

KINDNESS BOOSTERS

Science shows that kindness and wellbeing often go together. Kindness and compassion also go together. Being mindful and kind toward others can actually help *you* feel good or better. Being kind can be small or big. Maybe you buy a coffee for a friend, help a stranger in need, give someone a genuine compliment, volunteer for a cause you believe in, or practice self-love. All of these are Kindness Boosters.

Being kind is *not* same as being nice. Being nice is when you are polite to others, or, when you follow social norms and rules for how to treat people well. Kindness, on the other hand, is when you truly care about someone and your actions *show* that you care – including yourself! It's possible to be kind and not nice; it's also possible to be nice but not kind.

Keeping in mind how we define kindness, here are some action steps to show kindness to yourself and others.

Self-Love

When you hear “self-love”, you may think “stuck up” or “full of yourself”. But, that’s not what it means to practice “self-love”. Instead, ***self-love is being mindful of who you are and being kind to yourself above all else.*** When we practice self-love on a regular basis, studies show it increases our sense of wellbeing and our health. Self-love may help us to align our thoughts, beliefs, feelings, words, and actions, which is a concept at the core of mindfulness and contemplative practices. Even just 1 minute of self-love every day may support you in increased health, wellbeing, and resiliency.

Here are some ideas for Kindness Boosters for practicing self-love every day.

SELF-LOVE KINDNESS BOOSTERS:

- Start the day saying something positive about yourself. “I handled that situation well”, or, “I am enough”, or, “I am strong” are some examples. It can change, or it doesn’t have to!
- Fill your body with foods and drinks that are nourishing. Get plenty of water!
- Move your body in some way, every day. Even if it’s only 5 minutes of dancing or 1 push-up. A little exercise is more kind to your body than no exercise.
- Try not to compare yourself to others. There is no one like you. You are enough. Notice your strengths and maybe write them down, so you can remember them when you feel like you need a reminder. Notice how far you’ve come and what you’ve survived. Give yourself credit.
- It’s okay to feel angry, sad, helpless, or hurt. Notice when you feel these, and think of how you would treat your favorite person or animal if they felt like that. Do for yourself what you would do for your favorite person or animal.
- Practice gratitude.
- Forgive yourself. We all make mistakes or have regrets, and that’s okay. It’s also okay to forgive yourself for them, and maybe learn to not repeat them.
- Journal your thoughts and feelings, and try to let it be okay that you’re experiencing them.
- Have fun! Do something you love. Or, do something that’s just for you.

- Get in touch with your brain. Is it loving, encouraging and supportive? You deserve to tell yourself the loving, encouraging, and supportive things you would tell someone else.
- Get your favorite book, or a cup of tea, or just find a quiet place to tune out of the world. Take a few moments for yourself.

What ideas do you have to practice self-love for *your* brain and body?

Is there one, or more, thing(s) you can do for self-love every day?

KINDNESS BOOSTERS TOWARD OTHERS:

Studies show that when we practice kindness toward others, it can increase our own happiness as well. Kindness can be shown through actions.

- Give up your seat to someone who may need it more
- Hold a door open for someone
- Give a (sincere) compliment
- Make someone laugh
- Give someone a hug
- Take time to really listen to someone
- Make someone new feel welcome
- Let one car in on every journey/drive
- Give directions to someone who's lost
- Have a conversation with a stranger
- Pick up litter as you walk
- Let someone in front of you in the supermarket queue
- Tell someone they mean a lot to you

Acts of kindness (“Kindness Boosters”), no matter how big or small, promote happiness for others and for you!

What acts of kindness are present in your daily life?

Are there moments you can choose to practice kindness, where maybe you haven't before?
