

Pass It On®...

Fighting for Compassion in Our Communities.

Yolanda Ali, wife of boxing and humanitarian legend Muhammad Ali, continues to carry the light of compassion and kindness into communities around the world.

"I met Muhammad when I was 6 years old," Yolanda Ali remembers. "I knew then that there was something special about him. Just the way he carried himself, the way he treated people."

Yolanda Ali would eventually marry the man who graced the cover of seemingly every magazine throughout a career that took him from a teenage gold medal winner to the heavyweight champion of the world. But it wasn't his prowess and showmanship that attracted her to him. It was his heart.

"We were walking together one day in Los Angeles on our way to a juvenile detention center Muhammad wanted to visit. A man passed by going the other direction. Suddenly, Muhammad stopped, ran back to the man and gave him all the money he had in his pocket. I asked why he did it — the man didn't ask for it. And Muhammad just smiled and said, 'He looked like he needed it.' That was Muhammad. He wanted everybody to be happy."

The world was in turmoil for most of Muhammad Ali's life. Race relations were strained. The Vietnam War burned in the distance and on living room TVs. Labor disputes, political firestorms, the grind of everyday living during years of high inflation took their toll on the daily interactions of people everywhere.

Muhammad Ali had been the target of more than his share of unwarranted attacks. "He met hate head-on with compassion," Yolanda says. "And it never failed him."

Perhaps the relationship that most epitomizes the character of Muhammad Ali is with Howard Cosell, the bellicose broadcaster with the stiff delivery and standoffish demeanor. Ali would muss Cosell's hair, play games with him and draw him down off his tower. The two came to love each other.

"Muhammad could get through to anybody," Yolanda says. "Whether it was talking a man off a

ledge of a high-rise or jetting off to Iran to negotiate the release of prisoners, he cared about people, he cared about the outcome. Whoever he talked to, whether a child at a hospital or a political diplomat, Muhammad would touch you. It was his way of connecting, just that human touch."

"Muhammad made everybody around him a better person. Just to be around him made you want to be more compassionate, more kind," remembers Greg Fischer, former mayor of Louisville, Kentucky, Ali's hometown.

"He wanted to serve people," Yolanda adds. "The Ali Center is a reflection of that. And the Muhammad Ali Index is his way of teaching compassion. He was a great teacher."

Yolanda took up the torch decades ago, not only honoring her late husband's vision, but forging ahead with the tools that make it possible.

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth," Muhammad Ali said. Yolanda is the epitome of the kind of rent-paying tenant the earth needs. She is using the Muhammad Ali Index to influence cultural trends by measuring baselines of human behavior in communities and identifying areas of focus.

"You have to know what kind of help a community needs in order to be effective," Yolanda says. Like a trainer helping an athlete develop specific muscles, the Muhammad Ali Index identifies the "muscles" in a community that need work, measures the progress and pushes toward the best outcome. Impact partners then organize volunteers and resources specifically targeted at addressing the identified needs.

"You lose nothing when you fight for a cause," Muhammad Ali said. "In my mind, the losers are those who don't have a cause to fight for." Yolanda adds: "We all have something to give: a moment, a smile, a conversation, a handshake. The cause for all of us is to make the world around us a little better because we are here."

Fight for Compassion... [PassItOn.com](https://passiton.com)

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