

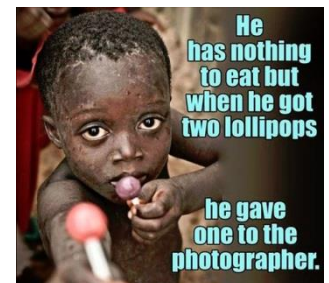
Random Acts of Kindness

Have you ever played Secret Santa at work? You secretly leave gifts or perform acts of service for someone without their knowledge of who is the giver. That is part of the game – watching the recipient try to figure out who is doing nice things for them. Why is being anonymous important? It encourages the recipient to do something nice for someone else, attempting to reciprocate to someone else. It can create a domino effect, snowballing into many people doing kind acts for others. Wouldn't that be a wonderful way to start a revolution of kindness for an entire community? Kindness is contagious in a very good way.

What would our world be like if we experienced a culture of kindness that is passed on to an ever widening circle of people? I think that is what our world needs. We are going through a phase in our country in which we blame everyone else for our problems. We look at people in a negative way if they think differently than us. Instead of ignoring polarizing social media posts we often become judgmental and join in on the conversation. Our culture has allowed children to grow up without respect for others, including teachers, adults and even peers. It is not a pretty world.

So, how do we break the cycle? One of the answers is to show kindness to others, especially people who are in need of encouragement. Secondly, we need to teach our children to honor and respect others. Our current culture is a return to the “me generation,” where everything is about getting what *we* want, regardless of the needs of others. Breaking the cycle has to be an intentional process of showing kindness, and not just hoping it happens. We need to teach our children to respect and love others, and model to adults thankfulness for good deeds done for us.

What does the Bible say about all this? Jesus said, *So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you ...* (Matthew 7:12). The Golden Rule starts with us. As a result, people will seek to be kind towards others. Paul, in his guidance to the early churches, said “*Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you*” (Ephesians 4:22). If we want God to be kind to us, to forgive us, we must first do the same for others.



Acts of kindness are the “fruit of the spirit” – characteristics we display because of our faith. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23).* Here is a sampling of motivational quotes that show faith displayed through acts of kindness:

- If you are helping someone and expecting something in return, you are doing business, not kindness.
- Never underestimate the power of a single act of kindness: your act may be just the added lift that someone needs to go from falling to flying.
- You seriously have no idea what people are dealing with in their personal lives, so just be nice. It's just that simple.
- Every act of kindness grows the spirit and strengthens the soul.
- *Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:2)*
- The highest form of wisdom is kindness.
- One day I would like to turn on the news and hear there is Peace on Earth.
- A person who is nice to you but not nice to the waiter is not a nice person.
- Be kinder than necessary, for everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.
- Sometimes a hug is the best thing ever.
- Kindness usually doesn't cost money, it is a gift from your heart to someone else's heart.

Let's change the culture around us and watch it spread in every direction, like ripples caused by a single pebble tossed into a still pond. The ripple effect can go a long way toward starting an epidemic of love to many people. It

is what God wants us to do. *So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; (Colossians 3:12)*

Commitment: Make a commitment to make random acts of kindness a goal of your coming week.

Prayer: Heavenly Father. Your kindness to us is undeserved. We fail to fully do all we can to help others, yet you still love us. Let us love our fellow man, seeking ways to affirm others. We love others because you first loved us. Amen.

There is a National Effort Called the Kindness Revolution?

The Kindness Revolution is a national non-profit initiative with the mission to raise awareness of kindness in our communities and schools. It is the idea of Ed Horrell, a motivational speaker and author of several books on this topic. Horrell's original concept is based on:

- **Schools:** Encouraging students in our schools to be more respectful to their peers, teachers, and parents. *We've let this slide and it is time to re-emphasize these behaviors.*
- **Business Community:** Expecting a little more in the way of customer service from the companies with whom we do business. *We seem to be settling for less when we should be expecting more!*
- **Leadership:** Deserving more in the form of civility from our business leaders and politicians. *We are becoming a nation of whiners and finger pointers as opposed to a nation of doers.*
- **Gratitude Toward Others:** Reaching out to others in our communities who are making a difference. *When was the last time you thanked a teacher, first responder, or volunteer for the work they do in YOUR community?*

The Kindness Revolution has been embraced by State Farm Insurance agents around the country, including Kernersville. "Like a good neighbor," they have successfully encouraged people to post acts of kindness they have observed on the Kindness Revolution Facebook page. The NBC Today Show has also embraced the concept on their morning show, encouraging their viewers to document one million acts of kindness. Kindness acts posted reveal the genuine goodness of people and the many dimensions in which we can show kindness to others. It is positive reinforcement that can encourage others. Local State Farm Insurance agent Kevin Bugg is spearheading the Kernersville effort of the Kindness Revolution in 2017.

