



**FROM THE EDITOR**  
**Elinore Kaplan**

Welcome everyone to Volume 1, Issue 2 of the now *Ethical Outlook* bi-weekly. I hope you're reading and enjoying it. Please give me your feedback—what did you like, and what might you recommend? And send your contributions — What are you reading, watching, listening to, and, especially, doing? What have you seen?—send a photo. What, in dealing with this challenge, would you like to share in our Sharing & Caring column? Email me at [ethicaloutlook@gmail.com](mailto:ethicaloutlook@gmail.com)

**SHARING & CARING**



This is a tough time for all of us. Here's one space where you're invited to share your thoughts and experiences. Some of us are really struggling and need to express that. All of us are trying to find the uplifting moments, looking for that silver lining, that positive gesture, that funny thought, that spark of yes, even delight. Let's share those, too!



*From Elaine Berman Gurney*

**A Busy Avenue**

I live on a busy avenue that has stores, restaurants, pizza places, subway stations, and any New York street thing you can imagine. The sidewalks of the avenue are narrow. I have read that they widened the road long ago and did that by narrowing the sidewalks. These narrow sidewalks are always filled with people rushing around. It takes concentration to avoid bumping into people coming the other way, particularly when they are pouring into the streets from the subway.

The avenue is always full of car and truck traffic. I live across from a supermarket and on many mornings at rush hour trucks are lined up making deliveries. This often narrows the roadway to one impatient, honking lane, and that is what I see and hear when I leave the house.

One reason I chose my apartment was the bustle in the street. I am from quiet streets in Brooklyn and then Queens where my parents, both children of immigrants and from  
*....Continued on p.3*

**WE'RE HERE FOR YOU!**

Both of our Leaders, Joe Chuman and Richard Koral, are here for you. And so is our Caring Committee, as well as many of our members. Don't hesitate to reach out. Email or call — [jchuman@verizon.net](mailto:jchuman@verizon.net), 201-487-6635, [rkoral@nysec.org](mailto:rkoral@nysec.org) 914-260-2214.

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**HELPFUL INFO**

In addition to providing information about the virus and the precautions you can be taking, **Northwell Hospital System's** website includes clear instructions on such things as what to say to your kids and what to eat. [Read more here >](#)

**Helpline and Support Groups** are available via [National Alliance of Mental Illness of NYC \(NAMI-NYC\)](#). Their Helpline is available daily from 10am – 6pm: 212-684-3264 or [helpline@naminyc.org](mailto:helpline@naminyc.org)



## LEADER'S DESK

DR. JOE CHUMAN

### ETHICAL VALUES IN CHALLENGING TIMES



There is a cohort of ethical values that are highlighted by the pandemic that we confront. Among them we might consider the following:

**Universality.** The pandemic is worldwide. If there are 7.4 billion people comprising humanity, the plague we confront unites humanity under a blanket of common fears and anxieties. It brings to the fore that we are all in this together.

**Egalitarianism.** Related to its universality is that the plague is a great leveler. It transcends international boundaries and does not discriminate on the basis of race, class, gender, religion, or membership in a particular social group. We are all its potential victims and we are brought together by the common menace we confront.

**Fragility.** Albert Camus, in his famous novel, *The Plague*, portrays the humble heroism of a doctor who battles a plague in the city of Oran in northern Algeria. A point Camus makes is that the human condition is always subject to radical insecurity. A plague can

“ *We live within the web of humanity, joined together by need, but also by love, compassion, and mutual support.* ”

emerge at any time, unanticipated, to threaten humanity and its survival. Our confidence and self-confidence are bought by blind egos. Built into the human condition is uncertainty, fragility, or, as Camus often noted, absurdity. We have no choice but to do what we must in the service of human solidarity.

**The Human Bond.** The need for social distancing (an oxymoron, when you think of it) raises to the fore our yearning and our need for others. Our Ethical Culture teaches us that we are individuals, but we are also social creatures. We live within the web of humanity, joined together by need, but also by love, compassion, and mutual support. We are interdependent and comprise a human family.

We live in each other's radiations, as Felix Adler nicely put it.

After this plague passes — and it will — let us hope that this yearning for one another, which is currently challenged by necessity, will endure and we come to appreciate one another even more than we do now.



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

LIZ SINGER

### UNPRECEDENTED TIMES



These are unprecedented times we're dealing with in confronting COVID-19. At the recent unscheduled Board meeting, we addressed a situation that we had never experienced before, having to make decisions and take action, even in the face of facts, news, government directives, and experts' advice changing daily, sometimes hourly.

As the crisis unfolded, our first thoughts were to the safety and wellbeing of our staff and members. With that foremost on our minds, and with a heavy heart, we closed the Ethical Culture building—but not the Society.

The Society has been reinvented online. Committee Chairs and staff are committed to bringing you virtual

programs that will continue throughout this period. All of you with computers, tablets, and smartphones can, usually with a single click, enjoy and participate in some of the familiar and some new programs as well as in relationships with

*We are Ethical Culture NYC, a humanist community dedicated to ethics, social justice, and education since 1876. We celebrate life's joys, support each other through life's crises, and work to make the world a better place.*

other members online.

As a matter of fact, we're getting to know one another better, talking with members—and newcomers—whom we don't ordinarily spend time with, and feeling more like a community — an extended family — than ever.

Tough times do tend to bring out the best in so many of us.

It is inspiring to see daily evidence that we are responding with great spirit and resilience, with camaraderie and compassion. Through this crisis your Society will be here to help you find joy and to provide comfort. In these trying times, you've got a friend; you've got the whole Ethical family!

Our 110-year-old landmark building will open its doors again to our wonderful programs. In the meantime, we, as a Society are living up to the cherished responsibility we have to each other, and as individuals are enriched and comforted through our relationships with one another.



noisy immigrant neighborhoods, loved having the Brooklyn and Queens houses in peaceful places. For them it was their success in life.

When I went to Hunter College in Manhattan I fell in love with this noisy avenue, so I was thrilled to come and live on it in my twenties. Over the years the feeling has not diminished.

I am, of course, self-quarantining. I go out for food and a walk once a day wearing gloves. The day before yesterday I was busy at the computer and stayed in. Yesterday I couldn't wait to get out on the street. Then, when I stepped out onto the sidewalk, I didn't want to let the tears fall, and I was glad I was able to hold them back.

The avenue was almost empty. There were many fewer people on the sidewalks than there had been two days ago. There were many fewer cars than usual coming down the road. It was very quiet, partly because two construction sites were inactive. I got what I needed in empty stores, walked a bit, and came home.

—March 20, 2020



From Marion Burns

AN OBSERVATION

*I feel overwhelmed. I just can't manage to do all the nothing on my calendar!*

Did you know we have our own YouTube channel?



Go to

[YouTube.com/NYSEthicalCulture](https://www.youtube.com/NYSEthicalCulture)



From Larry Hurst

## Ballad of the M10 Bus Driver

I drive it, lonely as a cloud,  
From Harlem to Columbus,  
Then rest awhile, but there's no crowd  
To step aboard my *sad* bus.

I met a customer today  
Munching on a *sandwich*.  
He said, "Express to hundredth street,"  
I smiled and said, "Well *that's* rich."

I dream of driving the M11.  
At least it has its *twin* —

To race up Amsterdam, it's heaven  
When the M7 *cannot* win.

But I'm still sticking to my bus  
Regardless of its *fate*.  
My isolation is okay —  
And I'm never *late*.

And when someday we're back again  
To frantic normalcy,  
I'll fondly thank these idle times  
For making me feel *free*.

## SUNDAY PLATFORM TALK — APRIL 5

11am

### THE FUTURE OF DISINFORMATION



#### PROF. TODD GITLIN

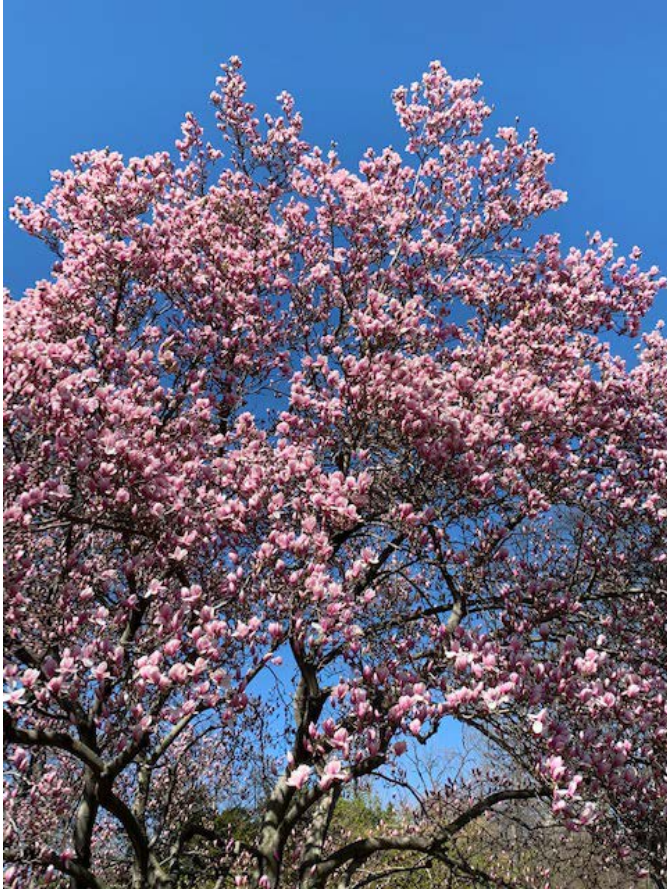
Of these things we can be sure: Disinformation flourishes. Its channels multiply. There is a large bloc of Americans who find comfort in it because it preserves their sense of being an embattled but triumphant community. It is not by itself the cause of our political nightmare, but it worsens everything. Individuals cannot overcome it by themselves. The forces that sustain it are built into American politics. It can be defeated but it will not go away on its own.

TODD GITLIN is a writer, sociologist, communications scholar, novelist, poet, professor of journalism and sociology,

and chair of the Ph. D. program in Communications at Columbia University. He was a professor of culture, journalism and sociology at New York University and, before that, professor of sociology and director of the mass communications program at the University of California, Berkeley. Gitlin has appeared on many *National Public Radio* programs as well as *PBS*, *ABC*, *CBS* and *CNN*. Author of sixteen books, he was a columnist at the *New York Observer* and the *San Francisco Examiner*, and a regular op-ed contributor to the *Los Angeles Times*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, and *Newsday*. His poems have appeared in *The New York Review of Books*, *Yale Review*, *The New Republic*, and *Raritan*.

# BACK TO BASICS — WALKING

PHOTO BY LARRY HURST



## For the full life experience, put down all devices and walk

By John Kaag and Susan Froderberg

“Pedestrian:” a word fitted to the most drab, tedious and monotonous moments of life. We don’t want to live pedestrian lives. Yet maybe we should. Many of history’s great thinkers have been pedestrians — Henry David Thoreau and William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Walt Whitman, Friedrich Nietzsche and Virginia Woolf, Arthur Rimbaud, Mahatma Gandhi, William James.

“Walking with a purpose” is usually regarded as a positive thing.... We typically walk in order to get somewhere: the grocery store, the yoga studio, the water cooler. We need to walk the dog, or we walk in protest for a cause. We walk to get in shape, tallying up our steps on a Fitbit or smartwatch. ...There is something both funny and sad.... The point of the journey is no more than to ‘get there.’ Moving our feet is just the drudgery endured between moments of rest.

... [With] The art of walking... there is no pre-programmed set of rules or calculations involved. Walking, simply for the sake of a walk [allows] us to detach so we might see life for ourselves again, not unlike a child does. We can just step out the front door, pay attention, and perceive and feel for ourselves...

We might be detached while at the same time fully engaged as we move along. The mind is no longer in a state of intention – gathering facts or supplies or blessings, burning calories, being seen – but is instead in a state of attention. The activity becomes a temporary renunciation of purpose and is its own reward, like a form of art...

There is a certain beauty in the awareness of being fully alive while striding through a given space in a given time...[an awareness gotten] only through ears and eyes and nose and skin: the sensation of sky and light, of a building’s grace or immensity, of waves and wind, rocks and leaves, a boundless horizon.... We decide to slow down and let the mind wander in the open expanse before us....

Still, someone might say, what is the point of simply meandering? ... The answer is simple: for the experience alone... When we give ourselves over to the art of walking, we exist in the moment for no reason or purpose other than that of the experience alone, for the appreciation and apprehension of beauty. There is no purpose...only the immeasurable effect it has on our nerves, our body, our being. Woe the society that sees little or no value in this.

Member **Sandi Sacks** is recommending this article, which was in *Aeon* magazine this week. <https://aeon.co/ideas/for-the-full-life-experience-put-down-all-devices-and-walk> Here is a generous excerpt. Think about it when next you go out for a walk — and do try to get out; it’s good for you.

And – when you’re out, take some pictures — and send them to us!

(By the way, **Marge Burman** suggests forming a walking group. It can be as few as two, as long as you can keep your safe distance (6 feet), you could probably go up to eight. Marge even has a name for one she’d like to form, “The Riverside Walkers.”)



## OUR ETHICAL FAMILY

Congratulations to David Gracia and Catherine Carozo Gracia on the birth of their son, Oliver, who arrived early Monday morning, March 30 – and to big brother, Alejandro!



## EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT... ETHICAL CULTURE NYC

In just this past week two national publications were in touch with the New York Society to see how we're handling the crisis.

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE  
**MONITOR**

In an article in *Christian Science Monitor* (3/19/2020), staff writer Harry Bruinius interviewed President **Liz Singer**, and member, **Elinore Kaplan**. Here's a generous excerpt from the article, below. You can read it in full at this site: [Christian Science Monitor](#)

At the New York Society for Ethical Culture in Manhattan, volunteers and staff have had to readjust as well in a time of social distancing. It's a term that Elinore Kaplan, a long-time volunteer at the historic humanist congregation, just across the street from Central Park, finds frustrating. "We may be physically distancing, but we are socially communicating," says Ms. Kaplan, co-chair of the Society's communications committee. "I think in every sense, our being a community, our being an ethical family and extended family, we can continue to be present with each other in a variety of ways."

Its Sunday "platform," the term they use for their non-theistic but spiritually centered services, has been canceled for the foreseeable future, and committee meetings have moved online or to conference calls. "We've spent the last three days doing nothing but saying, how do we calm people's fears?" says Liz Singer, president of the Society for Ethical Culture's board of trustees. "How do we let them know we're here? How do we let them know

that if they feel the need to come in, how can they be able to reach out and to talk to us?"

**HUFFPOST**

And on Monday, March 23, Carol Kuruvila opened her article in *HuffPost* with this, below. Find the full article here: [HuffPost](#)

For decades, members of the New York Society for Ethical Culture, one of America's oldest secular congregations, have gathered on Sundays for a lecture they call Platforms. These meetings began in the late 1800s as a radical alternative to the weekly gatherings of traditional faith groups, giving attendees a chance to listen to music and speeches about social justice issues and philosophy without any of the God talk.

This week, in light of New York City's drastic new efforts to combat the coronavirus pandemic, the 144-year-old humanist society is trying things it has never done before. The society is putting together daily virtual classes for members guided meditations, poetry sessions, chair yoga. And for the very first time, they live-streamed their Sunday Platform.

Losing a physical community has created a real feeling of loss for members, many of whom are at the age of "retirement or plus," president Liz Singer told *HuffPost*. This meant that the society had to quickly learn new ways of gathering. "We must do this live and we must have interaction," Singer said about their new initiatives. "Being a humanist does require another human to be connected to."



### WE ARE FAMILY

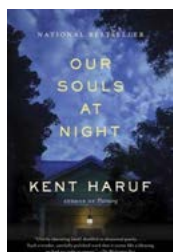
*Some photo memories. Share yours!*





## WHAT WE'RE READING

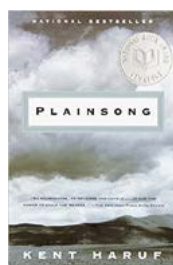
These are novels and authors that are not downers. They're well-written and engaging. No, they're not all "happy-go-lucky, nothing bad happens, and all's well that ends well." But there's a warmth, a compassion, an appreciation and acceptance of human foibles... they're not likely to cause stress, and they are likely to hold your interest all the way through.



### OUR SOULS AT NIGHT, Kent Haruf (192 pages)

"...a beautiful rumination on aging, accommodation, and our need to connect. ...Haruf has given us a powerful, pared-down story of two characters

who refuse to go gentle into that good night."  
—Lynn Rosen, *The Philadelphia Enquirer*

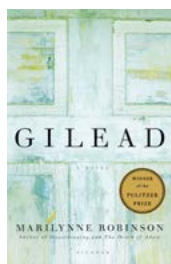


### PLAINSONG, Kent Haruf (301 pages)

"Resonant and meaningful...A song of praise in honor of the lives it chronicles [and] a story about people's ability to

adapt and redeem themselves, to heal the wounds of isolation by moving, gropingly and imperfectly, toward community."  
--Richard Tillinghast, *The Washington Post Book World*

"A compelling and compassionate novel. . . . [With] his sheer assurance as a storyteller, [Mr. Haruf] has conjured up an entire community, and ineluctably immersed the reader in its dramas."  
--Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*



### GILEAD, Marilynne Robinson

(247 pp)

"At a moment in cultural history dominated by the shallow, the superficial, the quick

fix, Marilynne Robinson is a miraculous anomaly: a writer who thoughtfully, carefully, and tenaciously explores some of the deepest questions confronting the human species. ...Poignant, absorbing, lyrical...Robinson manages to convey the miracle of existence itself." —Merle Rubin, *Los Angeles Times Book Review*

"So serenely beautiful and written in a prose so gravely measured and thoughtful, that one feels touched with grace just to read it." —Michael Dirda, *The Washington Post*



## WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

One would hope that you're limiting your intake of Breaking News! And watching whatever you find diverting and engaging. If you've succeeded in finding such shows — including, by all means, reruns — let us know.

### ON TV



### STORIES FROM THE STAGE (PBS, WORLD)

Storytellers from around the world share tales of what it means to be human. Each episode features interviews with each

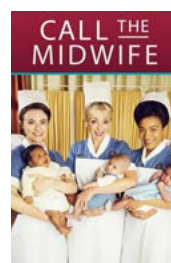
storyteller about his/her inspirations and craft, and the story behind the story, followed by an on-stage performance. Hosted by Wes Hazard and Theresa Okokon.



### M\*A\*S\*H (MeTV)

Who can forget this beloved, multi-E Emmy-winning series developed by Larry Gelbert about Army surgeons cutting up amid the Korean War.

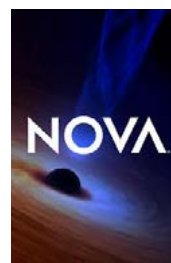
For 11 years (10 in the Top 20), the show deftly blended sharp, thoughtful humor with moving scenes of dedicated, stressed doctors trying to save lives--while clinging to their own sanity--in a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital. Alan Alda, you made us laugh and you made us cry. We love you.



### CALL THE MIDWIFE (PBS)

Follow the lives and experiences of the nurses, midwives and nuns from Nonnatus House in the East End of London in the late 1950s and 60s. The

reruns are on, and the new season begins March 29.



### NOVA (PBS)

This is the most-watched prime time science series on American television, featuring in-depth science documentaries and mini-series, from

the latest breakthroughs in technology to the deepest mysteries of the natural world.



### THE BRITISH BAKING SHOW (PBS)

A surprise hit of the season, in this weekly British series, you can follow the trials and tribulations of passionate amateur

bakers as they move through weekly eliminations by a group of gentle but discriminating judges.

Science, Exploration, and Nature — All on the Discovery channel



## WHAT ARE WE SEEING?

Remember to look out the window! What changed from yesterday to today? One member in Lincoln Towers looked out one evening (after catching a bit of the sunset). Lo! One resident in one of those buildings on Riverside Boulevard (do you remember them, and the name that has since been removed from them?) had created a large heart of colored lights. What a welcome sight! It was there for only two nights but it was lovely while it lasted. Here's a weak photo of it; the color doesn't even come up, but you can get the idea. Such a sweet way of reaching out!



## ON THE INTERNET

Member **Sandi Sacks** wrote, "We will have the cleanest closets, a little extra padding on our fragile hips, and neckache — but a brilliant brain from all the hours spent on the computer, and a newfound resilience we never knew we had."

Suddenly there's a plethora of things to tune into — live performances, programs from the archives, interactive shows — too many to list here. A good start would be to get on Assemblywoman Linda Rosenthal's email list. On 3/23 she listed 100 websites for Free Online Activities & Entertainment under these categories: Museums/Art, Music/Theater, Cultural Sites, Libraries/Learning, Aquariums, Yoga/Meditation, Workouts, Documentaries, and Kids' Entertainment, and Mental Health Services. You can sign up to receive her newsletters and emails by sending an email to [rosenthal@nyassembly.gov](mailto:rosenthal@nyassembly.gov) or by completing the web form available at this link: <https://nyassembly.gov/mem/Linda-B-Rosenthal/contact>

**FOOD** — Within a day of the West Side Rag publishing a list of West Side restaurants open for take-out and delivery (not all are delivering), two of their readers created a map to go with it, and added many menus as well. Here are those links: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FPXUw34W6yEaElHfeLj8wntru-4bYdgLgoR4ct\\_-5TI/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FPXUw34W6yEaElHfeLj8wntru-4bYdgLgoR4ct_-5TI/edit#gid=0) And to the map: <https://sites.google.com/view/uws-open-covid-19/map?authuser=0>

**ACADEMICS** — *Coursera.org* Sandi highly recommends this site, and has taken several of the courses. There you will find hundreds of college courses. Many cost, but there's a multitude of free ones. Just hit the link, choose your course, and register. Poof! You're in. (And you don't have to do the homework.)

**ALSO** — there's the Broadway Box Daily Scoop (catch the Sutton Foster video), Symphony Space (last week there was a really funny Selected Short reading by John Lithgow), and nightly improv shows from The Magnet Improv.



## FOR PARENTS & CHILDREN

Lincoln Center Pop-Up Classroom

Check the websites of *Metro Parents*, *Big Apple Parents* and other magazines for some great idea and activities.



Lincoln Center is

jumping in to help with concerts for Kids, and a Daily Pop-Up Classroom at 10am, with learning activities to engage the entire family using simple materials from around the house. <http://lincolncenter.org/lincoln-center-at-home?>



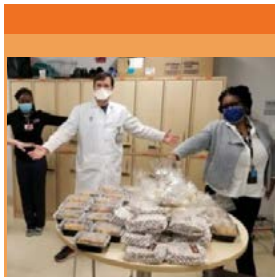
## WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

Are you running out of catch-up and clean-up tasks yet? If you're like some of us, you're finding that when you've done with one, two more occur to you. Keep going — you'll be a candidate for the cleanest, neatest residence in NYC. Here are some more suggestions. Send us yours.

**Rearrange the furniture.** Organize your bookshelves. Admit it, you've been meaning to do that for ages. Weed out the books you no longer need to have, the ones you'll never re-read, and those you can admit you'll never get to. Certainly, keep all those that matter to you. And set aside the others to donate, whether it's to your building library, another library that takes donations (some do), or any of the organizations that put them to good use. Google "where to donate books" and you'll find several, some of which will pick them up.

**Start researching your family tree.** Besides *Ancestry.com* and Heritage Family Tree, there are several sources online for various genealogical records. Just Google.

**Play music that you love from whatever source you can and sing along.** Better still, dance! It doesn't matter how off-key or graceless you are; no one's watching.



## HEROES IN THE 'HOOD — AND HOW YOU CAN BE A HERO TOO!

**FEED THE FRONTLINES NYC** — Luca Di Pietro, long-time Upper West Side resident and owner of Tarallucci e Vino, a popular neighborhood spot on Columbus Avenue at 83rd Street, established [Feed the Frontlines NYC](#) almost overnight along with his wife Kate and college-aged children Isabella and Ian. The organization delivers fresh, delicious, and free meals directly to NYC hospital workers. Friends, neighbors, and anyone who wants to help can log onto the site and click "Buy Meals." The donations enable Di Pietro's team at Tarallucci e Vino to cook, organize, package, and deliver the meals to the hospitals. Help the heroes feed the heroes!

# ETHICAL

We are Ethical Culture NYC,  
a humanist community dedicated to ethics, social justice,  
and education since 1876.

We celebrate life's joys, support each other through life's crises,  
and work to make the world a better place.

Join us for hundreds of community and cultural programs  
where people meet to explore and embrace ethical living.

Learn more about us at our website, [www.ETHICAL.nyc](http://www.ETHICAL.nyc) —  
or, better still, visit with us. You're always welcome.

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