



A CURRICULUM OF
HOPE FOR A
PEACEFUL WORLD

A Curriculum of Hope for a Peaceful World

Newsletter

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Dear Readers,

With this edition comes a change in our distribution. First, as we announced in our last issue, we are only sending snail mail copies to those of you who have requested them. Our online access, even with enlisting the services of an emailing company (MailChimp), will save us a great deal of money each year. With the price of a stamp going up to \$.73, it just makes fiscal sense especially when you mail over 1,000 copies. For those of you making the change to receiving the newsletter by email, we know you will enjoy receiving it in color. Please be patient as we work out the kinks, and make sure to let us know if you have any questions or concerns.



Thank you so very much to everyone who made donations to the Curriculum of Hope in memory of our founder, mentor, and friend Jeanne Morascini. As you can see by this picture, the Peace Pole that our committee placed in Heritage River Park in Willimantic CT way back in 2002, needs repair. Our original Peace Pole Project included "May peace prevail on Earth" in 12 local ethnic languages (representing the ethnic groups who lived and worked in the community as they had immigrated for employment in the local thread mills). Today's poles are weather proof, but only accommodate 8 languages. So we are working to determine which languages we will represent. Those spoken in the community today include, but are not limited to, English, Spanish, K'iche', Urdu, Arabic, Pashto, Russian, Polish and Hebrew. We can also get a Braille plate, Rainbow Unity decal and Veteran's for Peace Logo to adhere to the pole. We will have a plaque honoring Jeanne. Plans are underway to dedicate the new Peace Pole on October 6th in Heritage Park, which is across from the textile museum in Willimantic CT. Watch for more as the day gets closer. If you are interested in learning more information about Peace Poles visit: [Peace Pole Project - May Peace Prevail On Earth International\(worldpeace.org\)](http://worldpeace.org/PeacePoleProject-MayPeacePrevailOnEarth)

This is our back-to-school issue and we will look at all sorts of changes, including changes that impact education. Dealing with the pandemic is perhaps the reason we have a heightened sensitivity to change. Just a few years ago we were living on the edge of our seats, managing shifts that were occurring to our normal— at almost every hour. Some of us became amazingly adept and even energized by the countless changes that impacted our lives, and others were definitely not. So here we are, four years later looking at potential significant changes in our world, our country, our communities, our workplaces and even our homes. How are we doing? Are there any changes that can bring our neighbors, our society, our nation and our planet closer to unity?

We hope you will find something in this issue that will stick with you as you navigate the world going forward. For those of you going back to the classroom, may you have the fortitude to deal with the ever-changing world of education. We can't prevent change, but we can make sure we have the resilience to accept it.

—Janice McKusick, Editor

"If nothing ever changed, there would be no butterflies."

-Unknown

Back to School



Play-Based Learning

In 2023, Connecticut joined New Hampshire in passing legislation to require play-based learning in schools. As of July 1, 2024, "Each local and regional board of education shall provide for play-based learning during the instructional time of each regular school day for all students in kindergarten and any preschool program offered by the board." The law also requires local and regional boards of education to permit teachers of students in grades one to five to do the same. The law defines play-based learning as a "pedagogical approach" used with Connecticut's learning standards. The law also requires professional development, including training on play-based learning for preschool through fifth-grade teachers.

You can find out more at:

<https://resilienteducator.com/classroom-resources/play-basedlearning/>

<https://www.weareteachers.com/play-based-learning/>

"If I'd asked my customers what they wanted, they'd have said 'Don't change anything.'"

-Henry Ford



Teaching Reading

In case you missed it, Balanced Literacy is out and the **Science of Reading** is in. The Science of Reading is based on years of research that has continued to look at how children learn to read. Districts are examining their reading programs for correlation to the Science of Reading and they are looking for alignment within 5 areas: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary and Comprehension. In the previously touted Balanced literacy, students were taught to use cueing to figure out an unfamiliar word. They looked at words or cues around it (like pictures) to understand it. The idea was that kids should quickly be able to figure out a word and move on, keeping their interest in the text. Leveled reading was another key part of balanced literacy, and reading and writing were taught as separate subjects. While many teachers believed in (and still believe in) balanced literacy, there hasn't been the scientific evidence to back up its effectiveness. Study after study has found that focusing on phonics and vocabulary builds reading comprehension much faster and more effectively.

Advocates of the Science of Reading, including leading brain researchers and parents of children with dyslexia, have pushed hard over the last ten years to change reading instruction. Research shows that many students need explicit, carefully sequenced instruction in the letter combinations and spelling patterns that form the English language. Foundational skills such as phonological awareness and phonics are critical to cracking the code of written language. In addition to explicit and sequenced instruction in phonics, most students require explicit and systematic reading instruction in all domains.

Learn more at:

<https://www.weareteachers.com/science-of-reading-curriculum/>

<https://www.nytimes.com//2024/01/03/us/what-to-know-about-the-science-of-reading.html>

<https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/science-reading-basics/index.html>

The Florida Center for Reading Research has some great information and activities:

<https://fcrr.org/>

Caring for Our Planet



Read about some amazing organizations that are working hard to reduce ocean pollution, protect marine ecosystems, and save our seas. The following are excerpts from an article written by Marta Fava (09-May 2022). Visit the site to learn more and check out the Teacher Area. [UNESCO Ocean Literacy | Sharing the World's Ocean Knowledge](#)

The Ocean Conservancy

The Ocean Conservancy, founded in 1972 by Bill Kardash is one of the oldest groups dedicated to protecting our ocean. The Ocean Conservancy works to fight climate change and help to develop and implement government policies and sustainable fishing practices. The OCC works around the world bringing science, community and policy together to find solutions for a more sustainable future for the ocean, its ecosystems and inhabitants, and the communities who depend on it. [Home - Ocean Conservancy](#)

The Ocean Cleanup

The Ocean Cleanup was founded by Dutch inventor Boyan Slat in 2013. Its focus is developing new technologies to remove plastic debris from marine ecosystems. By breaking down dangerous microplastics and by working in rivers, they intercept ocean-bound plastic from entering coastal waters. The Ocean Cleanup aims at cleaning up to 90% of floating ocean plastic by 2040. [The Ocean Cleanup](#)

Clean Ocean Action

Clean Ocean Action is a coalition of groups working together since 1984, on the East coast of the United States to improve and protect marine waters. It uses science, law, research, education and community engagement to protect waterways. They organize press events and rallies, testifying at public hearings and distributing literature to empower citizens to protect the ocean. [Clean Ocean Action: Be the Solution to Ocean Pollution](#)

Coral Reef Alliance

This organization works to protect and save coral reefs around the world. CORAL works at local, regional and global levels using innovative science and technologies. It is one of the biggest NGOs focusing exclusively on this goal. CORAL is also leading new research on how corals adapt to the changing ocean conditions that the earth has been experiencing over the last twenty years. This research has shown that corals can actually adapt to climate change, and that there is hope that we will be able to save coral reefs for generations to come. <https://coral.org/>

Sea Life Trust

The Sea Life Trust works to guard the planet's oceans, wildlife and ecosystems. They support local projects to protect marine wildlife as well as work on conservation campaigns on a global level. One of their main goals is to reduce plastic pollution by creating campaigns and supporting cleanup projects all around the world, as well as removing ghost-fishing gear, one of the greatest killers in our ocean. The Sea Life Trust also owns and operates two marine wildlife sanctuaries: the Beluga Whale Sanctuary, off the coast of Iceland, and the Cornish Seal Sanctuary, in the UK. <https://www.sealifetrust.org/en/>

Surfrider Foundation

The Surfrider Foundation was born in the 1980s in Malibu, California by a group of surfers concerned about growing coastal development. It is a powerful activist community and network that works and volunteers for the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, waves and beaches. The main issues the networks address are plastic pollution, ocean protection, beach access for all, coastal preservation and clean water. You can join a local chapter and collaborate on local issues. Become a volunteer, donate or taking action directly from your computer. <https://surfrider.org>

Ocean Sole

Ocean Sole is an upcycling business that is helping to save our ocean. It collects washed up flip-flops found along the coastlines and beaches in Kenya. Founder, Julie Church got this idea when she saw children making toys from discarded flip-flops. Then she started encouraging locals to collect, wash and cut the slippers and turn them into colorful products. Over a 1,000 Kenyans are impacted through the collection of flip-flops and direct employment. Learn more and shop the art and products at:

<https://oceansole.com>

Oceana

Oceana was founded in 2001 and it is one of the largest international advocacy organizations focused specifically on ocean conservation. Their offices, which are around the world, work to create and implement strategic, directed campaigns focused on specific outcomes related to ocean biodiversity and conservation. Their main projects focus on fighting against overfishing, reducing ocean pollution and addressing ghost fishing gear issues. <https://oceana.org>

Lava Rubber

This upcycling project idea was founded by Michael Briody in 2009. Lava Rubber recycles wetsuits, neoprene sheets, gaskets, weather stripping, juice pouches, energy bar wrappers, yoga pants and other scraps and transforms them into something new. They also recycle over two tons of their scrap every month. They will accept any of their products back to recycle. Go to the online store to find all kinds of products, from slippers to outdoor mats, yoga mats, coasters and more. <https://lavarubber.com>

Sea2see

Sea2see is a seastainable eyewear brand made in Italy with recycled marine plastic, collected by fishermen that collaborate with the Sea2see Foundation. François van den Abeele, the company's CEO and founder began the company after realizing that sustainability was almost non-existent in the optical sector. It became one of the pioneers in using recycled marine polymer in the eyewear and watch sectors. Sea2See also collaborates with Free the Slaves to put an end to child fishing slavery. Each watch sold contributes to 10 days of education for young children who are rescued from being sold to work in fisheries in Ghana. <https://sea2see.org>

Bracenet

Ghost nets are fishing nets that were lost or even intentionally discarded. Every year up to 1 million tons of these nets become a danger to marine animals. Bracenet works to recover these nets and upcycle them into new products. Then they use the profits to fund other recovery missions or they donate it to projects for the protection of the oceans and marine life. They have now recovered over 773 tons – roughly equivalent to the weight of 6 blue whales. All products are upcycled from the nets and are handmade and shipped without plastic. You can find bracelets, earrings, dog leashes, bags, lanyards and more. <https://bracenet.net/en>

4Ocean

This is a business model that believes in the single actions of individuals, and that we can collectively change the world. 4Ocean is committed to ending the ocean plastic crisis. They run a global ocean cleanup operation with a full-time crew, recovering harmful marine debris, and help to educate and empower people to fight against plastic pollution. In their online shop, they sell reusable alternatives to common single-use plastic items (like bottles and cups), cleanup kits and sustainable accessories. <https://www.4ocean.com>

As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands
— one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.”

— Audrey Hepburn

Artificial Intelligence

One of the most rapidly growing changes taking place in our world is the use of artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence (AI), is the ability of a digital computer or computer-controlled robot to “think,” learn, reason, and make informed decisions like humans. Siri? Alexa? Both are artificial intelligence systems helping users to find information, answer questions, and assist in daily lives.

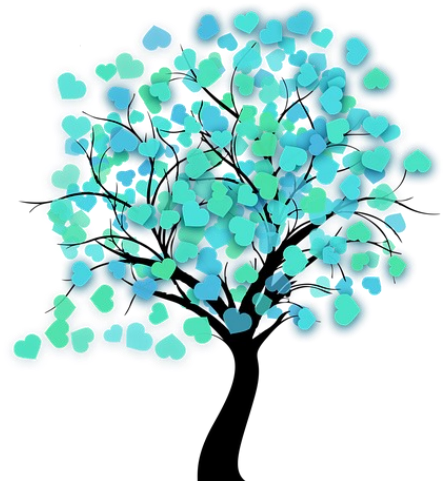
Here are some of the ways you may have noticed or will be noticing AI in your world. In healthcare AI is giving professionals tools for diagnosis, treatment, and patient care. It enables faster and more accurate medical image analysis, assists in drug discovery, and even helps predict diseases and epidemics based on vast amounts of data. AI-powered virtual assistants can also provide personalized healthcare recommendations and monitor patients remotely, improving accessibility and patient outcomes. Several pharmacies are using AI as their first encounter when you seek medical help at their clinics.

AI is also being used in the development of self-driving cars. You encounter AI when you shop online and ask questions to virtual assistants and chatbots. AI is revolutionizing the way we learn and teach by using Intelligent tutoring systems to provide personalized learning experiences based on student need. In the financial industry, AI is used for fraud detection and in manufacturing AI improves efficiency. AI-powered robots and automation systems can perform repetitive tasks precisely, reducing human error and increasing productivity.

AI is not without risks and even can pose dangers to society. Questions abound about who’s developing AI and for what purpose. In March 2024, the European Union was the first to pass the AI Act, adopting regulation and legal frameworks for the use of AI. Unacceptable AI practices will be banned in Europe and the rights of workers and citizens will be protected. An AI Office will be set up to support companies in complying with the rules. At the end of 2023 President Biden issued an Executive Order to establish new standards for AI safety and security, protecting Americans’ privacy, advancing equity and civil rights, standing up for consumers and workers, promoting innovation and competition. The Executive Order builds on previous actions the President has taken, including work that led to voluntary commitments from 15 leading companies to drive safe, secure, and trustworthy development of AI. Whether or not legislation will be signed into law this year remains to be seen. Work in the Senate has created a bipartisan foundation on AI policies for lawmakers to reference now and in the years ahead.

What should we watch out for? For most of us we need to use the common sense that comes with responsible internet, text, and phone use. Watch for scams, and AI generated phone voices that sound like a family member or friend asking for a payment to help them pay for car troubles, medical issues, or something like that. Be on the lookout for unfamiliar email addresses and phone numbers. Watch for misspellings in the email address. If you think you are getting a message from someone you know using an unfamiliar account, try to reach out to them the way you normally would and see if they acknowledge the request or if they’re actually fine. Set up two-factor identification. Unless you are 100% sure of the authenticity and identity of the sender, don’t click or open anything. NEVER give important identifying number over text, phone or email. If you are interested in learning more about AI-powered scams and what you can do about them please visit <https://techcrunch.com/2024/06/30/ai-powered-scams-and-what-you-can-do-about-them/>.

Buckle your seatbelt! Artificial Intelligence has the potential to be an extremely powerful tool. When used for the good it will make revolutionary impacts on healthcare, education, finances and our overall efficiency in our daily lives. It can automate repetitive tasks in fields like data entry and processing, customer service, inventory management, data analysis, social media management, financial analysis, language translation, content generation, personal assistants, virtual learning, email sorting and filtering, and supply chain optimization, making tedious jobs a bit easier for workers. But can we trust AI with accuracy in decisions about our physical and mental health? Will it take away jobs and create an unequitable society? We need to stay tuned! <https://mashable.com/article/is-ai-good-or-bad>



September



September is Hispanic Heritage Month

[Hispanic Heritage Month | National Museum of the American Latino \(si.edu\)](https://www.si.edu/hispanic-heritage-month)

<https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/tools-tips/hispanic-heritage-month>

21 International Day of Peace

<https://internationaldayofpeace.org/>

<https://nationaltoday.com/international-day-of-peace/>

28 National Public Lands Day

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/npscelebrates/public-lands-day.htm>

Some 2025 dates were not available at the writing of the newsletter.

October



7 World Habitat Day

<https://www.habitat.org/volunteer/build-events/world-habitat-day>

14 Indigenous Peoples' Day

<https://www.cnn.com/us/indigenous-peoples-day-native-americans-cec/index.html>

<https://weareteachers.com/?s=indigenous+peoples+day>

15 White Cane Awareness Day

<https://nfb.org/programs-services/blind-equality-achievement-month/white-cane-awareness-day>

15-21 Worldwide Character Counts Week

<https://bitsofpositivity.com/free-world-wide-character-counts-week-resources/>

16 World Food Day

<https://www.fao.org/world-food-day/en/>

17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

<http://overcomingpoverty.org/>

24 United Nations Day

<https://www.un.org/en/teach>

November



**11 Veterans Day
(Remembrance Day in Canada)**

<https://www.nea.org/tools/lessons/veterans-day-activities-intro.html>

https://www.va.gov/opa/vetsday/vetday_faq.asp

<https://www.weareteachers.com/?s=Veteran>

16 International Day for Tolerance

<http://www.doonething.org/calendar/toleranceday.htm>

<https://www.unesco.org/en/days/tolerance>

20 World Children's Day

www.un.org/en/events/childrenday/

25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/end->

Mix It Up at Lunch Day encourages students to identify, question and cross social boundaries. Schools can host a Mix It Up event on any day of the year! Students are asked to move out of their comfort zones and connect with someone new over lunch. <https://www.learningforjustice.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/LFJ-Mix-It-Up-Starter-Guide-2021-12092021.pdf>

December



- 1 **World AIDS Day**
www.worldaidsday.org/about/
- 3 **Giving Tuesday**
<https://givingtuesdayspark.org/resources-for-teachers>
- 10 **Human Rights Day**
<https://www.teachingexpertise.com/social-studies/human-rights-activity-for-student/>
- 18 **International Migrants Day**
<https://www.twinkl.com/event/international-migrant-day-2024>
- 26-Jan.1 **Kwanza**
<https://www.weareteachers.com/?s=Kwanza>
- 29 **Chinese New Year: Year of the Green Snake**
<https://www.education.com/resources/chinese-new-year/>

February



February is Black History Month

[Welcome to Blackpast](#) [AAME : Home](#)
([inmotionaame.org](#))
www.learningforjustice.org

- 17 **Presidents' Day**
<https://www.weareteachers.com/?s=Presidents+day>
<https://www.teachstarter.com/us/blog/8-engaging-presidents-day-activities-for-kids/>
- 28 **Ramadan Begins at Sundown and lasts until Saturday March February 28th** lasting 30 days and ending at sundown on Saturday, March 29 (Eid).
<https://www.edutopia.org/article/teaching-students-about-ramadan>
[Understanding Ramadan: A Classroom Teacher's Guide - The Educators Room](#)

January



- 20 **Martin Luther King Jr. Day**
<https://thekingcenter.org/>
<https://www.education.com/resources/martin-luther-king-jr-day/>
[5 Creative MLK Day Activities to Celebrate Dr. King - The Butterfly Teacher](#)
- 27 **International Holocaust Remembrance Day**
www.ushmm.org
[Teaching International Holocaust Remembrance Day to Children | Woo! Jr. Kids Activities : Children's Publishing \(woojr.com\)](#)

March



March is Music In Our Schools Month

[Music In Our Schools Month® \(MIOSM®\) - NAFME](#)
[Learning From Lyrics ©1996-2012](#)

Check this activity calendar for every day of the month of March [Indiana Music In Our Schools Month Activity Calendar - Google Slides](#)

March is Women's History Month

<https://womenshistorymonth.gov>

- 3 **Read Across America Day**
[Read Across America](#)
[How to 'Read Across America' Without Dr. Seuss | Lifehacker](#)
- 8 **International Women's Day**
www.internationalwomensday.com
- 22 **World Water Day**
<https://sharemylesson.com/blog/world-water-day>
<https://unwater.org>

april



- 7 World Health Day**
www.who.int/campaigns/world-health-day/
- 22 Earth Day**
<https://www.earthday.org/>
<https://littlebinsforlittlehands.com/hands-on-earth-day-activities-for-kids/>
[What Can We Do to Slow Down Climate Change? | NASA Climate Kids](https://www.nasa.gov/children/12-18/what-can-we-do-to-slow-down-climate-change/)
- 19-23 National Environmental Education Week**
<https://www.neefusa.org/environmental-education-week>
- 25 Arbor Day**
<https://www.arborday.org/>
<https://nationaltoday.com/arbor-day/>
www.stateforesters.org/

June



- 19 Juneteenth**
[https://www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth\(woojr.com\)](https://www.history.com/news/what-is-juneteenth(woojr.com))
[The Top 6 Ways to Celebrate Juneteenth with Kids - Crafting A Fun Life](https://www.craftingafunlife.com/juneteenth/)

“Take pride in how far you’ve come. Have faith in how far you can go.”

– Unknown

May



May is Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

[Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage - Telling All Americans' Stories \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](https://www.nps.gov/learn/education/asian-american-and-pacific-islander-heritage-telling-all-americans-stories)

[AAPI Month - Meaning, Community & Heritage | HISTORY](https://www.history.com/topics/asian-american/aapi-month)

4—10 National Teacher Appreciation Week

- 5 Cinco de Mayo**
[The Best Sites For Teaching & Learning About Cinco de Mayo | Larry Ferlazzo's Websites...\(edublogs.org\)](https://www.edublogs.org/2018/05/05/the-best-sites-for-teaching-learning-about-cinco-de-mayo/)
[10 Fun Cinco de Mayo Activities for Kids | FluentU Language Learning](https://www.fluentu.com/blog/cinco-de-mayo/)

“Imagine all the people living life in peace.
 You may say I’m a dreamer, but I’m not the only one.
 I hope someday you’ll join us, and the world will be as one.”

– John Lennon

This and That

change.org

Thanks to about 800,000 people who called for change at **Change.org**, Amazon will stop using puffy plastic shipping pillows in North America,

marking a huge victory for the people who supported a petition calling for this change. Visit change.org to find campaigns, started by people everywhere who have a passion about a cause. Once a petition is created, it is shared with family and friends, and the cause comes to the awareness of others and gains more supporters. The cause builds momentum and reaches new audiences. Finally people who make decisions in businesses or governments get involved and change is created.

Human Rights Watch has reported that from 2017—2019, Chinese authorities renamed more than 600 Uyghur villages to remove religious or cultural references, in an effort to erase Uyghur identity, language and culture. A report done in collaboration with the Norway-based organization Uyghur Hjelp, compared the names of 25,000 Xinjiang villages as listed by the National Bureau of Statistics of China between 2009 and 2023. According to the report, about 630 villages in Xinjiang have had their names changed to remove references to Islam or to the Uyghurs' culture and history. Renaming locations has happened in other places in China. Since 2017, China's Ministry of Civil Affairs has issued official Chinese names for locations in Arunachal Pradesh in north-east India, which China claims to belong to its southern Tibet region. The Chinese government is also gradually dropping the name "Tibet" in official English-language references in favor of the region's Mandarin Chinese name "Xizang". <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-06-20/chinese-authorities-change-uyghurs-village-names-/104001048?>



Looking for ideas to teach your students about the November election? Check out **ICivics** for nonpartisan teaching resources to help students learn about state, local, and federal election processes, understanding the power of their voice and the vote, and becoming

engaged participants in America's constitutional democracy. Resources include: worksheets, games, curriculum units, lesson plans, PDFs, customizable Google Slide Decks, infographics, webquests, and more. <https://www.icivics.org/election>

“In a chronically leaking boat, energy devoted to changing vessels is more productive than energy devoted to patching leaks.”

—Warren Buffett

The Last Word



The Starfish

Once a man was wandering on a deserted beach on a lovely morning. The sun was shining and the sea looked amazing. As he strolled along the beach, he could see a man going back and forth between the surf's edge and the beach. As he approached the man, he noticed that he was throwing starfish into the sea. The man noticed hundreds of starfish stranded on the sand brought by the tides.

The man was stuck by the apparent vanity of the task. There were hundreds of starfish on the beach and many of them were sure to perish as the sun grew stronger by the day. But the man continued the task of picking up a starfish one by one and throwing them into the sea.

"I must ask, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" he asked as he approached the man throwing the starfish.

The man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die soon."

Observing the frugality of the task, the man said, "There are thousands of starfish stranded on the beach. There is no way you can throw all of them back to the surf. You can't possibly make a difference." The person looked at the man, stooped down and picked up one more starfish and threw it as far as he could into the ocean. He turned back to the man and replied: "It sure made a difference to that one!"

Moral: Often we get overwhelmed by the challenges of the world as it seems to be humongous and unconquerable. We may feel like our actions are trivial. But this should not stop us from our attempt to create positive change in the world. We often forget and ignore the impact of our actions on the world. Sometimes even our tiniest act of kindness may be affecting someone in a great way.

Reprinted from: [5 Inspirational Short Stories | All Time Short Stories](#)

Curriculum of Hope is a Standing Committee of Connecticut State Organization, DKG.
Our intent is to promulgate resources and information, not to endorse products.

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**"Unity does not mean sameness.
It means oneness of purpose."**

—Priscilla Shirer

<https://thinkaboutsuchthings.com/priscilla-shirer-quotes/>