



## The Reality of Kindness



[1]"What do you think of when you hear the word "kindness? For some it's kind of a reminder of sitting around a camp fire and singing Kumbaya - which represents a cynical and satirical view of human nature as naively optimistic. If you wake up happy, and love extending kindness to others and having others extend their kindness to you, are really naively clinging to a concept that has no value and no reality?

What does a Google search provide in terms of research and documentation related to kindness? A first search for negative effects of kindness - came up with no research that found kindness had a negative effect on one's life or health.

Searching for positive effects of kindness brought a motherlode. The organization, the [Random Acts of Kindness Foundation](#) [2], among it's other goals, seeks to quantify and support kindness - including Allan Luks' investigated research, *The Healing Power of Doing Good: The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others*, which illustrates numerous scientific studies showing acts of kindness result in significant health benefits, both physical and mental.

Here are some key findings of contemporary research:

- Helping contributes to the maintenance of good health, and it can diminish the effect of diseases and disorders - serious and minor, psychological and physical.
- A rush of euphoria, followed by a longer period of calm, after performing a kind act is often referred to as a "helper's high," involving physical sensations and the release of the body's natural painkillers, the endorphins. This initial rush is then followed by a longer-lasting period of improved emotional well-being.
- Stress-related health problems improve after performing kind acts. Helping reverses feelings of depression, supplies social contact, and decreases feelings of hostility and isolation that can cause stress, overeating, ulcers, etc. A drop in stress may, for some people, decrease the constriction within the lungs that leads to asthma attacks.
- Helping can enhance our feelings of joyfulness, emotional resilience, and vigor, and can reduce the unhealthy sense of isolation.
- The incidence of attitudes, such as chronic hostility, that negatively arouse and damage the body is reduced.
- The health benefits and sense of well-being return for hours or even days whenever the helping act is remembered.
- An increased sense of self-worth, greater happiness, and optimism, as well as a decrease in feelings of helplessness and depression, is achieved.
- Regular club attendance, volunteering, entertaining, or faith group attendance is the happiness equivalent of getting a college degree or more than doubling your income.



[3]In fact, **the research is overwhelming. It's naive *not* to see the value and reality that kindness brings to your own health and that of others. If you're still not sure, do your own search.** And one last thought, remember not everyone will ask for help, so try to walk in their shoes and think of their needs. That kindness will go a long, long way - for both of you.

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### Links

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[2] <https://www.randomactsofkindness.org/>

[3] <https://personalsafetynets.org/file/125>