

## Random Acts of Kindness Day, February 17th

*February 10, 2019*



Kindness humanizes us and helps us connect positively with others. It likes to provide a helping hand, an understanding voice, a shoulder to rest on or a deed unclaimed. It feels good.

### **Connection and Compassion**

When you feel connected with others, you lessen alienation and enhance the sense that we are more similar than dissimilar in our experiences. It promotes empathy and compassion; which in turn, leads to a sense of interconnectedness with others. Feeling connected melds us together rather than divides us. Kindness is potent in strengthening a sense of community and belonging.

The simple witnessing of others being kind can release the same “feel good” chemicals that doing an act of kindness can produce. However, a greater benefit comes from doing the acts of kindness. The rewards are felt almost immediately. One small act of kindness can release an enormous chain of positive events. The power of kindness is that it is contagious and something to pass on and spread to many others.

### **Small Acts of Kindness**

Small acts of kindness resonate in all our lives. For example:

- Stopping your car to let a car pull out of their parking space.
- Snowplowing your neighbor's driveway.
- Paying the toll of the car behind you.
- Writing a kind message on your mirror with a dry erase marker for yourself, your significant other or a family member.
- Inviting someone to go in front of you in a bank or grocery line.
- Taking muffins or cookies to your local librarians.

*Why do intentional or random acts of kindness increase a person's sense of feeling good or happy? One reason is that kindness can promote gratitude. Being kind to others helps you become more self-aware to furthering the appreciation of your own life.*

Kindness can strengthen the will to live in depressed individuals who feel isolated and alone; that is why performing volunteer work is so powerful. Researcher, Barbara Fredrickson thought that kindness, specifically loving kindness, moved one out of the selfish realm. Compassion and kindness also reduce stress, boost the immune system, and help reduce negative emotions such as anger, anxiety, and depression.

#### **When we practice random acts of kindness...**

- Kind behavior releases "feel good" neurochemicals like dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin and endogenous opioids. We feel better and the recipients of our acts feel better, which then makes them more likely to be kind to other people.
- The neural circuits that are involved in producing chemical "highs" are the same ones activated by kindness and compassion.
- Kindness reduces stress. Many physical ailments are caused by or aggravated by stress. Kindness enhances both physical and mental health.

**Look for opportunities to be kind. They are all around you.**

**Let February, 17th Random Acts of Kindness Day be your springboard to get started!**

**For more information about Random Acts of Kindness Day.**

<https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/the-kindness-blog/2943-50-kindness-ideas-for-random-acts-of-kindness-day>

This is my simple religion.  
There is no need for temples;  
No need for complicated philosophy.  
Our own brain, our own heart is our temple;  
the philosophy is kindness.

Dalai Lama

*By Sherry Rhynard*

\*\*\*