

I am reaching out because I am broken. I've been terrified and feeling a sense of helplessness in light of what is going on in our world today. It seems like nowhere is safe, and there is no way to shut off the obsessive focus. TV, social media, newspapers, blogs, fashion, conversation. Lines are being drawn based on heartfelt differences in opinion, and division is a monster that is knocking on my door. Almost pounding. It's suffocating. And I'm not alone. I know this.

Our world, our city, our home, our loved ones and minds are paralyzed by fear. Currently our world is arming itself in every way fathomable. WWII no longer sounds far fetched. Corrupt politics, climate chaos and debates, gun control, death, famine, you name it. All of it, in its own way, varying degrees of terrorism. It's striking not only the physical lives of people all over the world, but sensationalized in every dispute and way all over the media and ultimately the minds of anyone with access or connection. Opinions are as violently scattered by the media, as the shameful acts of hate filled violence that initiate the buzz in the first place.

There was an NPR interview I was listening in on and was moved by one line in particular...from the mouth of terrorism expert, Jessica Stern, co-author of "ISIS: The State of Terror" on 11/24/15:

HORSLEY: Terrorism expert Jessica Stern cautions ISIS is no ordinary enemy. And Stern, who's co-author of "ISIS: The State Of Terror," says stepped-up military attacks could have the perverse effect of boosting ISIS in the eyes of followers elsewhere.

JESSICA STERN: They excel at psychological warfare. This is what they are best at. They want to polarize non-Muslims against Muslims. That feeds right into what they are trying to achieve.

HORSLEY: Stern says allies also have to consider the so-called day after problem. What happens to parts of Syria if ISIS is driven out?

STERN: We can remove this organization, but what will take its place in Syria? If we leave Syria with a complete leadership vacuum, ISIS will rise again - ISIS or something like it.

Terrorism is an act of psychological warfare. It's terrifying and unsettling...to say the least. Not to deduce the heartbreaking devastations that have already occurred, but to put this evil in it's place....the gig is UP. This is not a new tactic. It's old and tired...and the exact definition of insanity: "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." At the end of the day....the human spirit always prevails. Doesn't even the most diabolically, delusionally brilliant villain get this by now? No. If we can't even remember this, they don't need to. But guess what... Incredible activists...weapons of peace, have conquered and prevailed. And they will again. Martin Luther, Mother Theresa, Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr., Albert Schweitzer, The Dalai Lama, Maya Angelou and so many others.

Martin Luther King Jr. beautifully put it this way: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

So what about PRP? Smart, friendly, local. What about us as a city? Us as both individuals and as a people? We don't have to choose to play by the decisions and ultimatums laid out by any sort of terrorism...or psychological warfare. We won't let any of the scare tactics win. We are venom to this very weapon. We are the worst opponent to go up against in a time like this. We promote local arms of creativity, hope and light.

Let's make it known that we are joining with our city to take back the media. Let's do what we do, but make it known that we are strategically choosing to celebrate the triumph of the human spirit. In EVERY way. With every artist, with every local business, with every voice and listener.

I'd love to get feedback. I plan on dedicating my 2 hour segment next week to "the human spirit and triumph through creativity and joy". I'm going to take it right back to the quote that sparked hope in me, yet again, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that." If he was willing to put his life on the line for this believe, something tells me there must be something to it.

Thank you for the platform. Thank you for giving the human spirit a voice. This is where real change can happen.

Best,
Sarah Billings