# K - Kindness

## Organizations that Promote Kindness

The **Pay It Forward Foundation** was established by Catherine Ryan Hyde, author of the 1999 novel, Pay It Forward, to inspire acts of kindness among strangers that will generate a ripple effect from one person to the next, one community to the next. These acts of kindness among strangers will foster a more caring society.

**Action for Happiness** helps people create a happier and more caring world. Members take action to increase wellbeing in their homes, workplaces, schools and local communities. Their patron is The Dalai Lama

The **Random Acts of Kindness Foundation** Random Acts of Kindness Foundation provides hundreds of examples of how people can help to build a kinder world. Random Acts of Kindness are simple good deeds you can do at any moment to make the world a better place. By being kind to strangers, the environment, friends, and family, you can truly make someone's day and be part of a better community. Every small interaction with someone is an opportunity to have a positive impact on both of your lives.

The **World Kindness Movement** (WKM) is a coalition of kindness NGOs. World Kindness Day is observed in many countries, including Australia, where it has been placed on the National School Calendar. The mission of the WKM is to inspire individuals towards greater kindness by connecting nations to create a kinder world. Members of the movement include over 28 nations. WKM supports the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of UN adopted by world leaders in September 2015.

**Inspire, engage, influence – find the courage to be kind.**

(WKM)

## What is kindness?

Merriam-Webster's Learner's Dictionary defines "kind" as *"having or showing a gentle nature and a desire to help others: wanting and liking to do good things and to bring happiness to others"*. Yet what one person might view as a kindness may be viewed differently by another, and might cause more harm than good. Hanna Braime, in her blog "The True Meaning of Kindness" notes that being "kind" is not the same as being "nice". She states that "kindness" is based on your own ethics, your own values, and your own beliefs, whereas "niceness" is based on how other people see you. Kindness is rooted in empathy and acceptance and acts without expectation of reciprocity or recognition.

## Why is kindness important?

Kindness knits us together as a community. Being kind to one another makes us happier and improves relationships that form communities. Furthermore, being kind to "another person" could mean that "another person" will help a third person and the web of communities filled with kindness will only get bigger and stronger.

*"A little thought and a little kindness are often worth more than a great deal of money."*

## How is kindness good for us?

1. *Kindness makes us happier:* The good feeling we get from helping others is due to the elevation of dopamine in the brain, often referred to as 'Helper's High'
2. *Kindness is good for the heart:* It also produces the hormone oxytocin which causes the release of nitric oxide, which dilates the blood vessels, thereby reducing blood pressure which protects the heart.
3. *Kindness Slows Ageing:* Oxytocin also reduces levels of free radicals and inflammation in the cardiovascular system and so slows ageing
4. *Kindness Improves Relationships:* Acts of kindness increased social bonds and create new ones. Strong social support networks are associated with better health
5. *Kindness is Contagious:* Studies show that acts of kindness create a pay-it-forward ripple effect that spreads outwards to our friends' friends' friends – to 3-degrees of separation.

David R. Hamilton, The 5 Side Effects of Kindness

### REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

David R Hamilton, PhD. The Five Side Effects of Kindness (Hay House, February 2017).

Braime, Hanna. "The True Meaning of Kindness" http://www.becomingwhoyouare.net/the-true-meaning-of-kindness

Random Acts of Kindness. Kindness Health Facts. https://www.dartmouth.edu/wellness/emotional/rakhealthfacts.pdf

The Honey Foundation. Research & Info http://www.honeyfoundation.org/learn/research-info/

Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition
Coalition des communautés en santé de l'Ontario

BC Healthy Communities
People. Place. Potential.

OHCC enables communities to create and sustain positive change through equitable community engagement, intersectoral partnerships, political commitment, healthy public policy, and asset-based community development. BC Healthy Communities supports multi-sectoral groups to build their capacity to create healthy communities.