



The Abbey

KINDNESS

Would we be kind to
extraterrestrial life?

Nikita, Upper III (Year 7)



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Is it more terrifying to be alone in this universe, or to be surrounded by extraterrestrial life? This very question and its branches has been perplexing both physicists and psychologists for many years. When most people think of extraterrestrial life, they think of little green men. Although this statement is highly ambiguous, we humans have hammered this image into our heads. However, if complex forms of life like these little green people did exist, how would we react as a human race? Whilst I hope we would welcome the “foreign” life with great kindness, I know that we might also show symptoms of mild or even extreme xenophobia. Xenophobia is a strong dislike or prejudice against people from other countries and cultures - in this case, from a culture that really is alien.

So would we be kind to this alien species - whether Jovian, Martian, Neptunian, life from the outer solar system or even occupants of exoplanets? Kindness is an essential part of life, an emotion, a feeling, an action. Kindness releases serotonin and dopamine, which give the feeling of satisfaction and joy. To explore this question further, I would like to put things into perspective.

Although I, as an individual, can never be exactly sure how humans would first meet or interact with alien life, I could certainly give examples. Let's say aliens somehow wandered onto the Earth after stumbling across the Voyager 1 spacecraft and hearing the Golden Record it carries, a collection of sounds and images taken from human culture and life on earth. Let's imagine they landed straight in your area (the chances of this happening are slim) to the surprise of you and your

neighbours. Take a second to think of how you would react. I know that I, personally, would (despite my wanting to be kind to the alien life) be afraid, though not xenophobic - at least I would try not to be.

How would you fare? Would you be kind? Would you be afraid? If you're a keen sci-fi reader, you may be influenced by the fact that most books portray the sightings of alien life as having a negative psychological impact on people. However, after a study concerning 500 users of the Amazon Mechanical Turk was carried out, it was proven that the responses to how people would react would be more positive than negative - it would bring excitement! But excitement doesn't necessarily mean welcome. For example, if a hostile organism was discovered, despite the intrigue, most people would reject any suggestion to bring it to Earth.



To summarise, I believe that as a race, humans will debate their reactions, and that overall, we will have unbalanced views on alien life if we ever find any! So, I think that the reaction and whether we are kind or not to alien species may change drastically from person to person. How would you react?





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