**Random Acts of Kindness Week**

Kindness is more than buying a stranger a cup of coffee. Learning how to be kind to ourselves will help us be authentic and kind to others.

**Why Dedicate a Week to Kindness?**

Science finds that positive effects of kindness are experienced in the brain of those who receive or witness an act of kindness. Experiencing kindness improves mood and makes people significantly more likely to “pay it forward.”

**Participate in the 7 Day Kindness Challenge, Starting February 16, 2020**

Take part in our 7 days of science-based strategies to boost kindness, happiness, and social connection. The challenge will encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and do some things that maybe you haven’t done before or have wanted to do but weren’t sure how to get started. Each day’s practice offers a new science-based practice to help give your kindness a supercharge.

**Challenge Themes**

- Random Acts of Kindness
- Courage
- Assertiveness
- Strengths and Perseverance
- Gratitude
- Focusing on the Good
- Self-Compassion

**Start Your Kindness Journey**

[unh.edu/health/kind](http://unh.edu/health/kind)

**Reflect and Share**

After you have completed the 7 day kindness challenge, visit [unh.edu/health/kind](http://unh.edu/health/kind) to tell us how it went for an opportunity to win a free 50 minute massage therapy session at Health & Wellness.
Kindness Challenge

Being kind means being honest and assertive about what we want and need. Today’s act of kindness challenge is all about practicing being ASSERTIVE in an effort to be more authentic and enhance relationships. #BeKindUNH

Assertiveness

Everyone experiences conflict—it is part of being human. Strategies that help us promote collaboration, honesty, listening, and cooperation are vital. Research suggests that neglecting to advocate for our point of view can increase feelings of distress, which is why it is important to be proactive in solving conflict constructively. Others witnessing our willingness to engage appropriately in conflict may inspire those around us to do the same. Today’s challenge will help you start building or enhancing the skill of assertiveness.

How to Do It

Consider a conflict, big or small, that you are facing with someone else. Perhaps you disagree with your classmates about how to get a group project done, or maybe you are having a difficult time telling your roommate that their dirty dishes in the sink are really bothering you.

• Choose to actively manage the conflict rather than ignore it. If someone does something you disagree with or if you feel that your time isn’t being respected, your instinct may be to accommodate their wishes, and ignore your thoughts and feelings on the matter. Instead of avoiding the conflict and allowing suppressed emotions to build inside, we can decide to take an active approach.

• Embrace a mindset of collaboration. Do you tend to avoid conflict? Or do you hold your ground no matter what to “win?” The best way to resolve conflict is actually somewhere in the middle: choosing a collaborative mindset. Collaboration means that individuals feel safe to share opposing opinions and strive for compromise.

• Practice active listening. Effective discussions need mutual respect and one way to do this is through actively listening. Instead of preparing your rebuttal when someone is speaking, fully listen to what their words and body language are saying. When it is your time to speak, it is okay to pause and gather your thoughts so you can articulate them clearly. When both people feel heard, there is a better chance that you’ll find a solution.

• Use the “I” formula. Speaking from your own experience and feelings will help the other person better understand your perspective.

   1. I feel --- state your feeling
   2. When --- describe behavior
   3. Because --- concrete effect/consequence on your situation
   4. I’d prefer --- offer a compromise
   5. Feedback --- “Does that make sense?”

Why It Works

The point of resolving conflict is to repair relationships and reduce negative feelings—which doesn’t happen when we ignore problems or strive to prove others wrong. Instead, active, collaborative approaches that allow everyone to be heard can help.

Learn More at unh.edu/health/kind

Source: Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley