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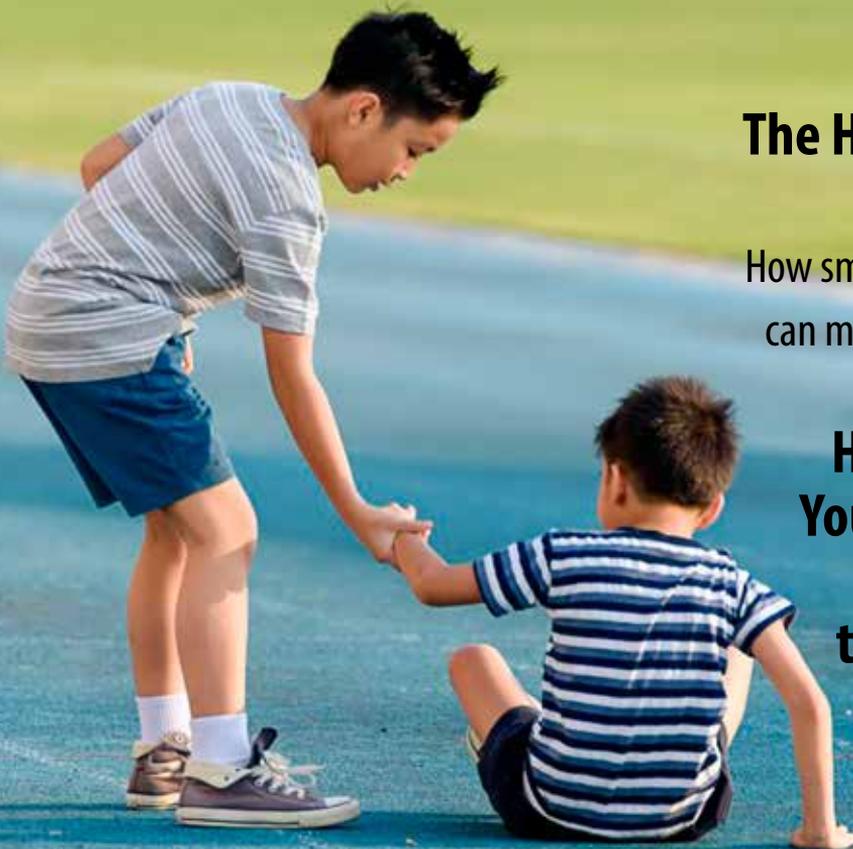
THE MAGAZINE THAT MOVES YOU!

THE POWER OF NICE

The Healing Power of Kindness

How small acts of kindness
can make a big difference

How to Rewire Your Brain to Be More Kind toward Others



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One of my favorite books, which I often recommend to others, is *The Power of Nice* by Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval.

In the book, Kaplan Thaler and Koval illustrate the surprising power of nice with an array of real-life examples from the business arena as well as from their personal lives. Most important, they present a plan of action covering everything from creating a positive impression to sweetening the pot to turning enemies to allies.

Filled with inspiration and suggestions on how to supercharge your career and expand your reach in the workplace, *The Power of Nice*, transformed the way I live and work. Putting their ideas into practice has resulted in some amazingly positive experiences, not just for myself, but also for those with whom I've interacted nicely and kindly.

From having to call customer service with a complaint to interacting with a difficult student, the power of nice never failed to perform. It's literally changed my life, as well as the lives of others.

Our world today needs "The Power of Nice" (page 3) and "The Healing Power of Kindness" (page 6). I hope these articles, as well as the others included in this issue of *Motivated*, will inspire you, and that as you practice these simple principles together, it will change your life, and the lives of those around you, for the better.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

The Power of Nice

By Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval

For years, we have loved a particular security guard in our Manhattan office building. In fact, most of us at *The Kaplan Thaler Group* think the world of him. A large, jovial man in his mid-fifties, Frank brightens people's days by giving everyone who walks into our building a huge, warm greeting. "Hello, Linda!" "Hello, Robin!" he'll say. "Happy Friday!"

Frank's engaging banter changed the way we started work in the morning. Instead of simply flashing our passes anonymously and making a beeline for the elevator, we found ourselves seeking out Frank and making sure to say hello. He set a positive tone for the entire day. But we never considered how Frank might be helping our business, other than preventing intruders from entering the premises.

That is, until the day Richard Davis, the president and COO of U.S. Bank, the sixth-largest bank in the United States, came to see us. For months, our entire team had been working to create a pitch that would wow Davis and win us the huge U.S. Bank account.

At the time of Davis' visit it was down to the wire. We were one of two agencies still in the running for the account. Davis

and his team were flying in from their executive offices in Minneapolis to meet personally with us. We didn't realize it at the time, but in fact, Davis and his team were a bit apprehensive about the treatment they'd get in New York City. The furious pace and hard-bitten "out of my way" attitude of the Big Apple had become part of the mythology of the city. They were afraid we would be too cold, too aloof.

But when Richard Davis and his team walked into our building, they received a warm, enthusiastic greeting from Frank. When Davis reached our offices a few minutes later, he was gushing about the friendly security guard. "This guy gave me a huge hello!" he said. "And all of a sudden, I thought how could I not want to work with a company that has someone like Frank? How can I feel anything but good about hiring an agency like that?" We won the account.

Of course, Davis wouldn't have awarded us the job if he wasn't impressed with our work. But we've got to give Frank credit. With a multi-million account in the balance, it was Frank's warm hello that helped us clinch the deal.

That is the power of nice! ■

***The Power of Nice* is available [here](#).**

16 Easy Random Acts of Kindness to Practice Today



By Meg Selig

The world can be a harsh place. That's why even small acts of kindness matter. If you think small courtesies and helpful acts are just "a drop in the bucket," think again! You can make someone's day with a compassionate comment or a helpful act. And all those "drops in the bucket" could end up creating an ocean of kindness.

The story of "World Kindness Day" (Nov. 13) is inspiring in itself. According to this article in *The Washington Post*, the

president of Tokyo University started the "Small Kindness Movement" in Japan in 1963 after no one came to his aid when he was mugged. The motto of this movement is: "Let us show whatever kindness we can, so that kindness will be the norm in society."

This wonderful slogan reminds us that not only might we make one person's day better with gentle kindness, but also that we might create a culture of kindness, step-by-step.

Just so you know, ample research supports the idea that performing acts of kindness will make you happier, too. When college students were asked to perform five random acts like those below each week for six weeks, they experienced a significant boost in happiness. As the Dalai Lama once said, “If you want to be happy, practice compassion.” Sometimes virtue truly is its own reward!

If you are one of those amazing people who volunteers regularly to make people’s lives better or who decides to remedy a particular ill by starting a foundation or a charity, more power to you! But even we ordinary mortals can make the world better in small ways. Here are 16 suggestions you might decide to act on, from the ridiculously easy to the slightly more challenging:

1. Practice courtesy: Holding the door and saying “please” and “thank you” are easy ways to show kindness to another person.
2. Offer to return a supermarket cart to its rack for a busy parent or a senior. This little gesture is a great time-saver for someone.
3. Put a coin in an expired or expiring parking meter for a stranger.
4. Write a gratitude letter to someone who has been a positive force in your life. Or just tell someone how much you appreciated something he or she did.
5. Call a relative or friend to see how they’re doing.
6. Offer to pick up groceries or medications for someone who is ill.
7. Buy a cup of coffee for someone.

8. Write a check to a worthwhile charity.
9. For five minutes, listen to someone without interrupting.
10. Slow down. Research tells us you are more likely to be kind to others when you are not in a hurry. Details here.
11. Give someone you love a hug. Say, “I love you.”
12. If you can afford it, contribute some money when someone comes up short in the check-out line.
13. Donate blood.
14. Give a lift to someone who doesn’t have a car.
15. Babysit for a friend or relative who needs some “me time.”
16. In honor of the founder of *World Kindness Day*, and because it’s the right thing to do, decide you will call 911, or the emergency number in your country, if someone needs emergency help.

This list is just a start. The ways you can be kind to others are endless as you use your own creativity and thoughtfulness. Just be mindful of how you could be of service to someone.

A few sensible guidelines: If someone doesn’t want help, back off. Be sensitive to other people’s needs for privacy and space. Show respect.

You might decide to deliberately cultivate the habit of kindness as a personal goal. If so, you’ll soon become more alert to a broad variety of opportunities for compassion.

And if anyone asks how they can repay you, just say what someone said recently to a friend of mine after paying for his groceries when he had forgotten his wallet: “Pass it on.” ■



The Healing Power of Kindness

How small acts of kindness can make a big difference

Web Reprints, adapted

The healing power of kindness is amazing. Indeed, just a small act of kindness can have a big positive impact on the world.

Different actions bring different results: an act of anger will bring hatred and violence, an act of kindness will bring love and compassion.

I believe that everyone feels that when we are kind, no matter how small our acts of kindness are, we experience kindness coming back to us. By performing acts of kindness, we influence others to be kind too, and this produces an endless chain of effects, a circle of kindness.

Following are some short stories that show how small acts of kindness can make a big, positive difference in the way we relate to each other.

The Man at the Market

When the supermarket clerk tallied up

my groceries, I was a bit over from what I had on me. I began to remove items from the bags when another shopper handed me some money. “Please don’t put yourself out,” I told him. “Let me tell you a story,” he said. “My mother is in the hospital with cancer. I visit her every day and bring her flowers. I went this morning, and she got mad at me for spending my money on more flowers. She demanded that I do something else with that money. So, here, please accept this. It is my mother’s flowers.” *Leslie Wagner*

Jim and the Job

My neighbor, Jim, had trouble deciding if he wanted to retire from the construction field until he ran into a younger man he’d worked with previously. The young man had a wife and three children, and was finding it difficult to make ends

meet, since he hadn't worked in some time. The next morning, Jim went to the union office and submitted his retirement paperwork. As for his replacement, he gave them the name of the young man. That was six years ago, and that young husband and father has been employed ever since. *Miranda MacLean*

A Family's Food Angel

While going through a divorce, my mother fretted over her new worries: no income, the same bills, and no way to afford groceries. It was around this time that she started finding boxes of food outside our door every morning. This went on for months, until she was able to land a job. We never did find out who it was who left the groceries for us, but they truly saved our lives. *Jamie Boleyn*

Amazing Colors

I forgot about the rules on liquids in carry-on luggage, so when I hit security at the airport, I had to give up all my painting supplies. When I returned a week later, an attendant was at the baggage area with my paints. Not only had he kept them for me, but he'd looked up my return date and time in order to meet me. *Marilyn Kinsella*

Seven Miles for Me

Leaving a store, I returned to my car only to find that I'd locked my keys and cell phone inside. A teenager riding his bike saw me kick a tire and say a few choice words. "What's wrong?" he asked. I explained my situation. "But even if I could call my wife," I said, "she can't bring me her car key, since this is our only car." He handed me his cell phone. "Call

your wife and tell her I'm coming to get her key." "That's seven miles round trip." "Don't worry about it." An hour later, he returned with the key. I offered him some money, but he refused. "Let's just say I needed the exercise," he said. Then, like a cowboy in the movies, he rode off into the sunset. *Clarence W. Stephen*

Breaking Bread

Last December, before work, I stopped at a deli and ordered a sandwich with cream cheese. It was toasty warm, and I couldn't wait to dig in. But as I left the store, I noticed an older destitute gentleman sitting at the bus stop. Knowing it would probably be his only warm meal of the day, I gave him the sandwich. But all was not lost for me. Another customer from the deli offered me half of her sandwich. I was so delighted because I realized that in one way or another, we are all looked after. *Liliana Figueroa*

"I Can Still Help"

As I walked through the parking lot, all I could think about was the dire diagnosis I had handed my patient Jimmy: pancreatic cancer. Just then, I noticed an elderly gentleman handing tools to someone working under his stalled car. That someone was Jimmy. "Jimmy, what are you doing?" I yelled out. Jimmy dusted off his pants. "My cancer didn't tell me not to help others, Doc," he said, before waving at the old man to start the car. The engine roared to life. The old man thanked Jimmy and drove off. Then Jimmy got into his car and took off as well. Take-home message: Kindness has no limits and no restrictions. *Dr. Mohammed Basha* ■

How to Rewire Your Brain to Be More Kind toward Others



By Steven Handel, adapted

Kindness is the state of caring about other people's well-being and taking action to help make other people's lives better and happier. It is a social glue that allows us to connect with others and build meaningful relationships with them.

When someone does something kind for us, we like them more and we want to cooperate with them more.

When we do something kind for someone, we earn their trust and respect, and we feel better about ourselves for being a good person.

Kindness is a reciprocal relationship. It becomes a cycle that strengthens our bond with friends, family, people we love, coworkers, and acquaintances.

The more we practice kindness, the easier it is.

Every thought and action we do fires neurons in our brain. The more these

neural pathways are fired, the easier it becomes to activate them. So the more we repeat acts of kindness, the easier it is to do them in the future.

Here are scientifically supported ways we can increase our kindness toward others.

Get your intentions right

Having good intentions is the first step toward being kinder toward others and building positive relationships with them.

Research on good intentions has shown that when people know we are acting with their best interests at heart, this improves their experiences with us and makes them more pleasurable.

Cultivating the right attitude about others is often necessary before we start acting in kinder ways.

If we approach the world with a cynical mindset, people are going to notice that

and not want to be around us.

But if we approach the world with a positive and optimistic mindset, people are going to be attracted to that and want to spend more time with us.

In a small but significant way, people with good intentions make the world a better place.

See from the other person's perspective

The practice of perspective-taking is a scientifically supported technique that we can use to increase empathy and kindness toward others.

The aim of this technique is to imagine ourselves experiencing a situation from another person's perspective. How would you feel if you were them? What thoughts would you have? How would you act if you were in their shoes?

By answering these questions, we can gain a deeper understanding of why people act the way they do. Perspective-taking helps us step out of our narrow mind and see the world through the lens of another conscious being.

And by understanding people better we learn to interact with them better, be nicer to them, and even forgive them when they do things we normally wouldn't understand.

Practice kindness in small doses

Kindness starts as a thought but ends in an action.

Acting kindly toward others is the only real way to let people know we care about them and their happiness. Without action, kindness just lives in our minds but never touches the real world.

Being kind to others doesn't have to be complex or fancy. Sometimes the simplest acts of kindness are seen as the most sincere, such as holding the door,

helping with directions, saying "please" and "thank you," or even just a smile.

Start there, and then build to acts of kindness that take a little more effort.

Kindness is like a muscle; the more we exercise it, the better we are at it.

Pause when you get angry or frustrated

An important part of being a kind person is knowing how to control our anger and frustration.

It's natural for us to occasionally be upset with other people; however, we should try our best to channel these emotions in constructive ways, not lash out, yell, insult, or be aggressive.

Often by creating a "pause" between our thoughts and actions, we can re-evaluate what we're doing in the moment and change our direction if we find ourselves wanting to do something aggressive or destructive.

So when someone angers you and you want to yell at them, take a mental "step back"—breathe a few deep breaths—and then focus back on the situation with a clear mind.

Try a loving-kindness meditation

Loving-kindness meditation is a popular technique designed to cultivate warm, positive feelings toward all conscious beings.

Begin with focusing on yourself and loving yourself fully and completely. You then extend these good feelings of love toward family, friends, coworkers, acquaintances, and even enemies. The goal by the end of the meditation is to be radiating kindness towards others.

Recent research in neuroscience has shown that this meditation can leave long-lasting changes in the brain if practiced on a regular basis. ■

Loving Kindness Is Twice Blessed

By Lilia Potters

I felt gloomy the other day. The weather had been dark and rainy, and I just didn't feel so positive.

As I was sitting at my desk, I remembered it was the birthday of a dear long-time friend—a single, middle-aged woman who has dedicated the past 30 years to nursing, and loves her work.

Knowing that she doesn't have family in town, I decided to give her a call. Sure enough, she was on B-shift, scheduled to work late into the evening, and wouldn't have much of a birthday this year. As always, though, she sounded cheerful and was happy I called.

After I hung up, I couldn't shake the feeling that she would really appreciate a little attention on her special day. Still feeling a little gloomy myself, I tried to put it out of my mind, but as the day passed I couldn't shake the thought. I finally gave in, and that evening set off to the hospital with a card, a slice of cheesecake, and a “flower” sculpted from balloons.

My friend's grateful smile and joyful exclamations assured me I'd done the right thing and were a generous reward for the little effort it had taken.

When I got home, I realized that not only had I cheered up a lonely friend on her birthday, but my own gloomy feelings had also disappeared. Making *her* day had made my own!

Isn't that the way it is when we take the time and make the effort to do something for someone else? It's like the little saying, “Loving kindness is twice blessed; it blesses him who gives, and him who receives.”

Cheering up people on their birthdays isn't the only thing we can do to make their day. Life constantly presents us with opportunities to take an extra step or do a kind deed that will make a difference to someone. And the wonderful thing is that as we do, it changes things for the better for us too. Like a boomerang, the blessing comes back to us. ■



How One Random Act of Kindness Changed My Life Forever

Anonymous

Let me tell you a story of a time that a stranger helped me in a way that really impacted my life. It changed the way I interact and react with strangers today.

I have been poor all of my life. From an early age, I learned how to cut corners and stretch that last little bit of whatever I had as far as it would go. I know about saving every penny in case I might need it someday.

In 1996, I was trying to find my way in the lovely city of Los Angeles. My uncle was gracious enough to let me stay at his house rent-free. Thank goodness this was the case as I had a minimum wage part-time job and there was no way I could actually afford to live on what I earned (even in the good old days). I had a Volkswagen Beetle that cost \$10.00 to fill up completely back then. To get to work and back each day I used my VW Bug, as it was too far to walk.

On one particular day, I went to get gas on the way to work. I was feeling quite tense, and in that mindset, I presented my debit card to the guy in the kiosk and asked him to fill up my Bug. I thought I had \$15.00, but as it turned out I had nothing in my account, maybe a dollar but nothing more. I was surprised and, understandably, upset that my card was empty. I was really stressed and I had no idea what to do. I had no other money and my uncle was at work so I couldn't even borrow from him. At this point, I could not get home either, because my car wouldn't make it that far.

I sat on the curb and just cried. I had no clue what to do from there. The guy who owned the gas station couldn't really help me as he had other customers to attend to and, well, a crying woman just wasn't that important. It felt like I was in a fog as customers rushed in and out while I just sat there, still panicked and alone.

But, out of all of those customers, a kind woman stepped forward and asked me what was the matter. Unable to hold back my tears, I told her what had happened. She gave me a tissue and told me to dry my eyes, and then she reached into her pocket and produced the money I needed to fill my car.

When I asked after her name so that I could find her and pay her back, she said it wasn't necessary and to take care of myself. This sweet stranger helped a crying girl in a gas station just because she could, and it has positively affected me to this day.

When I see a person in need I do my best to help if I can, or if I am unable to help the way I would like to, I will always do my best to get the person the help that they need. The way I view kindness today is thanks to this nice lady in a gas station. ■

Kindness is...

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Kindness is the sunshine in which virtue grows.—**Robert Green Ingersoll**

Kindness is making someone smile if only for a moment.—**Raktivist**

Kindness is a gift everyone can afford to give.—**Author Unknown**

Kindness is the highest form of intelligence.—**Wayne Teasdale**

The smallest act of kindness is worth more than the greatest intention.—**Kahlil Gibran**

Constant kindness can accomplish much. As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust, and hostility to evaporate.—**Albert Schweitzer**

A little kindness from person to person is better than a vast love for all humankind.—**Richard Dehmel**

No act of kindness is too small. The gift of kindness may start as a small ripple that over time can turn into a tidal wave affecting the lives of many.—**Kevin Heath**

Kindness is a simple art, which can be mastered by conscious daily practice.—**Author Unknown**

Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together.—**Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe**

How do we change the world?
One random act of kindness at a time.—**Morgan Freeman**

How beautiful a day can be, when kindness touches it!—**George Elliston**

