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  Gratitude
Courage             Focusing on the Good
Assertiveness       Self-Compassion
Strengths and Perseverance

Start Your Kindness Journey
unh.edu/health/kind

Reflect and Share

After you have completed the 7 day kindness challenge, visit 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.
Gratitude

Feeling grateful can improve health and happiness, while expressing gratitude can strengthen social wellness. Yet sometimes expressions of thanks can be superficial and fleeting. Today’s challenge encourages you to express gratitude in a thoughtful, deliberate way by writing—and, ideally, delivering—a letter of gratitude to a person you have never properly thanked.

How to Do It

Call to mind someone who did something for you for which you are extremely grateful but to whom you never expressed your deep gratitude. This could be a friend, relative, professor, coach, or teammate. Try to pick someone who is still alive and could meet you face-to-face in the next week. It may be most helpful to select a person or act that you haven’t thought about for awhile—something that isn’t always on your mind.

Now, write a letter to the person you have chosen, guided by these steps:

• Write as though you are addressing this person directly (“Dear_____.”).
• Don’t worry about perfect grammar or spelling.
• Describe in specific and concrete terms what this person did, why you are grateful to this person, and how this person’s behavior affected your life.
• Describe what you are doing in your life now and how you often remember their efforts.
• Try to keep your letter to roughly one page.

Next, you should try if at all possible to deliver your letter in person, following these steps:

• Plan a visit with the recipient. Let them know you would like to see them and have something special to share. If you can’t meet in-person, make a plan to FaceTime or chat on the phone.
• When you meet, let the person know that you are grateful for them and would like to read a letter expressing your gratitude.
• Take your time to read your letter. While you read, pay attention to their reactions as well as your own.
• After you have read the letter, be receptive to their reaction and discuss your feelings together.
• Remember to give the person the letter when you leave.

Why It Works

This letter affirms positive things in your life and reminds you how others have cared for you—life seems less bleak and lonely if someone has taken a supportive interest in us. Sharing the letter in-person strengthens your connection with them and reminds you how others value you as an individual.

Learn More at unh.edu/health/kind

Source: Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley