



# Flourishing Guide - Kindness

## Spring Term 2021

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# Introduction

We all know what kindness is. We can probably all explain why we think kindness is important, both to us and to society. Kindness is, however, one of those large and broad topics that seems to cross over so many different behaviours and characteristics. When we think of kindness we often think of other important things such as altruism, compassion and empathy. Kindness can be so self-evidently important that we might not always stop and think about why it is so important.

In this Flourishing Guide on 'Kindness' we look to explore the topic in a little more depth. We will explore why it is so important and where kindness fits into our lives, into the idea of 'psychological flourishing' and how both we and others benefit from acts of kindness.

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Psychological Flourishing is centred around the idea that we should focus on how we can live and perform at our 'optimum level of human functioning'. It helps us to look beyond thinking about only fixing problems and being OK. This idea also helps to focus on the things that make us better and how we can push beyond that by really improving our wellbeing and ... well 'flourish'.

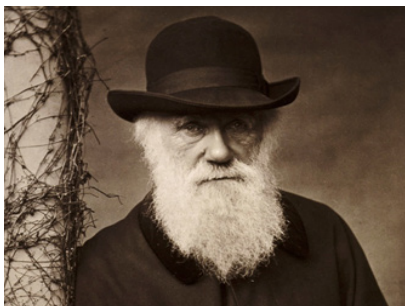
There are many different definitions out there and different ways of measuring this, but, Martin Seligman's PERMA approach is the one way that we focus upon here at Wycombe Abbey.

PERMA stands for Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishments.

# How kind are we?

What are human beings like? What should they be like? Questions of this nature have fascinated people throughout human history. They are questions that philosophers, theologians, psychologists and many others have discussed, explored and to which they have tried to find definitive answers. Definitive answers are however, hard to find. We can also find the same information being used in different ways and sometimes ways which are diametrically opposite. Take for example the importance of Charles Darwin's work on evolution and how this has been applied to human society and human behaviour. Many people think first of maxims such as 'survival of the fittest' and the view that it is natural for humans to be in a state of perpetual competition with one another. Taking this view, it would be hard to see where kindness would fit in, however Darwin observed the fact that humans have enormous capacity for prosocial, cooperative and altruistic behaviour. In this way we see humans as essentially social creatures and that it is natural for us to be kind and considerate to those around us, being able to work with those around us. It can be suggested then that this trait amongst human beings has been beneficial to us over our evolution and that is not hard to imagine ... do you think you would be more likely to survive if you were working with others and each treating each other with kindness or if you were on your own and in competition with all others around you?

'Survival of the fittest or survival of the kindest?'



So where else can we look to see if kindness is an innate part of our nature? It is certainly seen as an important part of all major religions, which is really no surprise to us.

Here are some quotes and examples of how kindness forms a part of religious teachings ...

'A gift is pure when it is given from the heart to the right person at the right time and at the right place, and when we expect nothing in return'

– The Bhagavad Gita

'Three ways kindness is greater than charity. Charity is done with money, kindness can be either with one's money or one's person. Charity is for the poor, kindness can be done for either the poor or the rich. Charity is for the living, kindness can be done for the living or the dead'

– Sukkah 49

'Allah is with those who are in the service of others'

– Al Quran 29:70

'A man who is kind benefits himself, but a cruel man hurts himself'

– Proverbs 11:17



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Studies of human behaviour and experiments also suggest that kindness is something that is built in to human nature. Researchers such as Hepach and Tomasello (2012) have shown that genuine concern for others and kind acts start from a young age and are evident in the behaviour of toddlers. An experiment by Rand, Greene and Nowak (2012) aimed to explore whether it was intuitive for humans to act in kind way. They used a public goods game approach to explore whether people would make more cooperative decisions and 'kindness' decisions when they were given less time. Their thinking was that by reducing the time that participants had to make their decisions the more intuitive and instinctive the outcome would be. The experiment showed that people did make more kindly, generous and social decisions the less time they had to think. This suggests that kindness is our natural default setting. This is good news and something we should keep in mind when thinking about kindness. It is a natural part of who we are and therefore we should look to see how we can 'let this behaviour out' and encourage it. For Goethe, kindness is the 'Golden chain by which society is bound', a nice way for us to think about kindness as we move forward.

We may, naturally, be kind and cooperative as a society but there are concerns about the nature of kindness in the modern world. Action for Happiness worked with LSE and Mori in 2019 to complete a national compassion audit and one of their headline findings was a worrying statistic that 60% of people in Britain felt that the country had become less kind over the last 10 years. Other commentators such as Passmore and Oades highlight that 'in an individualistic world, where time is money, and the dominant culture is "I think" it is understandable that kindness and other aspects of life are too often forgotten'. Worrying? Well it could be or perhaps we should see this as rallying cry for kindness ... why don't we try to change that statistic by the next time a similar survey is completed? Interestingly in the same survey it highlighted that people tended to see people in their own area as being kinder.

Maybe this shows that we see kindness around us but are faced by lots of information about a less kind world?

## Kindness benefits the receiver

Perhaps because this seems too obvious as a statement many researchers focus upon the impact on the doer. There have been some studies to demonstrate the effect of random acts of kindness on those who receive them. In a study by Sarah Pressman in 2015 they asked 'givers' to engage in random acts of kindness to strangers for 90 mins. The facial responses of receivers were coded and receivers of kind acts showed more smiles and an increased number of 'paying it forward' kind actions than those who did not receive the kind actions.

Receiving acts of kindness from those around us can help us feel valued, it can help us feel attached to those around us. This is more important than just the initial happiness that we may feel when we benefit from someone's kindness. It helps us feel that we are safe and that we belong. The value of this is hardwired into our brains, serotonin is the chemical that creates the feeling of pride inside us when we perceive that others like and respect us. Those acts of kindness to people around you will help them feel that they belong as part of the society around them.

# How does kindness benefit us?

Treating others with kindness is something which clearly has benefit to the recipient but increasingly we are aware that it also has profound benefits to the person responsible for undertaking the kind act. In fact, this is an area that is often of more interest to researchers than the benefits to the people receiving the acts of kindness. It is worth considering the different ways in which being kind can bring benefits to us. These benefits should not be the reason for acts of kindness. Kindness to others should really be its own reward, but reflecting on the positive impact that acting in a kind way can have and how that can help us to maximise those benefits. So do spend time considering.

## Kindness improves our health and wellbeing

For those of you who have read previous Flourishing@Wycombe guides and newsletters, you will not be surprised to find out that these positive behaviours have benefits for our own health and wellbeing. One thing that researchers find again and again is that people who are positively engaged with their lives and the world around them enjoy a wide variety of health benefits.

Kindness is linked to many of these positive behaviours. Mark Rowland highlights that there is increasing 'evidence that being aware of our own acts of kindness, as well as the things we are grateful for can increase feelings of happiness, optimism and satisfaction'. Kindness therefore is something that we should take time to reflect upon and consider deeply and we should keep in mind that it is not only the immediate benefits of kindness that are important but the knock on effects that they can have. Indeed, reflecting upon kind things that we can be really important, a study by Shimani, Tanake-Matsumi, Otsui and Frederickson (2006) has shown that simply counting one's own acts of kindness increases our levels of happiness.

Give it go ...

I am sure that you did something kind today, and if you are reading this early in the morning and it is too early to have been out and about being kind, I am sure you did something kind yesterday.

For the next week try to keep a list of kind things that you have done, you can take pictures on your phone, keep a note on your computer or list them in a diary or journal. Once you have written them down, take a minute to read through them.

At the end of the week make some time to think about how you feel, has keeping this list motivated you to do more acts of kindness?

It is not just reflecting upon our own acts of kindness that has benefits for us, it is not simply about swelling our own pride. Numerous studies have shown that kind actions make us, the doer, feel better. Many of the studies involve one group of people spending money on themselves and another spending money on others. Repeatedly these studies have shown that those who spend money on others display higher scores of psychological flourishing than those who spend it on themselves. Other studies, such as that by Rowland and Curry (2018) have shown that there is a positive correlation between the number of kind acts that we engage in and the levels of happiness that we experience ... simply put the more we act with kindness in mind, the happier we are likely to be.

OK, so being kind makes us happy ... that shouldn't be too much of a surprise, especially if we are genuinely doing acts motivated by kindness and not out of obligation, but what about our health? Does being kind bring us any benefits in this area? You will not be surprised to read that the answer is yes, it does indeed. A randomised-controlled trial using participants with high blood pressure found that the group who completed

acts of kindness for others recorded reductions in their blood pressure when compared to other groups. Indeed, the magnitude of the effect was comparable to antihypertensive medication or exercise.

Engaging in acts of kindness has also been shown to reduce social anxiety. A research study showed that socially anxious participants who engaged in acts of kindness for four weeks showed a decrease in social avoidance and a notable reduction in social anxiety. Other studies have shown the link between kindness and our emotions. Tashjian's study in 2018 demonstrated that kindness is positively related to better self-regulation and less emotional reactivity.

Being treated with kindness also has important benefits for our health and wellbeing. In another experiment, patients who rated their clinicians as showing greater empathy recorded reduced levels of severity and a reduced duration in their cold symptoms, and increased immune response levels. Being treated with kindness was helping people who felt ill get better more quickly! Think about how being kind to those around you might, therefore, impact upon their wellbeing.

Being treated with kindness can also have a long term impact. A study by Russel and Schwartz (1997) showed that young men who had a kind and warm and compassionate upbringing are 'significantly less likely to be diagnosed with a range of major diseases later in life'. This could, of course, be part of a wider picture. A warm and compassionate family is also one that is likely to have other benefits and protective factors but it is interesting that these characteristics have been shown to have such important benefits to people.

## Kindness has a wider impact upon the society in which we live

Humans are social animals. It is part of our biology, it is part of how we have evolved, quite simply no one is an island. Kind acts are what is described as 'prosocial behaviour' and they are very much part of a wider collection of behaviours that help to improve the world around us. Again this is surely no surprise but worth us keeping in mind when we consider how we should act and the importance of acting in a kind manner.

Let's take a moment to think how kindness has a wider impact upon the communities that we live in and also upon us as members of this community.

## Kindness improves our relationships

It should be no surprise to us that kindness improves relationships with people and studies support this suggesting that it is true. Karyn Hall highlights that 'it has been found by researchers to be the most important predictor of satisfaction and stability in a marriage' and Mark Rowland highlights how kind acts have been shown to 'improve our support networks and encourage us to be more active' in society. KindLab also highlight research which suggests that kindness is seen as a more important characteristic than physical attractiveness for people choosing a partner.



Kindness also helps improve how we are seen by others. For a long time, there has been a belief that kindness can sometimes be seen as a weakness and the idea that 'nice guys finish last'. Well this has been rightly challenged. Lee Rowland, an Oxford researcher completing a meta-study on kindness, highlights studies that show that 'nice guys finish first'. He highlights studies whereby people were engaged in group activities as part of an experiment and how those who acted in a kind and pro-social manner were given the highest status at the end of the experiment. Experts in leadership are also highlighting the importance of kindness and relationships for leaders and managers. Simon Sinek is a famous exponent of the idea of 'service leadership' and the idea that 'leaders eat last' a kindly approach from those in a position of power is increasingly seen as the right way to make others follow.

Responding with kindness to events in our relationships can be an important indication of the state of our relationships and Gottman's research shows that how we respond to success of others is perhaps more important in this regard than how we respond in times of difficulty. Her work highlights that 'kindness is to be openly happy for the other person'.

Kindness and acts of kindness can also help maintain a healthy relationship. One nice analogy about this effect came out of Cotney and Banerjee's research into adolescent perspectives of kindness. Relationships were described as a sort of egg-timer and kind acts enabled it to be turned over so that the sand could re-fill the empty half where necessary.

## Kindness can make our communities more productive and efficient

As a society we can still get a little stuck on the image of a productive company or society as one in which everyone is working with their nose to the grindstone, with someone carefully watching over our every move, ready to pounce if we stop or if we get something wrong. Well, this is no

## The Kindness of Great Leaders: Nelson Mandela

Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison before his release and election as President of South Africa. His time in prison was both long and difficult, the treatment of him and his fellow prisoners was not always kind. Following his release and his election as President, Mandela invited former guards to his inauguration. He even arranged to have dinner with Percy Yutar, who was the state prosecutor who had pressed for the death penalty. When asked about this Mandela replied 'If I hadn't done this, then I would still have been in a prison'.

**This is a story about both forgiveness and kindness and it demonstrates one of the reasons why Mandela is remembered as a great leader. Acting with kindness is central to leadership and we all have the capacity to be leaders.**

surprise, it somewhat describes the ideas of 19th century and 20th century efficiency. Increasingly, however, studies have shown that kinder more accessible and more compassionate societies can be just as productive. Simon Sinek's book 'Leaders Eat Last' is full of examples of companies and organisations in which companies decided to act with kindness rather than ruthless efficiency and how this benefitted the company in the long run.

It seems obvious but engaging in acts of kindness helps people with their relationship with their work. A 2018 study in Spain demonstrated that people who received acts of kindness in work had higher levels of job satisfaction and enjoyed their work more, but, the people who enacted the acts of kindness showed even higher levels of happiness, engagement and reductions in absence and incidents of depression. This is supported by Hans Seleje's work that has demonstrated that



cooperative environments and those with the lowest levels of distress are best achieved through collective commitment to 'altruistic egoism'. This idea is that as we are social creatures we should look to gain the benefits we need to live and to thrive by being altruistic.

Other research has shown kindly advice and honest feedback, delivered with kindness, is a key component in enabling personal growth and flexible thinking in the working environment. Kindness within a relationship is much more likely to allow you to give honest feedback and help those around you. If there is a lack of kindness and there is a lack of trust, we will then feel stressed and defensive. Our brains are more likely to be affected by higher levels of cortisol which is our primary stress hormone. Therefore we should try to ensure our relationships have a positive foundation, one based upon kindness, in order for them to be as effective as possible.

People who engage in kindness are more likely to be more productive in a number of other ways also. In an interesting study, one group of participants were given time to write and mail letters of kindness to ill children. This group perceived that they had more time for themselves than the control group, despite giving up their time to write letters.

## The kindness of acceptance

We can often think of kindness as something that we have to do, an action that we have to perform or something that we have to give, but, there is also room for us to consider how we can accept situations and the actions of others in a kindly way.

One key aspect of this is accepting others success and good fortune. When you hear the good news of others how do you feel? How do you react? We would all, I am sure, want to be able to revel in their joy and achievements. We would all, I am sure, want to feel that warm inner glow of pride in what they have done. We would all, I am sure, want to say that we are happy for them and wish them all the best. Can we, all honestly say that?

Emotions of jealousy and envy are not uncommon and when others receive things that we do not, we can feel that it is 'not fair' even if what they receive does not detract from what we receive at all. Studies suggest that this feeling is wired in to our brains, therefore we should be aware of it and consciously try to exercise kindness when we hear others' good news.

### When wanting things to be 'fair' isn't always a good thing

There is a well-known experiment in which Chimpanzees were encouraged to take part in a task for which they received a reward of something nice to eat. Unsurprisingly these highly intelligent animals quickly learnt to complete the task and to receive the reward and they continued to do so. After a while the experimenters introduced another group of Chimpanzees, within eyesight of the original group, who were doing the same task but they were receiving double the reward. The original group saw this disparity and stopped completing the task and therefore stopped receiving the reward.

**The original group would rather go without than receive a reward that could be seen as 'unfair'. Of course acting in a fair manner is really important but we must also be careful that we don't see the good fortune of others as something that detracts from what we have, we should not 'cut off our nose to spite our face!'. Instead let us be kind, wish others well and allow them to enjoy what they have.**

The kindness of acceptance is not only about the manner in which we act with kindness to accept what others have but also how we accept the kind actions of others. Cotney and Banerjee's research into the perceptions of kindness highlight the importance of situational factors in our perception of kind acts. We appreciate 'autonomous' acts of kindness more than those that appear to be duty bound and there is a difference in how we accept kind actions from those we have a good relationship with and those with whom we have a negative history. This is perhaps natural and understandable but we should ask ourselves some key questions about this:

- If someone has a duty to do kind acts for us every now and then, are they not still kind acts and don't we still benefit from them?
- If someone who has a duty to look after us or help us is that necessarily the same as doing it in a kind way? And can we be sure that their motivation is not just pure kindness?
- If we have a negative history with someone but they then begin to act in a manner that is kind do we not then have the opportunity to demonstrate forgiveness? Is this not an opportunity to improve relationships? And could it be that they have had to show real bravery to act in a kind manner despite previous problems in the relationship? ...

Putting it simply ... do we not set to gain overall if we accept the kindness of others?



## Accepting the kindness of others ... two lessons from A Christmas Carol

One of my Christmas pleasures is reading A Christmas Carol and I particularly like the description of Scrooge's first boss, Mr Fezziwig. The Ghost of Christmas Past challenges Scrooge's assessment of him and his kindness as his Christmas party cost but a little mortal money and Scrooge's response was that 'he had the power to render us happy or unhappy'. Mr Fezziwig may have had a duty to look after his staff but choosing to do it in a kindly way makes him a noteworthy character in my book and a good example to us all.

Dickens' classic Christmas tale gives us another important lesson in the acceptance of kindness. Once Scrooge has been visited by the Ghosts of Christmas past, present and future he begins to make amends and becomes 'as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town, or borough, in the good old world'. His new found kind self was accepted by others, including Mrs Cratchit who, not long before, was telling her husband that if she saw Scrooge she would 'give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it'. Within the context of the book, Scrooge doesn't have positive relationships with any living character and he is described as 'solitary as an oyster' but as the story draws to a close we see a character who not only undertakes acts of kindness but whose actions are accepted by others ... that is a lesson in itself.

# Being kind to oneself and others

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Lee Rowland highlights the use of loving kindness meditation as a useful practice in being kind to oneself. Loving-Kindness Meditation (LKM) involves focussing your attention on the people who love you and who are kind to you whilst you meditate. A description of the process can be found in this article from [mindful.org](http://mindful.org). A study by Cendri Hutcherson found that just a few minutes of LKM can be effective in increasing feelings of social connectivity and positive emotions towards others. Another study, this time a four-week study conducted by a team led by Julieta Galante found that people who undertook an introductory course of LKM online found increased levels of wellbeing and altruism and neuroimaging studies have shown that this practice may improve activation of brain areas that are involved in emotional processing and empathy (Hoffman, Grossman and Hinton, 2011). I think that there are two key things that I take from this work on LKM. Firstly, the importance of reflecting upon the kindness that we receive and the good that this can do for us and secondly that the more that we are kind to ourselves in this manner the more likely it is that we will act in a positive and kindly manner towards those around us. We take kindness in and then, by reflecting upon it and recognising it properly, we can then reflect this out to the world around us which will, in turn, have further benefits.

## What gets in the way of being kind?

With kindness having so many benefits and being such a self-evidently good thing, what stops us being kind all of the time?

We have already seen that sometimes our desire for 'Fairness' can actually get in the way of us acting in a way that would be considered kind. Ray Dalio highlights that we need to understand the difference between fairness and generosity. We should not always strive for fairness at the expense of being kind and generous. By way of an example consider a company deciding to provide a bus to work for its lowest paid workers, these workers get free transport, which is great as it is in

addition to their pay, which is at the going market rate and they don't need to do anything in return. They probably feel grateful and happier in their jobs and probably do a better job as a result. This provision is not made for other workers who are on higher salaries ... should the provision for one group be stopped because it is not provided for other groups? Fairness or generosity?

Another similar facet of how we behave that stops us always acting as kindly as we would want, is the bystander effect and the diffusion of responsibility. We may not step forward and act in a way that we would consider kind either because others are not doing it and we don't want to stand out from the crowd or, conversely, because we assume that someone else will take action. Mura Ghosh highlights that it is often 'Dispositional factors are relatively weak predictors of what we do, situational ones such as speed of our daily lives on the other hand, play powerful roles in shaping our actions'. I think that this rings true, people who are kind by nature do not always act in that way. It is not that they have ceased to be kind but things do seem to have a habit of getting in the way of our best intentions. Therefore, when we see the opportunity to act in a kind way we may have consciously overcome the inertia that is restraining us ... when you are in this position think back to all the benefits you could get from being kind and try to use this as your motivation to step forward and be kind.

Another thing that can be a barrier to kindness is how we interpret the actions of others. It is important to remember that often the actions of others have to be interpreted through a lens of our own minds. Research into young people's interpretations of kindness by Banerjee and Cotney highlighted how people can struggle to accept kind actions as being genuine from people with whom they have had negative interactions. It is worth us bearing this in mind and making a conscious effort to appreciate that people's motivation may, in fact, just be kindness!

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Similarly, when we are reflecting upon people's actions and the kindnesses we receive we need to remember that we are predisposed to remember negative emotions more than positive ones. Negative thoughts are 'sticky' whereas positive ones are 'slippery'. This is important for us to keep in mind. It can be too easy for us to forget or to downplay kind actions and too easy to focus upon the negative ... but knowing that we can try hard to improve how we interpret these things is important.

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**“We must find time  
to stop and thank  
the people who  
make a difference  
in our lives.”**

**JOHN F. KENNEDY**

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## What can we do to be kind?

What we can do to be kind probably doesn't need much explanation and I am sure that most of us would consider ourselves already kind. Interestingly, kindness is not something that relates to status - Tashjian's research (2018) has shown that people with less money actually show more generosity, charity and helpfulness.

We can probably list kind actions, but to help, here are some things to help us focus upon:

### **1. Treat those around us with kindness**

We can make an effort to show people around us how much we value them by kind actions and words. It can be easy not to, but take the time to give a compliment, say a kind word, or to do something nice for people. Kind actions that are not seen as part of a duty and those that surprise people are often the most effective.

### **2. Be kind to yourself**

Make time to look after yourself. Look at your timetable and diary, and make time to do the things that you enjoy. Set aside time to focus upon yourself - it is important. You also need to be kind to yourself in how you think about yourself. Remember that we can often be too critical of ourselves, we can focus upon the negative and not the positive, and we may have to take time to think about our many qualities. One exercise you can try is to write down the nice things that have happened to you recently.

Studies have shown that 'happy people' are more likely to be motivated to be kind, therefore being kind to yourself can also help you act more kindly to those around you.

### **3. Be kind to the world around you**

Think about the world in which you live and think what more you can do to show it kindness. The things that we can do are well known to all of us but what we can fail to do is to act upon these ideas and our beliefs. It can help to set out the actions that we want to take, write them down and make a commitment to them. Writing out what we want to do has a marked impact upon how likely we are to do it compared to just thinking about it. The other way we can be kind to the world around us is to make sure we take action locally. If we see something that we can do, a change we can effect, we should do it. The feeling of achievement that this will create will encourage you to do more kind acts.

### **4. RAOK and CAKE**

Random of Acts of Kindness (RAOK) are something that are now known with plenty of videos and websites about them. The basic principle is something that is both simple and endearing; people undertake kind actions for people around them who they don't know for no other reason than to be nice ... why not give it a try?



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One writer suggests that we try to have not only Random Acts of Kindness but CAKE: 'Consistent Acts of Kindness and Empathy' ... A big challenge to us all but certainly one worth trying!

### My love of Random Acts of Kindness

I have enjoyed the Random Acts of Kindness movement for a long time. About 10 years ago I organised my first 'Random Acts of Kindness' weeks in a boarding house that I was running. We all had little tickets to leave around the School to show where we had done an act of kindness and we created a display in house with all of the actions that people undertook. I will always remember an act of kindness that one pupil did for me and for other members of staff in the boarding house. Each morning, before I woke up, she left me a post-it note with either a thank you for something that I had done for the house or a motivational quote. It cost nothing more than a post it note, it wouldn't have taken much time but it was heartfelt, genuine and kind ... it made my day then and makes me smile every time that I think of it.

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## Inspiration for kind actions

Here is a list of some actions that you can take to show kindness to the world around you.

1. When in line to get your morning coffee, pay for the person behind you or, if it is a communal kitchen make their coffee for them first.
2. Whoever you interact with today, even if it's 15:35, compliment the first two people.
3. Pick up your phone and open your text-messaging app – send a positive text to four people.
4. Go through your belongings that you have not used in the last year and see how many you can donate to those in need.
5. Donate food or drink to those who are in need.
6. Smile genuinely at five strangers throughout your day
7. Take some flowers or sweet treats to a nurse's station at a nearby hospital.
8. Give up your seat so someone else can sit on the train or bus.
9. Hold the door open for someone.
10. Make a goodie bag of treats, canned food with warm gloves, socks or a hat and give it to a homeless person.
11. Send an out-of-the-blue gratitude message to a friend and let them know how grateful you are for them.
12. When on a class call, do a heartfelt shout-out to one of your classmates that did an awesome job on a project.
13. Get your friends in on the action, and organise a fundraiser, charity drive or game of 'secret angels'.

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| <p>14. Let a member of staff know that you appreciate them and the work that they do for you.</p> <p>15. Leave change in the vending machine, for someone to use when they are hungry.</p> <p>16. Sit with a new pupil at school.</p> <p>17. Reach out to a new pupil and introduce them to your friends.</p> <p>18. At the end of the School day, tell your teacher thank you for a great day of learning.</p> | <p>19. When you get home from School, tell your parents how much you missed them.</p> <p>20. Write a thank-you note to the catering staff.</p> <p>21. Offer to tutor a fellow classmate on a subject that you excel at.</p> <p>22. Genuinely compliment one person every day.</p> <p>23. Help tidy an area around you; use a 'litter picker' to collect rubbish or help with a conservation programme in your area.</p> |
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## Kindness activities and activities

### Secret Angels

This is a wonderful activity similar to Secret Santa.

Every person who is involved draws a name at random and keeps it secret. During the activity they try to do nice things for that person whose name they have drawn and they try to keep their identity secret.

If you are organising this in a larger group of people where not everyone knows each other, you can ask people to complete a small form with details about themselves and things that they like. People can draw this 'out of the hat' so they get to know something about the people for whom they are acting as 'a secret angel'.

### Kindness Bingo

This is a way of helping us appreciate the small acts of kindness that we see around us all the time. By looking out for examples of kindness we will be more accustomed to seeing them and recognising them. It may inspire us to act with kindness also.

As a group, list out lots of small acts of kindness and compassion, such as:

- You hear someone pay a compliment to another person
- Someone holds a door open for someone else
- Someone offers to help another person with a chore
- You see someone smile kindly at a stranger
- Someone gives to charity

Then, create Bingo cards with different selections of these acts. Throughout a day or week, tick off when you see the actions on your card. The person who completes their card first wins!

## Model of Kindness

Start on your own and list the characteristics of a person who is kind. Think about the things that they do (maybe in one colour) but also think about their attitudes and their beliefs.

Once you have finished writing your ideas compare your thoughts to people around you, see what they have and how they compare to your ideas.

## Random Acts of Kindness

As a group, set yourself a target of completing five random acts of kindness over the course of a week.

A random act of kindness is one which is not paying something back, it is not something that is routine, it is something that comes out of the blue and something that has an element of surprise.

Keep a record of the things that you do, and at the end of the week make a tutor group poster of all the actions that you completed.

## Contagious Acts of Kindness

As a group or as an individual, choose a simple kind act that anyone can complete e.g. smiling as people pass, opening the door to people in the corridor. At the same time, look out to see if this has an effect and others do the same as you.

## Think Kind, Act Kind

As a tutor group, put together a 'post-it poster' of sayings, quotes and phrases about kindness. Everyone should write a quote or phrase about kindness and stick it on a larger piece of paper.

Try to decorate the poster and make it as attractive as you can.



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## In need of some inspiration?

'Unexpected kindness is the most powerful, least costly, and most underrated agent of human change.'

- Bob Kerrey

'Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see.'

- Mark Twain

'If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.'

- Dalai Lama

'What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make.'

- Jane Goodall

'We rise by lifting others.'

- Robert Ingersoll

'Tenderness and kindness are not signs of weakness and despair, but manifestations of strength and resolution.'

- Kahlil Gibran

'Kindness has a beautiful way of reaching down into a weary heart and making it shine like the rising sun.'

- Unknown



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## In need of a little more inspiration?

These video clips have some wonderful examples and explanations on the importance of kindness:

- [10 Incredible Acts of Kindness Caught On Camera - YouTube](#)
- [Taking An UberCOMMUTE Trip | Uber - YouTube](#)
- [Kindness Through Their Eyes - YouTube](#)
- [The Science of Kindness - YouTube](#)





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