

Ty Ankrom's Here's What I Think ...

A quote attributed to Plato encourages people to "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle."



Other aphorisms encourage kindness because it creates a ripple effect within society.

And being kind can benefit not just the recipient but also the presenter.

But it's more than lip service. Science shows that being kind has health benefits, too.

Studies have found that people who show acts of kindness and generosity — such as volunteering or helping another person — reported an increase in energy, happiness and pleasure, as well as having a longer lifespan.

A story has made the rounds on Facebook about a man who did nice things for his ex-wife on her birthday: He brought flowers and cards and a gift for his sons to give her and helped them make her breakfast. His reason was he wanted to show his sons good behavior.

"True kindness does not have an agenda or ulterior motive," writes Tara Cousineau, author of a new book, *The Kindness Cure*.

Jill Suttie, on the Greater Good Web site in a review of Cousineau's book, describes a few ways people can promote kindness.

Recognize when you're stressed and take a breather, be it through meditation or a walk outside. When you're in a comfortable place, you're more likely to be kind to others.

Be aware of your surroundings. Today, people are often tied to an electronic device and may not notice that a person around them needs help.

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Educating the mind
without educating the
heart is no education
at all. ”

- Unknown

"To be kind, we need to learn to stop, pay attention, and practice empathy for others," Suttie writes.

The 24-hour news cycle has also contributed to a greater awareness of news, often, negative things happening in the world, Suttie writes.

"We need to counter that by purposefully creating opportunities for positive emotion," Suttie writes.

Studies also have shown that kindness can be taught.

Educators can sign up to get free lessons plans from randomactsofkindness.org (click on the "For Educators" link). Also available are projects, games, books and activities, and classroom tools.

Find other articles on kindness and mindfulness on Greater Good's Web site (<https://greater-good.berkeley.edu>) by typing "kindness" into the search field.

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