

(Random) Acts of Kindness

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Research shows how even small acts of kindness can positively affect both those who perform those acts and those who receive them. Research also indicates that we underestimate the impact that kindness can have. In this workshop, we will discuss acts of kindness that we have witnessed and participated in. We will consider why and how we and our friends and family engage in acts of kindness and what the experience has been like. We will each write about one especially memorable act of kindness.

Quotations about Kindness

“Practice random kindness and senseless acts of beauty.” — Anne Herbert

“I think it is a misnomer to describe acts of kindness as random; kindness arises with an intention to ‘be kind’ followed by an action.” – Susan Smalley,

“Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you.” – Princess Diana

“How do we change the world? One random act of kindness at a time”-- Morgan Freeman

“Sometimes it takes only one act of kindness and caring to change a person’s life.” – Jackie Chan

“You cannot do kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson

“Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible.” —The 14th Dalai Lama.

“Remember, there’s no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end.” —Scott Adams

"What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness?" – Rousseau

“Kindness can become its own motive. We are made kind by being kind.” — Eric Hoffer

“For attractive lips, speak words of kindness.” -- Audrey Hepburn

“When I was young, I admired clever people. Now that I am old, I admire kind people.” -- Abraham Joshua Heschel

Resources

The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/> (Ideas, quotations, daily dose, science of kindness, printables, blog)

Greater Good Science Center. University of California, Berkeley. <https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/> (On the website, search on the term “kindness” to find scores of articles, ideas, examples, etc.)

Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us> (On the website, search on the term “kindness” to find lots of articles on the topic.)

David, Tchiki. “Random Acts of Kindness: List of 99+ Ideas and Example.” Berkeley Well-Being Institute. <https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/random-acts-of-kindness.html>

Dignity Health, “Hello Kindness” ads

Mister Rogers (pretty much every episode)

Smalley, Susan L. “There Are No Random Acts of Kindness: The Non-Random Nature Is Key to Its Value.” *Psychology Today*, blog post, August 22, 2010.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/look-around-and-look-within/201008/there-are-no-random-acts-of-kindness>

Questions for Discussion and Writing

1. What do you think about Dr. Susan Smalley’s observation about intentionality in kindness?
2. When and how did you learn about kindness?
3. What are other words that you associate with the word *kindness*?
4. What is the greatest act of kindness that you have witnessed in life?
5. What are some ways that family members or friends engage in acts of kindness?
6. Who in your family or circle of friends is best known for acts of kindness?
7. Who among your family members and friends are your role models for kindness?
8. Which public figures do you consider role models for kindness?
9. What characters in movies or books stand out for you for their acts of kindness?
10. In what ways do you engage in kindness?
11. How do you feel when you engage in kindness?
12. What motivates you to engage in kindness?
13. How have you expressed gratitude for acts of kindness?
14. Have you received expressions of gratitude for acts of kindness?
15. In your experience, how does kindness relate to empathy, compassion, and/or love?
16. What would the world be like if everyone consistently acted with kindness?
17. Why do you think people engage in acts of kindness?
18. Why do you think people engage in unkind acts?