

7 Simple Ways to Spread Kindness

By [SUCCESS Staff](#) | November 21, 2017



1. Make someone's day.

As children, our parents tell us to make up for misbehaving by doing something nice for someone. As adults, we help friends move into a new house; we bring hot meals to new mothers; we might even donate time or money to local charities a few times a year. After all, it's naturally uncomfortable to see a friend (or stranger) suffering or in need. Call it karma or mojo, but these acts are generally reciprocated. We receive tax breaks, returned meals and favors, thank-you notes. Tit for tat.

But what about pure, altruistic generosity, without the expectation of receiving something in return? Some researchers argue this type of generosity doesn't exist. But our editor set out to see whether she could learn to give without the promise of getting. She made lists of various kind acts and placed reminders on

her bathroom mirror, her work computer, her car dashboard: *Make someone's day today!*

Could she really find joy by giving to those around her? Can random acts of kindness actually increase and sustain happiness? Turns out they can, but there are exceptions. To find lasting happiness through generosity requires a suppression of our ego, an analysis of our motives and a reflection on how these acts alter our perception of the world.

2. Act generously.

Acting generously not only heightens your happiness, it also releases nearly 50 percent more of oxytocin—the feel-good chemical in your brain—and boosts creativity, resilience and problem-solving skills. Our editor's month of kindness taught her that generosity doesn't have to be a big production. Something as small as a conversation can boost your mood and spread good vibes to those around you.

Follow her happiness challenge by trying these 30 random acts of kindness to brighten someone's day. Add your own generous acts and reflect on how it changes your mood and boosts positive emotions.

3. Be nice, the right way.

Analyze your motives. To achieve true altruism, Matthieu Ricard says, we must demolish the part of our ego that fuels a sense of pride for acting generously. Ask yourself, *Would I be just as happy if someone else performed this act of kindness?* "For a true altruist, it's the result that counts, not the personal satisfaction of having helped," he writes.

4. Respond with kindness.

The first person you meet today, whether a passing acquaintance or friend, and no matter the context—positive or negative—is an opportunity for kindness. Or as different translators have taken this line from Seneca to mean, it is an opportunity for *benefit*. For both of you. You can seek to understand where they are coming from. You can seek to understand who they are, what they need, and what forces or impulses might be acting on them. And you can treat them well and be better off for it.

The same is true with the second person you encounter, and the third. Of course, there is no guarantee that they will return the favor, but that's not our concern. As

always, we're going to focus on what we control: in this case, the ability to choose to respond with kindness.

5. Spread positivity.

Over the past several years, researchers have been investigating how perceptions and mindsets can be transferred to others. And as it turns out, the three best strategies for transferring positive genius to others are not that different from the ones Cobb employed. They are:

- Success franchising: Coming up with a positive behavioral change that is easily replicated.
- Script writing: Changing a prevailing social script by making it positive.
- Creating a shared narrative: Creating value and meaning by appealing to emotion.

6. Give back.

If everyone asked, “How can I help?” as opposed to “What can I get?” we would start to see a much different world take shape around us.

The universe aligns its bounty for a generous heart. We must only take that first step toward serving the greater good. This is the greatest act of service we can offer. When we elevate one, we elevate all, and soon all of our common interests are met. Only then can we begin to transform the world. It is only then the better world we dream of becomes a reality.

It's up to us to take that very first step. It's up to us to offer a helping hand to those struggling to climb the ladder. We stand on each other's shoulders to elevate us to our ultimate accomplishments. This is a testament to a new tomorrow. This is the legacy we can be proud to leave our children. We must clasp each other's hands and take that first step together. It's a step that every person, organization or institution can take together—if only we change our lens from competition to cooperation. From receiving to giving.

7. Practice self-kindness.

Being kind to yourself is one of those things that sounds easy in conversation but difficult in practice. To turn generosity inward. To do acts that allow you to appreciate yourself, reflect and grow.

And the truth is, saying some Hallmark-worthy phrases to yourself isn't an exact science for increasing your feelings of self-worth. At least not that we feel right away. But that doesn't mean it's not working. Growth—in any form—is never easy. It takes patience, persistence and self-compassion, a reminder we need more than once per day.

Being kind to yourself isn't about *feeling* good. After all, doing what feels good isn't always what's best for us. But taking the time to compliment yourself, to nurture your self-compassion, sends a message to future you that she matters. That's a gift worth giving.