



Be Well Aware – Health Article



Holiday Kindness

Kindness Can be Contagious

Have you ever heard of “Paying it Forward”? Say you’re in line at the coffee shop, you pull up to the window and the cashier tells you that your order is already paid for. Would you “pay it forward” and pay for the person’s order behind you? Studies show that “one good deed in a crowded area can create a domino effect and improve the day of dozens of people”! [Good News Networks](#) says that people performing random acts of kindness can inspire other people to perform random acts of kindness, causing a “ripple effect”.

This is also proven to be true in the workplace. In a study done by Professor Richard Davidson, from the University of Wisconsin, givers and receivers of random acts of kindness in the workplace felt happier and had higher levels of well-being. “people who were receivers in the experiment paid it forward by doling out **278% more** acts of kindness”

Kindness and Mental Health

Performing random acts of kindness can have many positive side effects on your mental health. Random acts of kindness can help reduce anxiety, depression, and stress.

Kindness can trigger the creation of serotonin in the body. This chemical keeps you calm and increases your happiness. According to the University of British Columbia, referenced by the [Random Acts of Kindness Foundation](#), there was a significant reduction in anxiety and an increase in happiness during one of their studies performed. “A group of highly anxious individuals performed at least six acts of kindness a week. After one month, there was a significant increase in positive moods, relationship satisfaction and a decrease in social avoidance in socially anxious individuals”.



The CDC states that in people ages 12 and over, from the years 2009-2012, the percentage of people with depression in the population is 7.6 %. Performing random acts of kindness can decrease depression and increase overall well-being. The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation references that the Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science shows cortisol, the stress hormones, is decreased by 23%.

Kindness and Physical Health

Random acts of kindness can decrease pain and lower your blood pressure. Conducting acts of kindness can produce endorphins, the chemical that naturally reduces pain, therefore reducing daily pain. [Dr. David R. Hamilton](#) states “Acts of kindness are often accompanied by emotional warmth. Emotional warmth produces the hormone, oxytocin, in the brain and throughout the body”. Oxytocin releases the chemical nitric oxide. Nitric oxide dilates the blood vessels. This particular action reduces blood pressure.

Random Acts of Kindness during the Holidays

Are you wondering what you can do to brighten someone's day during the holiday season? Here are a few things you can do in the workplace and to spread joy during the holidays:

- Make ornaments for your coworkers with their names on them
- Offer to help a coworker on a project
- Make holiday treats to share with everyone in the office (send to their house if working from home)
- Offer to cover a work shift that needs covered
- Bring coffee or hot chocolate in for your coworkers



References:

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