



The Abbey

KINDNESS



The interlace of kindness and duty

Harshini, Upper IV (Year 9)



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Some say that kindness is a language, known by humans all over the world and shared without a second thought. Others say that kindness is an obligation to humanity: if we're not kind, then the entire world may collapse. But as I see it, kindness is what binds us together and unites us in the face of adversity. It makes people share the same perspective and learn more about each other, potentially changing each other's lives. After all, humans evolve by learning.

Kindness is a value, often shown in kid's shows. A show that may come to mind is *My Little Pony*, or more specifically, the sweet, warm-hearted Fluttershy. She represents the element of kindness, and is often portrayed as a generous and helpful character. We first see this when the main characters are confronted by a Manticore, a beast with the head of a human, body of a lion and the tail of a scorpion. Whilst the others fight with brute strength, Fluttershy is shown asking the others to 'wait'. She is not heard, until finally, the others give up and she gets a turn. After Fluttershy soothes the beast by removing a splinter from its paw, Twilight Sparkle, another pony, asks how Fluttershy knew that the Manticore was injured. She replies with 'I didn't. Sometimes we all need to be shown a little kindness.'

A popular quotation about kindness is "Kindness is something anyone can give without losing anything themselves." Personally, I think this idea is very important, especially when it comes to being kind to people who are facing tough situations. Before, when I was in primary school, I met a younger individual who was struggling with her homework and wasn't able to understand how to

do it. Since I had some free time, I decided to help her and she ended up getting full marks and thanking me. Some may say that I was being kind at that moment, but others may argue that it was my duty to help her as an older figure.

Duty implies an obligation to others, an action that you must do no matter what would happen to you. For example, it is a citizen's duty to uphold the law and set an example for younger generations. It is also important to consider that duty changes according to different people: a person may decide to visit their sick grandmother, even though they don't have to; they do this because they care for their grandmother and think of it as their duty. The grandmother, however, might say that it is the granddaughter being kind to her. This is where duty and kindness start to interweave.

Kindness is spoken about a lot in humanity lessons, but we are never taught how to recognise if somebody is being kind or not. When we are younger, we are congratulated for being kind and get special awards. But at some point, kindness becomes a duty and disregarded for what it truly is, a display of how much we have evolved. For a long time

scientists have studied chimpanzee behaviour, given that they are close relatives to humans. Now, scientists are starting to consider the Bonobo (*Pan paniscus*).

Bonobos are kind and do not discriminate against each other. Female bonobos have been seen taking care of infants who are not part of their herd. This is not seen in chimpanzees, who would have killed the infant as a show of power. Even though bonobos are similar to chimpanzees in terms of genetics, they have evolved their social systems enough to understand that fighting each other leads to nothing, but being kind goes a long way.

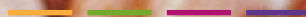
Likewise, people accept kindness as a duty that should be upheld, a practice that should be taught to all. An African proverb known by many echoes this idea:

*'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'*

Kindness is a duty that links us all together. If we want to progress further, then kindness is the way to go.



*“Kindness is something anyone can give without losing anything themselves.”*





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