how stunningly beautiful it is. God looks at you and me and thinks the same about us.

Regina