

Preparation for Kindness

Kindness is a virtue. It makes life brighter for both the giver and recipient of a kindness. Kindness is inexpensive. Kindness is easy. Why is there not more kindness in the world?

Sometimes we are just tired or busy. If our own needs are not being met, we may not notice other people and their difficulties. We may have had a tough day, and our bad temper makes us blind to opportunities to show consideration to others.

It is simple to be kind to those we love and those who are kind to us. It is harder to be kind to people who are annoying and to those who have hurt us.

Some consider kindness transformative. They believe that being kind to those who do not deserve it not only makes them better people but also makes us better. Others think that showing such people kindness is a weakness that opens us up to being taken advantage of.

Some people have difficulty accepting kindness. They may not feel worthy of receiving kindness, they may see it as a weakness, or they may not want to be beholden to someone else. Other people have difficulty being kind to themselves.

I actually think that the most efficacious way of making a difference is to lead by example, and doing random acts of kindness is setting a very good example of how to behave in the world. *Misha Collins*

It is futile to judge a kind deed by its motives. Kindness can become its own motive. We are made kind by being kind. *Eric Hoffer*

When you carry out acts of kindness you get a wonderful feeling inside. It is as though something inside your body responds and says, yes, this is how I ought to feel. *Harold Kushner*

It's not our job to play judge and jury, to determine who is worthy of our kindness and who is not. We just need to be kind, unconditionally and without ulterior motive, even—or rather, especially—when we'd prefer not to be. *Josh Radnor*

Once you encounter people who are really testing the limits of kindness, that's when you start to build up a shield and close yourself down. *Meshell Ndegeocello*

Sometimes people don't trust the force of kindness. They think love or compassion or kindness will make you weak and kind of stupid and people will take advantage of you; you won't stand up for other people. *Sharon Salzberg*

The true greatness of a person, in my view, is evident in the way he or she treats those with whom courtesy and kindness are not required. *Joseph B. Wirthlin*

Today we are afraid of simple words like goodness and mercy and kindness. We don't believe in the good old words because we don't believe in good old values anymore. And that's why the world is sick. *Lin Yutang*

Life is made up, not of great sacrifices or duties, but of little things, in which smiles and kindness, and small obligations given habitually, are what preserve the heart and secure comfort. *Humphry Davy*

Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness. Every act creates a ripple with no logical end. *Scott Adams*

We are all interconnected in a web of kindness from which it is impossible to separate ourself. *Geshe Kelsang Gyatso*

Questions to Ponder

1. Think about a time when you were treated with an unexpected kindness. How did it affect you? This question will be part of the sharing at the meeting.
2. When you are treated with kindness, does your relationship with the person who is being kind make a difference in how you react?
3. Think about times when you treated others with kindness. When is kindness an easy response to other people? When is it something you have to push yourself to do? What motivates you to be kind to people you do not like?
4. Think about times when you were treated with rudeness. How did it affect you? How did you react? How do you wish you had reacted?
5. Think about times when you were hurtful to others. What led up to your behavior? How did you feel afterwards? What, if anything, would you have done differently?
6. Think about times when you treated someone in a way that seemed mean at the moment, but in the long run might have been a kindness.
7. Is it possible to be too kind? If so, how can you set boundaries on what you are willing to do?
8. How kind are you to yourself? Does this affect how kind you are to others?
9. While thinking about the topic of kindness, have you formed any intentions of things you would like to do differently in your life?