

Positive+Parent™ Newsletter

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WHY WE SHOULD TEACH OUR KIDS TO BE KIND

Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle. ~Plato

I just read a fascinating article about some research about being kind. I had never really thought of it, but the authors make a good point that kindness is the “other side of the coin” of gratitude.

In their words, they said “Whereas gratitude results when people receive kindness from other people, kindness entails enacting kind behavior toward other people.” Having said this, it is no surprise that kindness makes people happy since we already know that gratitude makes people happier.

And being kind will make your child feel good. There is actually a release of endorphins in your body when you are kind. Endorphins are similar to morphine. You actually feel good when you are kind. I wonder if our kids can become addicted to being kind? What a great addiction that would be! And you sure wouldn't need any anti-depressants with that kind of addiction!

The researchers measured kindness in a few different ways. One way was to ask the participants how often they thought others were kind to them, how often they were motivated to be kind to others and how often they actually were kind to others. I think that first question is probably the step before gratitude. Once we recognize that someone has been kind to us, we can be grateful for it.

The researchers also gave the participants a happiness measure. Not surprisingly, those people who were happier were kinder. Or is it that those people who were kinder were happier?

Either way, we can learn an important lesson. There is a connection between kindness and happiness. So as with most other areas of happiness, we get to “kill two birds with one stone!” Those things that bring happiness are generally good things to do like being grateful, being kind and being self-compassionate.

Kindness can be toward friends or strangers. We can help our kids be kind to family members and teachers. Kindness toward any of these will help make us happy.

Happy people scored high in all three areas of happiness. They wanted to be kind, they recognized kindness more than unhappy people and they have more kind behaviors.

So what are some ideas for kind acts? How about a smile? Let's teach our kids to give passersby a smile. And we can give store-clerks a smile. Our kids can even smile to the driver in the car next to us. Or perhaps we can do a simple loving-kindness meditation which I have written about previously.

Even a small act like this can help your child to have a better day and make them happier. This happiness can spread throughout your family and improve all the relationships and interactions. How great would that be!



You can reach me by email at DrShaya@PositiveParentPlus.com I love to hear reader comments.

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