



## **Acts of Kindness**

### Let Loving Kindness Be Emblazoned On Our Banner

“Kindness will build our resilience and positivity, as well as concern for ourselves and others. It will protect us against the self-doubt or self-pity that would otherwise sap our strength. It will radically enhance our connections with others and our awareness of our capacity to give generously – and to reap the benefits that come with this. Bringing kindness into the bigger picture of our lives will wake up and utilise our powers to choose, and to choose wisely and well. It will make us less needy and much easier to like and to love.” Stephanie Dowrick, *Everyday Kindness*.

So much of this wonderful statement on kindness from Stephanie Dowrick bears contemplation. Allow me to unpack it and draw resonance from it.

“Kindness will build our resilience and positivity, as well as concern for ourselves and others.” Indeed, kindness allows us to expand and grow, rather than to shrink and to stay safe. I love how Dowrick begins with the self, and then others. Kindness, offered to ourselves encourages us to try again when our first attempt may not succeed; to gently soothe ourselves rather than scold, and then offer this grace to others.

“It will protect us against self-doubt or self-pity that would otherwise sap our strength.” Of course, self-doubt and self-pity are energy sappers. The energy required to ruminate and second guess our motivations and actions and feel sorry for ourselves, would better serve us to be directed towards kindness to self and others. As a universal character strength, kindness energises rather than depletes. Unlike self-doubt and self-pity, the more we tap into it, the more generative it becomes. A simple awareness, but profoundly affecting.

“It will radically enhance our connections with others and our awareness of our capacity to give generously – and to reap the benefits that come with this.” Have you noticed how an act of kindness can open the heart? All humans desire, no need, connection with other humans. Offering kindness – going first rather than waiting for it to be offered to us – enables connection which is the balm for our own hearts and a gift to others too.

“Bringing kindness into the bigger picture of our lives will wake up and utilise our powers to choose, and to choose wisely and well.” How marvellous. The intentional self and life we elicited in our personal manifestos feels more possible with kindness. The expansion we feel with kindness opens our hearts – beginning with kindness to self – induces calmness and centredness. From this stillness, we can more readily choose the action which will serve our best self and best choices, rather than reacting to whatever life serves up.



“It will make us less needy and much easier to like and to love”. Ultimately, we all must give ourselves what we need, rather than giving over the power to satisfy our needs to others. In doing so, we do not emanate neediness. As mature adults, growing ourselves into beings who do not need others to thrive but gladly benefit from what others freely give, is the aim. By being less needy and more lovable, we attract more connection and more love. It is a win/win situation. And so the paradox of ‘in giving we receive’ plays out.

Loving kindness given to self and others is the key to a healthy self with healthy connections and an ethical life lived justly and well.

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With loving kindness,  
Sue