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Citizens for Peace

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# Conversations on Compassion

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CITIZENS FOR PEACE  
February 10, 2015

Our meeting opened at 7:00 pm, with a warm welcome by President, Colleen Mills. She thanked all for coming tonight who will share in our Conversations on Compassion. She also invited all to take part in our Random Acts of Kindness Campaign during this Season for Nonviolence. Handouts explaining this effort are on the tables. For more information one can go to our new website, [www.citizens4peace.org](http://www.citizens4peace.org).

**Special Presentation:**

The members and guests viewed two TED Talks, in the sanctuary, that tie into our Conversations on Compassion:

1. **Daniel Goleman's 2007 Ted Talk in which he asks "Why we aren't more compassionate, more of the time?"**  
In his talk he explains that we don't take every opportunity to help others because our focus is in the wrong place. If we weren't so preoccupied, in a hurry, focused on our electronic devices and so self absorbed – we could pay more attention and tune into our surroundings. He also stated that studies have shown that IQ and Emotional Empathy are controlled by separate parts of the brain. Also, he explained that we are oblivious to the ecological, public health, social and economic justice ramifications of the things we buy. He recommended a book that looks at the hazards of many items, called "Stuff – The Hidden Life of Everyday Objects". And, more and more there are electronic tagging systems and scanners today that can allow us to take a look at the manufacturing processes and make a compassionate choice of what to buy. He closed his talk with a story of helping a homeless man at the subway station. One simple act of noticing, helped a man come to life, and so he said, he has hope.
2. **Robert Wright's 2009 Ted Talk on the Evolution of Compassion**, where he uses evolutionary biology and game theory to explain why we appreciate the Golden Rule ("Do unto others..."), why we sometimes ignore it and why there's hope that, in the near future, we might all have the compassion to follow it. He explains that early compassion was self-serving and was extended to friends and family. But it did not result in widespread compassion and the use of the Golden Rule. He went on to say that history has naturally expanded the channels for compassion, with the Non-Zero Sumness or Win-Win situations among interdependent relationships, not just among the relationships in one's inner circle. But it is not widespread because there are many who only believe in the Win-Lose scenarios. They believe if you're not in my group/family/religion/politics then exclusions exist to practicing the Golden Rule. Thus, he explained how compassion and the Golden Rule are somewhat built into human nature, but are sadly selectively deployed. In summary he said we need to expand our moral imaginations to open the channels for compassion by putting ourselves in another's shoes. However, for many, this is hard to do. But it is worth the effort.

After a brief break, the members and guests formed groups and discussed the talks with study questions from the guides we were given to us by the Fetzer Institute. We also discussed two questions selected by member, Gloria Gonek, from the Love/Forgiveness/Compassion conversation cards we also received. After this exercise, Colleen thanked all for participating and suggested using the Guide to start a conversation with others.

**Business Meeting:**

- Colleen thanked the Board Members for accepting their post for another year.
- Colleen also thanked all who helped with the new Political Action Guide, and said they are filled with a wealth of information. (\$5 ea or five for \$20)
- On the back of the Agenda is information regarding our Peace Alliance Action Team and a meeting at Citizen Action Dir., Ann Abdoo's home for a conference call with Dan Kahn, National Field Dir. of the Peace Alliance.
- Rosemary Doyle mentioned that the Nuclear Waste, Postcard Campaign continues. See her after the meeting if you'd like to send a postcard to our political leaders.
- Angela Ryan, President of the League of Women Voter's announced a joint effort with the Citizens for Peace: A discussion on the Challenges to Upward Mobility in the Job Market, by the The Center for Michigan, at the Livonia CC Library on Feb 18<sup>th</sup>. Please sign up as space is limited.
- March meeting: Women & Peace with Kim Bergier and Laura Dewey

Colleen thanked all in attendance. The meeting closed at 8:50 pm.