



February Wellness Tip:

The Power of Kindness

It seems fitting to devote this month's wellness tip to the topic of kindness, not only because *February 17th is National Random Acts of Kindness Day*, but because of all the benefits we get from being kind!

We already know it feels good to be kind to someone, but you know what is really cool? In addition to both the giver and receiver getting a release of "feel good" chemicals, ***so does anyone who witnesses the kind act!*** How's that for a win-win-win!!! I think that's why videos that show random acts of kindness are often viral sensations.

So what about kindness makes it so great?

Kindness does amazing things to us, both physically and emotionally. It creates more health, vitality, and energy while also diminishing anxiety and depression. It does this by increasing the **"feel good" hormones**.

Doing kind things for others boosts your **serotonin**, the neurotransmitter responsible for feelings of satisfaction and well-being. Altruism also releases **endorphins**, a phenomenon known as a "helper's high", as well as the brain's natural painkiller. Furthermore, witnessing a kind act releases **oxytocin** which is often called the "love drug" or "cuddle hormone" because it promotes social bonding, making us feel more connected to others. Oxytocin also expands the blood vessels, thus lowering blood pressure and therefore protecting the heart.

Kindness is also proven to raise energy levels, and can actually prevent illness and make you live longer! Compassionate people have 23% less cortisol, the stress hormone (Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science, 1998), and twice the DHEA, which slows down aging.

People who give contributions of time or money are "42% more likely to be happy" than those who don't give (Harvard "Social Capital Community Benchmark Survey"). Furthermore, people report being ***happier when they spend money on others*** than when they spend it on themselves.

Be kind to yourself too!

While being kind to others, remember to also be kind to a very important person - YOU! Consciously give yourself positive self-talk. Have your own back and be supportive, patient, forgiving, and encouraging to yourself. Recognize your strengths and attributes. Take care of you.

Part of being kind to yourself is also accepting kindness from others when it's offered, such as allowing others to help you and responding with a smile to a compliment. By accepting kindness from others, you are allowing them all the lovely benefits of being kind so know it's okay to receive!

What are some random acts of kindness ideas?

1. Leave money on a vending machine for someone
2. Visit an elderly person. If they live at home, go to the grocery store for them.
3. Take the time to really listen to someone
4. Write a kind review of a restaurant or something you bought on Amazon
5. Hold open the doors for people
6. Call or write a note to someone you haven't been in contact with for a while to let them know you're thinking about them
7. Let someone go in front of you in line
8. Tell someone why they are special to you
9. Make dinner for a family in need
11. Be kind to people who aren't. They're the ones who need it the most.
12. Leave letters of encouragement on people's cars or desks
13. Shovel a neighbour's driveway
14. Offer to take someone's pet for a walk
15. Read to kids at a library or school for story time
16. Make homemade cards for retirement home residents and/or read them a book
17. Give up your seat on the bus to another person
18. Lend a friend a favourite book or movie
19. Instead of posting negativity online, spread some encouragement
20. Reach out to someone who seems down or apart from others

Video worth watching: Unsung Hero - <https://rb.gy/4wan4k>

“Do things for people not because of who they are or what they do in return, but because of who you are.”

- *Harold S. Kushner*

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