

# Being kind

Practising kindness is a powerful way to impact the people around you.

Words EMMA NUTTALL

Every day, we have countless opportunities to impact the people around us. Sometimes, we hold back due to inhibition or uncertainty around what is appropriate or how our actions will be received. However, in today's world, being kind is more important than ever.

## What is kindness?

Kindness involves positive action towards another, such as being friendly, generous or considerate. As well as making gestures of kindness, you might think about the impact your actions have on the people around you and make decisions for the collective good.

Kindness is not limited to people. Treating animals and the earth with kindness, restraint and respect contributes to the wellbeing of our environment and community.

## Kindness as a trait

Kindness does not need to be about "people pleasing". You can be self-assured and kind. There is great strength in kindness when you act with integrity.



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I am fortunate to be surrounded by incredible people in my life and the friends and colleagues that I admire most embody kindness and lead with strength and humility. These people also have healthy boundaries and high levels of both self-awareness and emotional intelligence. They have successful careers and are fun to be around.

The traits I admired in adolescence and early adulthood are different to the traits I admire now. I want to spend time with people who display warmth and compassion and treat others with respect. This has led me to working with a company where wellness is a priority and kindness is considered a core strength. This permeates from the top down, resulting in positive collaborations between an engaged team of like-minded people.

### The science of kindness

When you are experiencing a challenging period or are feeling time-poor and overwhelmed, it can be hard to find the energy to engage in positive acts of kindness. However, research shows that kindness can have a beneficial effect on pain, stress and depression. By reducing stress hormones and generating positive emotions, it can decrease blood pressure and enhance immunity. Reaching out to

someone through an act of kindness can increase your connection to others. Social connection is a well-researched factor in enhanced wellbeing.

### Kindness is contagious

Small acts of kindness may appear trivial but, in fact, kindness can be contagious, with small, seemingly insignificant gestures having a large impact. Research shows that kindness spreads through social networks. A study into the social-contagion theory demonstrated that people who become happier in life increase the odds by 25 per cent of a nearby friend becoming happier.

If you want to receive kindness, then *show* kindness. Just like if you want strong, supportive relationships, then you need to be a considerate, compassionate friend.

### Kindness from within

Kindness should not be limited to positive actions towards others. Self-kindness and self-compassion can make a significant impact on your own happiness. We are often our own harshest critic and by showing yourself a little kindness, you can lift your mood and achieve a more positive outlook. This has a flow-on effect to the people around you. So, the next time you make

a mistake, put your arms around yourself and acknowledge that you did your best.

The best way to practise kindness is to not expect anything in return. Just don't be surprised if your world changes for the better, even just a little. 🍷

*Emma Nuttall is a nutritionist (BHSc) and freelance writer. She combines evidence-based nutritional medicine with mindset strategies to support her clients in achieving their goals. W: [healthservedup.com](http://healthservedup.com); IG: @healthservedup*

## How to spread kindness

You may not be able to change the world with one simple act of kindness, but you can change *your* world and brighten someone else's with these acts of kindness.

- Reach out to your tribe. Send a letter, email or text and tell someone how much you value them.
- Be generous with your time.
- Forgive someone.
- Show genuine interest in people and actively listen to them.
- Choose products and practices that reduce your environmental impact, even if it is a less-convenient option.



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