

"Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around."

–Leo Buscaglia

What is Kindness?

Oxford Dictionary of English defines kindness as 'the quality of being friendly, generous and considerate'. Interestingly, the 'and' indicates that all three of those conditions are required for kindness to be present. So, one can be friendly and yet not kind, or both generous and considerate but not kind. Perhaps it's when we become aware of all three conditions being present that we feel for ourselves the pleasure of real kindness.

Why is Kindness important?

When we practice kindness either to other people or towards ourselves we can experience positive mental and physical changes through lowering stress levels and increasing the body's production of feel-good hormones such as dopamine, oxytocin and serotonin. Being kind helps boost the immune system, reduce blood pressure and reduce stress and anxiety. It does directly and indirectly impacts academic achievement.

The great thing is that it isn't difficult to be kind. As the Dalai Lama said, 'Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible'. Compassion arises from empathy and perspective taking - that is necessary for collaboration, cooperation and co-creation. We are all wired to socially connect and have meaningful relationships with our significant others. When this compassion leads to action, we connect it to Kindness.

WHAT'S INSIDE

What is Kindness?

Why is Kindness important?

Kindness Muscles

The Kindness Hormone

Kindness to our children.

14 day Challenge and calendar.





Small and random acts of kindness are more of a spontaneous action and is seen even in toddlers, when they help people in need out of genuine concern. It is further cultivated when parents, elders and schools consciously create a school culture in which kindness is valued and practiced. Compassion, Empathy and Kindness Curriculum has often become a big part of Socio-Emotional or SEL learning.

While sharing, giving, and gratitude personally benefits stability and helps one become more altruistic, it also activates the pleasure circuits that makes one feel happy. More importantly, when students see that their school is a kind, safe and happy place to be, it boosts their will and motivation to learn and develop positive self-esteem. Going beyond, kindness not only strengthens the camaraderie and solidarity felt in one class or one community, but is pivotal for the survival of our entire species.

Kindness is indeed a Muscle

If you exercise it, it gets bigger and stronger, if you don't- it can get smaller and weaker. Kindness is not something that some people have and some people don't. It's a decision, a habit, a routine, something we nurture. In fact, it is a fruit of the Spirit. Children's understanding of kindness and compassion changes as they mature. The way of giving and connecting with others modifies as they grow in their ability to develop deeper compassion by developing the skill and capacities of deeper perspective taking and regulating their emotions.

What will kindness do for our children?

Doing good is not only beneficial for the person on the receiving end and those who witness the kind action, but also for the givers of kindness. When we are kind and intentionally perform acts of kindness, we get a boost in our own wellbeing and happiness. It feels good to help others and it helps us focus on the positive things in our lives. As kind actions increase energy, they also boost enthusiasm and activate the joy centers of the brain. It's a win-win!



The month of October is a joyous time of festivities in India marked by celebration of Durga Pooja, Diwali, Bhai Dhooj, Karwa Chauth and Dussehra. Is it possible that we make these festivities more enjoyable by practicing loving-kindness in all that we do and are more attentive in creating more smiles along the way !!

This month we are going to add some complexity in challenging our children to celebrate a kindness month, increasing their attentiveness towards others while recognising the benefits they get from being kind. We would want to encourage them to leave a trail of kindness glitter trail behind them and see what's the best magic they could do!



It is our belief that no act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted. Loving-kindness is a friendly nod, a small smile, a gentle hug or a silent look of encouragement. The challenge is to practice acts of loving-kindness for 21 days by choosing the ideas from the lists above, following or making your own October Calendar.



We plan to stretch our kindness muscle this month so that we radiate a happy smiling kind month of being kind to self, family, others and the planet. Can we then also invite you, as parents, to get creative and make up some of your own? You, our dear parents, lead by example. We invite you. to also go about and enjoy practicing kindness along as a family, while you encourage your children in creating small ripples of kindness. The list we promise is much doable and we assure you will make you feel quite content at the end of each day, week and the month of October.

KINDNESS to SELF

- Do something that makes you happy today
- Exercise for 10 minutes and get your heart pumping
- Smile more often
- Avoid complaining for the entire day
- Create a new game and play it with friends and family
- Take time to practice mindfulness
- Take long slow deep breaths for 3 minutes
- Listen to your favourite music

KINDNESS to FAMILY

- Help with the chores without being asked
- Express your gratitude to your family
- Play a game with a family member
- Wash Mum or Dad's car
- Make a handmade card for someone in your family
- Tidy up after yourself
- Surprise a family member by doing their job for them
- Cook a meal
- Leave a special note on a family member's pillow

KINDNESS to OTHERS

- Write a letter or note to someone out of town and post it
- Bake a cake or your favourite food and deliver it to a friend or someone in need
- Find opportunities to give compliments today
- Say "thank-you" as much as possible
- Hold the door open for the person behind you
- Do something kind for a stranger
- Greet people with a Hug, High Five or Handshake

KINDNESS to PLANET

- Use less plastic
- Drink from a reusable water bottle
- Turn off the lights when you leave the room
- Use reusable shopping bags
- Pick up 5 pieces of litter
- Walk more, drive less
- Recycle
- Make a piece of art work from recycled materials

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OCTOBER 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						01 Begin a diary and what you something enjoyed every day through the month
	02 Let the person who is trying to take over- pass by, relax and smile	03 Give yourself the me- time and pursue a hobby you love doing.	04 Share a compliment with a co-worker or friend	05 Try learning a new song or relax and enjoy reading something at leisure	06 Treat someone to a cup of coffee, a nice dish or a piece of cake/ chocolate	07 Enjoy nature around you, walk in the garden or the grass barefoot, water the plants
						08 Go out of your comfort zone to help / drive that someone to do a chore
09 Try to make a bag of clothes, toys and important things that you are happy to donate	10 Enjoy your breath and say hello to it at least once every hour	11 Reach out to a family member who you have not spoken to a while	12 Try going vegan today and paying attention to all that you eat today.	13 Appreciate the helpers who work for you with genuine affection, compliments and gratitude.	14 Try cleaning the area around your home	15 Practice mindfulness through the day
16 DO some activity - intentionally that makes you smile, happy and relaxed	17 Send an uplifting text to at least 3 friends	18 Play an indoor and an outdoor game as a family	19 Take time to call up someone who would want you to call them and hear them out.	20 Feed the stray around and offer to get them a warm mat to sit on.	21 Invite a friend or relative who is a bit of lonely at home for a game/ tea.	22 Choose to go for a walk to a park and exercise your five senses.
23 Enjoy and pay attention to the use of water today.	24 Try putting your phone away and spend maximum time with the family around.	25 Connect to your parents and give them a big hug and a card /note of appreciation	26 Realize/ out one person have been angry with and forgive them. Get out of your comfort zone and connect in family	27 Do not complain today- Come what may	28 Brighten up someone/ cheer them for the day.	29 Appreciate yourself for three things about you.
30 Write 5 things you are most grateful about.	31 Make a lovely dish and offer some to your friends/ neighbors.					

We will be happy to hear your experiences and enjoy any pictures you take as you ignite light, warmth and glow in someone's eyes and hearts, enjoying the true significance of Diwali. **Please do share the magic of goodness and the power of kindness with us at guidance.counsellor@ggn.hxls.org**