



Why are kindness and empathy so important?



Read the quote on the right by pioneering female pilot, Amelia Earhart. What exactly do you think it means?

Discuss: Do you think it's important for us to learn about kindness at school? Why / why not? Explain and be ready to share your answers.



Now write down the last time someone did something kind for you. What was it?

The last time someone did something kind for me was when...

Why are kindness and empathy so important?



Learning outcomes:

Describe the characteristics of mental and emotional health, to develop empathy and understanding about how daily actions can affect people's mental health.
Explain why it is important for us to spread kindness.

Kindness - the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate.

Empathy - Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

Sympathy - feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.

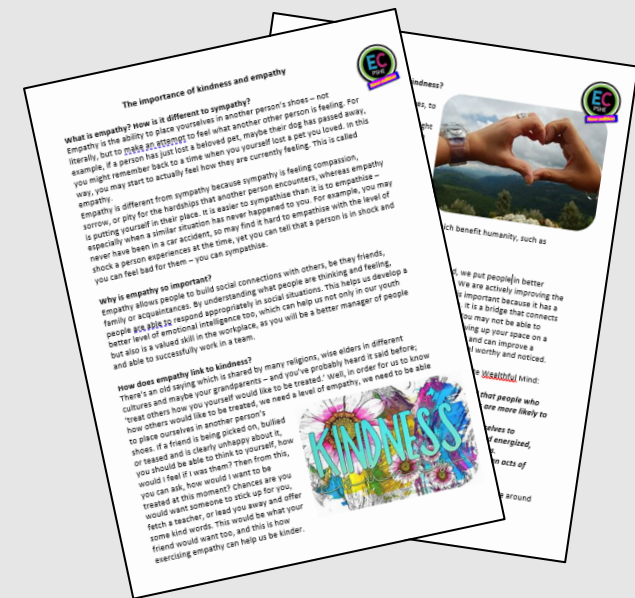
Why are kindness and empathy so important?



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We will now find out what exactly empathy is, how it's different to sympathy, how it links to kindness and why kindness is so important.

READING: THORNDEN THREE



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We will now find out more about the importance of kindness, empathy and sympathy.

THORNDEN THREE = GUIDED READING



What is empathy? How is it different to sympathy?

Empathy is the ability to place yourselves in another person's shoes – not literally, but to make an attempt to feel what another other person is feeling. For example, if a person has just lost a beloved pet, maybe their dog has passed away, you might remember back to a time when you yourself lost a pet you loved. In this way, you may start to actually feel how they are currently feeling. This is called empathy.

Empathy is different from sympathy because sympathy is feeling compassion, sorrow, or pity for the hardships that another person encounters, whereas empathy is putting yourself in their place. It is easier to sympathise than it is to empathise – especially when a similar situation has never happened to you. For example, you may never have been in a car accident, so may find it hard to empathise with the level of shock a person experiences at the time, yet you can tell that a person is in shock and you can feel bad for them – you can sympathise.

Why is empathy so important?

Empathy allows people to build social connections with others, be they friends, family or acquaintances. By understanding what people are thinking and feeling, people are able to respond appropriately in social situations. This helps us develop a better level of emotional intelligence too, which can help us not only in our youth but also is a valued skill in the workplace, as you will be a better manager of people and able to successfully work in a team.

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How does empathy link to kindness?

There's an old saying which is shared by many religions, wise elders in different cultures and maybe your grandparents – and you've probably heard it said before; 'treat others how you yourself would like to be treated.' Well, in order for us to know how others would like to be treated, we need a level of empathy, we need to be able to place ourselves in another person's shoes. If a friend is being picked on, bullied or teased and is clearly unhappy about it, you should be able to think to yourself, how would I feel if I was them? Then from this, you can ask, how would I want to be treated at this moment? Chances are you would want someone to stick up for you, fetch a teacher, or lead you away and offer some kind words. This would be what your friend would want too, and this is how exercising empathy can help us be kinder.

What are the different types of kindness?

There are many different types of kindness. We can be kind to ourselves, to others, and to wider society too. An example of being kind to ourselves might be ensuring we get a good night's sleep (and maybe even a lie-in!) after a busy and exhausting day. Being kind to others is what we usually think of when we talk about kindness – and this really is treating people with the same level of thought, courtesy and respect which we ourselves would appreciate. As for being kind to wider society, this would involve acts which benefit humanity, such as ensuring we always recycle.

We will now find out more about the importance of kindness, empathy and sympathy.

THORNDEN THREE = GUIDED READING



Why is kindness so important?

Kindness is contagious – it spreads. When we're kind, we put people in better moods and they are in turn more likely to be kind too. We are actively improving the world – without even putting much effort in. Kindness is important because it has a way of touching the human heart as no other action can. It is a bridge that connects people from different backgrounds, races, and cultures. You may not be able to speak a person's language, yet offering them a sweet or giving up your space on a bus is kindness in any language. Kindness also lowers stress and can improve a person's level of self-esteem, as you are helping a person feel worthy and noticed.

And there's science behind it too! As pointed out by the website Wealthful Mind:

In a study by the University of California, Berkeley, it was found that people who get a lot of encouragement and support from others in their lives are more likely to achieve their goals.

Studies show that mental blocks can be lifted when we expose ourselves to kindness.

When we witness acts of kindness, we become happier and energized, and this positive energy can fuel us in overcoming our own limitations.

Some studies have even found that there is a direct correlation between acts of kindness with happiness among people who receive them.

So what have you got to lose? Make a conscious effort to be kinder to those around you and see how the kindness spreads. There's no downside with this one!

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- So, being kind is important because it helps to create a positive and supportive environment, promotes empathy and understanding, and can improve the well-being of both the giver and the receiver.
- Kindness can also lead to strong relationships, foster a sense of community, and contribute to a more harmonious and compassionate society.
- Additionally, showing kindness can inspire others to be kind as well, creating a virtuous cycle of positivity.

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The benefits of kindness clip task

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9UByLyOjBM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciVdg5O2b-w>

Who does kindness start with?

What have studies shown?

How else does kindness improve your health and the health of others?

Give a few examples of how you can pass on kindness:

What does research show?

What does research show about if you do just one act of kindness a day?

What about children who are kind?

What did studies show about the cells of people who are consistently



Watch the clips and complete your questions in your booklet. We will then go through the answers together so you can fill in any you've missed.



The benefits of kindness clip task

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O9UByLyOjBM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ciVdg5O2b-w>

Who does kindness start with?

You.

What have studies shown?

Kindness reduces stress, anxiety and depression – it also makes you calmer and happier.

How else does kindness improve your health and the health of others?

Your body is flooded with happy hormones such as serotonin, endorphins and oxytocin. You may feel more confident, have less pain and also possibly live longer.

Give a few examples of how you can pass on kindness:

Hold the lift open for someone, give someone spare change for a coffee, helping someone carry shopping, or just smiling more.

What does research show?

We can improve wellbeing by being kinder to others.

What does research show about if you do just one act of kindness a day?

People reported increased life satisfaction.

What about children who are kind?

They reported having more friends.

What did studies show about the cells of people who are consistently kind?

Their cells have longer telomeres, which implies a longer life expectancy.



Where does kindness originate from anyway?

Oi, I hope you're gonna' share that, matey.



The origins of kindness are difficult to trace as it is a complex human trait that has likely developed over time through various cultural, social, and biological influences. However, some theories suggest that kindness has evolutionary roots, as cooperative and empathetic behaviour has likely helped early human societies to survive and thrive.

Additionally, the development of moral systems, religions and codes of conduct, have encouraged people to treat others with kindness and respect. Ultimately, the origins of kindness are likely a combination of nature and nurture, shaped by both biological and environmental factors. **Optional, but very interesting clip (just watch and listen):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gy5hejk4vl4>

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How can we build resilience when life throws us challenges?



Useful mental health helplines and charities:

Childline. Support for people under 19 in the UK. Call: 0800 11 11

Young Minds. Child and adolescent mental health charity. Call: 0808 802 5544 (parents' helpline)

Mind. Mind is a charity that provides advice and support for people experiencing a mental health problem in England and Wales. Call: 0300 123 3393 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 6pm)

Rethink Mental Illness. Support and advice for people living with mental health problems. Call: 0300 5000 927 (Mon to Fri, 9.30am to 4pm)

SANE. National out-of hours mental health charity offering emotional support, guidance and information. Call: 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm to 10.30pm)

Mental Health Foundation. Information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities.

Need Support? You're Not Alone

If anything in today's lesson has affected you, or you want to talk to someone, there is help available.



Mental Health & Low Mood

YoungMinds – <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>
Kooth – <https://www.kooth.com>
Mind – <https://www.mind.org.uk>

Talk to Someone

Your Tutor or Head of Year – We're here to help.
Wellbeing Team and School Nurse
Report a Concern on Satchel
Safeguarding Team with the Purple lanyards

Healthy Lifestyle

NHS Every Mind Matters – <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters>
Change4Life – <https://www.nhs.uk/change4life>

Apps That Can Help

Calm – For mindfulness and sleep.
Headspace – Meditation and stress relief.
Clear Fear – Manage anxiety (designed for young people).
MeeTwo – Anonymously talk to other teens, moderated by experts.

Eating Concerns

Beat Eating Disorders –
<https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk>
NHS Live Well – Eating Disorders –
<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/conditions/eating-disorders/>