

Note to students, kids and other thoughtful people: we decide what kind of world we live in. On this first anniversary of terrible news from Sandy Hook, let us step forward with direction and commitment and power. Maybe the power only involves lighting a candle or writing a letter or sending out a word to reverberate, but the place to start is right where we are.

Frightened people justify the need for assault weapons on the basis that someone is out to get us. When military style weapons are turned on our children, extremists call for more weapons. They mark the individual shooter instead of considering our culture.

Yes the history of humanity is filled with battles over religion, territory and resources. Where is the thought that we could leave current practices behind? We don't have to write on stone tablets anymore. We don't have to make fire by striking rocks together. We don't have to throw spears at wild animals to feed the family.

Human beings have invented solutions for all sorts of challenges -- we have windmills and flashlights and satellite radios. We have juries and libraries and church on television. Somewhere there's a kid day dreaming right now who will come up with the next great invention.

There is a common theme in our society that we will self-destruct. People who grew up watching the Jetsons might be distressed at the dystopian view in today's entertainment such as The Hunger Games. Also it seems like every other week there's a movie coming out in which the Earth is destroyed.

Do we need assault weapons to fight aliens who are coming from outer space to hurt us? Really? If a species has mastered travel from another solar system, wouldn't we seem primitive to them?

We decide what kind of world we live in. When we focus on fear, distrust and scarcity, than the world feels like a scary place. When we think everything is out to get us, than it feels like everything is out to get us.

In a dark room, if you feel around for a light switch, you find it. In a dark room, your eyes are drawn to any source of light, no matter how faint.

Sometimes in a crowd or while crossing a street, an adult will take the hand of a six-year-old child. Maybe the little child should lead us into new ways to trust, solve problems and find joy.



Essay by Shirley Knight, Art by Viviana M. Morales