

# OP-ED

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# Hear those who need help — before they kill

By **KATHRYN CHAVEZ**  
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In recent times, America has suffered quite a few tragedies. Mass killings have occurred all over our nation, and innocent lives have been taken.

As we mourn the dead and look to pick up the pieces, we need to ask ourselves why we are not doing more to prevent these things from happening in the first place.

Most of the shooters have histories of mental illness or post-traumatic stress disorder. What happens in a person's life that they feel they have no other way out? How angry must a person be to walk into a building and kill to get the help or attention they need? Why aren't we listening before it gets to this point?

I think back to other mass killings in America, and they are committed, in essence, by the same type of person. Someone who has a mental illness and is not getting the treatment or therapy they need,

*"How angry must a person be to walk into a building and kill to get the help or attention they need?"*

or someone who is scared or angry and feels the only way to be heard is to create a scene, even if that scene involves loss of innocent lives.

A child grows up angry and kills a classroom of children. A pair of brothers is angered by what they see as the United States attacks on innocent Muslims, so they set bombs to kill and maim runners.

Across the world, people are shooting each other, blowing each other up, or hacking them up with machetes to get their points across.

What created a world view that violence is the answer? Are we all so blinded by our own agendas and ideas of



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morality that we cannot sit down to listen to others?

I'm beginning to think vio-

lence is an integral part of our nature. Some seem to be able to escape from the hate and

demons within.

Maybe sometime in their past, someone sat down and

listened. Maybe they felt validated in what they said and were able to work through it in a nonviolent manner. Maybe they were able to receive the help they needed for PTSD, or another mental illness.

But until we as a country can open our minds enough to help all those who need help, and listen to those who feel they have no voice, I'm afraid there will be many more mass shootings and many more casualties.

I don't believe there will be a zombie apocalypse. I am not afraid of an asteroid crashing into earth. I don't think aliens are going to attack and harvest humans to extinction.

But I do fear that until we can learn to listen to each other and help each other in a peaceful way, respect everyone as individuals with feelings and thoughts, and be kind to one another, we will continue our descent into an apocalypse of our own hateful making.



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