

## **Kindness and Health**

Kindness can bring a sense of richness and fulfilment to our lives. It can also result in making us healthier. There have been a number of studies undertaken which demonstrate the positive effects of kindness on health, both psychological and physiological.

Further studies are under way, and several books have been published on the beneficial effects of kindness by top scientists. Experiments have shown that doing a kind deed for another person can make you feel more optimistic and happier, more energetic, more able to resist pain. It can make you calmer, feel more relaxed and help you sleep better.

It can help you feel healthier and control your weight better. It can aid you to empathise with others and make you more creative. It can make you heady with joy and feel excited. It can help to decrease feeling lonely and depressed. It can increase your sense of self control so that you don't feel so lonely and helpless.

It can help reduce acid in the stomach leading to bloating and reduce high blood pressure. It can increase your body warmth and help you live longer. It can bring about relief from arthritis and asthma and speed up recovery from an operation. You can even use acts of kindness to relieve back pain and banish headaches. It can actually make your eyes shine and make you look more beautiful.

Why does helping others make you feel so good? There are two reasons. One is because helping other people takes our mind off our own problems.

Another reason is that when we carry out an act of kindness, our body rewards us by triggering chemicals called endorphins within the body creating a 'feel good' sensation. These are naturally occurring morphine-like substances that create a feeling of bliss within us and help to reduce the intensity of any pain messages being sent to the brain.

It is not necessary to carry out major acts of kindness to gain the health benefit. In fact it has been found that brief, small, regular acts of kindness lead to the highest levels of well being. That means if we happily punctuate our day with doing small kind acts we can expect to feel good and make ourselves more popular as a result.

When you choose to become a kinder person, you are helping yourself as well as the person you help. Your kindness has a ripple effect. It has the magical ability of making others who look on and see you being kind to someone feel good too. In other words, it triggers their endorphins. When you make the decision to be a kinder person, you are effectively bringing about positive social change.

When you choose to do a kind deed you are actively helping to reduce world tension. You are also helping to relieve the frustrations which lead people to bully and hurt others.

However, it is important that we know how to carry out kind acts. In order to gain from a kind act, or help others gain from a kind act we have to do it in a certain

way. If we expect something good to come of it—for example, we do something kind and we don't get thanked—we can feel anger or disappointment. Then all the benefits are lost. Therefore it is important we do kind acts without expect anything in return.

Kindness is not only something that has positive benefits just for ourselves, it is something that has a positive effect on the community. Any act of kindness will help to bring about peace in our schools, our offices, and our homes. Any act of kindness will help to bring about world peace. That's why it is cool to be kind.