



The Abbey

KINDNESS

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It is always possible.”

– Dalai Lama



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What is 'kindness'? The quality of being friendly, generous and considerate – essentially the recipe for being a good person. So, in what ways can people be kind?

Whatever your situation, it is always possible to be kind. Even small actions can light up someone's day and can be a token of kindness for others. Always be kind and compassionate. As soon as one person is kind, it creates a virtuous circle, which, if it remained unbroken, would see the world's population being kind to all beings. What goes around comes around.

Be kind to yourself and your body: by exercising, eating healthily, enjoying the beauty of nature, having a positive attitude and spending time with people you love. Help people who are less fortunate: the homeless, those affected by war and people with disabilities or disadvantages in life. Most importantly be kind to everyone: always be inclusive, truthful and respectful. Happiness can be spread by celebrating differences and success.

As an individual, there are a multitude of ways to show kindness. These range from a small gesture like smiling, sharing and being polite, to significant acts of kindness. An example of this is a firefighter who runs into a burning building to save a stranger's life at great personal risk.

Ways to offer kindness in our community include: donating money, resources, time and effort to charities, collaborating well within groups, fostering/adopting, and engaging with those who are lonely or have unfavourable circumstances.

At a national level, kindness can be expressed by paying tax to provide resources, for communal welfare and mental health support. An example of this is the NHS, which we are very lucky to have as a free health service keeping our nation healthy.

At international level, we work together to protect our planet, look after the environment, recycle, plant more trees, become more energy efficient, waste less and lead a simpler lifestyle. Also, people can provide food, medicine and care packages for those suffering from natural disasters/wars/illnesses.

Being kind brings numerous benefits. By being kind to others, it brings joy to both the receiver and the giver, resulting in reduced stress and anxiety. It also stimulates the production of serotonin, which aids relaxation and heals wounds. It increases oxytocins which reduces blood pressure and makes people feel more love. It releases endorphins which reduces pain. Being kind promotes positivity, inspiration, confidence and good energy. Relationships strengthen and people become more motivated and productive. Overall, it promotes everybody's physical and mental health.

With modern technology, unkind messages can be sent via social media platforms (such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok etc.) Ways to be kind on socials include complimenting people on their work or avoiding commenting if unsure whether the message is kind. Be considerate before acting or ask a friend how they would react if the message was sent to them.

In a social situation, it is always important to be fair. For example, if a friend were to steal a pencil from someone else, do not:

- A) *Be a bystander and watch it happen*
- B) *Ignore it*
- C) *Be biased towards the friend even if they committed the wrongdoing.*

It is always more important to do what is right, not what is easiest: by standing up to someone, whether a friend or not.

It is amazing that there is a designated World Kindness Day, which was recently celebrated on 13 November 2022. Although this day matters, it is very important to make a special effort to be kind every day, in order to make the world a better place for everyone. Kindness is free to give but priceless to receive.

As per the Dalai Lama's philosophy: "Be kind wherever possible. It is always possible."

Ella, Upper III (Year 7)





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