

Dear World,

We interact with hundreds of new people every year, and yet there are times we all feel alone. I believe that if we took the time to notice, we'd see we're infinitely more connected by our similarities than divided by our differences.

Hours after the SWAT team found my classmates and me huddled in a locked office in Columbine High School, I sat on my couch, feeling utterly alone—even though I was surrounded by loved ones. Years passed and tragedies kept happening. But I continued to feel alone, convinced that no one understood what I had experienced. Until one day the helpless feeling just became too much, and I realized that I did have something unique to offer others: experience. Experience fighting the personal battle that results from mass trauma. I never wanted another person to feel like I did for over 10 years. So now my efforts are to reach out and find others, talk to others, and make those vital connections so they never feel alone.

The truth is, none of us are alone. All we have to do is take notice.

So reach out. Be kind. And don't forget to notice our similarities instead of focusing on our differences.

Peace,

Heather

How a simple sheet of paper can be a powerful instrument of peace.

Putting thoughts on paper can be a powerful way to express feelings, heal and inspire. We asked five people whose lives have been touched by violence or cruelty to write Letters of Peace that reflect their enduring faith in humanity. Meet the authors, read their letters and learn more about the power of paper.

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