Never Again Forever Again Dot Life (NAFA.Life)

A founding declaration by Grant Shull

I. A birthday gift that keeps on giving

On this birthday, which I call my Retirement Day, I am giving myself a gift. I am founding Never Again Forever Again Dot Life, or NAFA Dot Life, and giving the years ahead of me to a promise I hope others will make their own.

> *To Help Mercy Abound Right on the Streets Where We Live So that Never Again Stays Never Again Forever Again — Indeed.*

By *Never Again*, we mean remembering the Holocaust and the human cost of fascism, and paying attention when a neighbor is treated as disposable today. By *Forever Again*, we mean renewing the promise every time we have a choice about whom to hear, whom to hire, or when to speak.

Jesus sends his followers out among wolves and asks them to be “as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves” (Matthew 10:16). I hear in that verse a charge to be peacemakers; to be the kind of charitable, helpful, hopeful change we want to see in this world. We need the serpent’s alertness to recognize when fear is being used against a neighbor and the discernment to act without making things worse.

The dove’s innocence asks something just as hard. To tell the truth even when a lie would help our side. To stand beside a person whose rights are threatened and leave room for them to speak. To keep our purpose clear when we have power over what happens next.

That is why our emblem gives the serpent’s head the body and wings of a dove and places an olive branch in its mouth. In UN blue, Mother Teresa blue, and white, the whole creature carries an offer of peace. I want the gift I give myself today to reach a neighbor I may never meet and keep on giving and giving and giving.

II. The human rights we will promote and defend

In 1948, after the devastation of the Second World War, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It begins with a claim that still asks something of every country and every generation.

> *“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.”*

We take that *all* personally. Human dignity belongs to the person whose politics we oppose, the person who speaks a language we have yet to learn, and the person who needs help with something we take for granted. Mercy is one way we can honor a dignity they already possess. Defending human rights also means standing up for their freedom to speak, their equal treatment under the law, and their ability to seek justice when those rights are violated.

NAFA Dot Life commits itself to the undying promotion and defense of the human rights expressed in the Declaration and to advancing all 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The goals give us a shared agenda for building the conditions in which peace can take hold. A child needs food, clean water, and a chance to learn. A family needs decent work and a place to live safely. A community needs a livable environment, institutions it can hold accountable, and partners willing to do their share.

I am making this my American contribution we can all share in growing — together. And I see in the postwar commitment to universal human rights an expression of America’s better angels at work alongside people from around the world. We can carry that part of our inheritance forward by building things of value together and taking responsibility for how they serve. Each of us brings a story to that work. We can all be changed by the judgment and generosity of the people we build with.

Read the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

III. What we will build — together

Through Mabuhay.Network, we can put this promise to work together, right on the streets where we live. Through local Story Spots, shared stories, and neighborhood businesses, we can create places where people are heard, earn a livelihood, and decide together what to build next. The people who live on each street have the experience and agency to decide what belongs there.

A story read aloud can make it easier for two strangers to talk. A conversation might lead to another new route for TheWalkingBreakfast.Com, a reliable place to get drinking water, or paid work for someone whose skills the neighborhood has overlooked. We'll know we've created value when a neighbor can name what got easier or what they can now do for themselves and for others.

FOS (The Friends of Sophion) will be the family-oriented wing of NAFA Dot Life. Through stories, shared acts of mercy, and the example adults set, we will help raise a generation of Peacemakers committed to the cause. Children can practice welcoming someone left out and have a say in what their neighborhood needs. ONEofFOS.com will always be our base for growth and recruitment.

We will form a charitable organization with additional wings where adults can take on defined objectives and measure their results. I'm asking you to start on the street you know; the street where YOU live. We can ask a neighbor what would help and what they would like a hand in building. Then, do just one thing — together with your neighbor — and share what you learn as a STAR Reporter via Mabuhay.Network.

If someone I never meet takes what we started, shapes it into something helpful with their neighbors, and passes it on again, I will have received the birthday gift I intended.

To Help Mercy Abound Right on the Streets Where We Live So that Never Again Stays Never Again Forever Again — Indeed.

4EVER!

Grant Shull
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