



ellen krug
writer, lawyer, human

Keeping America from Undoing Itself May 27, 2020

Here we are again—the death of another African American man at the hands of a Twin Cities area police officer. This time, it was a man named George Floyd who had been accused of a completely non-violent crime.

This time, in what is so utterly symbolic of how America has historically held down people who are “Other,” it’s a white-color police officer with his knee on the neck of a black man, cutting off his air and callously ignoring his and others’ desperate pleas for compassion and dignity.

To say that I am appalled is an understatement. Everyone should be appalled.

I have no doubt that in the wake of the Eric Garner killing in New York in 2014, the MPD officers involved had received substantial training about how wrong it is to cut off someone’s air supply. And yet, there it was—the choking—on full display with a cop who seemed to not give a damn whatsoever.

America, what will it take for you to become more caring and more willing to see people who are “Other” as humans worthy of respect and dignity? Certainly, statistics, data, and pictures of surviving family members don’t seem to work.

I don’t have the market cornered on wisdom. What I do have: A changed perspective about how the system is rigged in favor of white-color people. At the same time, I also understand that with the right education and communication, people are more than willing to change how they see and treat humans who are “Other.” We’re all capable of changing our perspectives and behaviors to create a more welcoming country.

It takes bold leadership to change the system and it requires honestly looking at history, mechanisms, and behaviors, with the attendant questions: Why do we do this to each other? What will it take to stop the marginalizing and harm?

I call on our leaders, Governor Walz and Mayor Frey, to lead boldly and imaginatively. Business as usual no longer works in Minnesota or America. Toward that end, here is a radical Ten Point Plan for Change which could be a starting point. (For PDF readers, a copy of the Plan can be found at <https://elliekrug.com/my-blog/>)

Change will not happen until those who are free of oppression speak out and actively work against the oppression of others.

We must change before America undoes itself.

ellie