

## Association

Acts of kindness is a very broad subject. There are tons of things people think are “Acts of Kindness,” so who better to ask, than the people themselves. To really dig deep into this topic, I created a survey to find out what people first thought of when they heard the words “acts of kindness.” I surveyed 50 people from my school (old and new), soccer team, family, church, and friends. There was a mixture of different answers that came in. Some talked about a certain act of kindness. Others shared a definition. One person even said they thought of puppies. What I found interesting was that some of the things people were saying were actually very simple, such as saying “thank you” or throwing away trash that isn't yours. I personally think even the smallest things make a difference. The littlest thing could turn something small into something big. It's something called the butterfly effect. The butterfly effect is a theory explaining how one tiny change in the present state, could lead to a large-scale alteration in the future. Just doing the bare minimum could be everything to someone else.

I once heard a story from someone I knew. My aunty rode the bus one day, sat down in a seat and looked around. On the bus she saw a boy, and he looked very glum and blue. The boy looked up and they both made eye contact with each other. In my auntie's mind, she said she heard the Holy Spirit talking to her. It was saying, “Smile at the boy.” Now my aunty didn't understand the reason the Holy Spirit told her to do that, but she was obedient and listened to its command. As they arrived at her bus stop, she smiled at him and got off the bus.

The next day she saw the same boy on the bus. The boy saw her and immediately got up from where he was sitting. He quickly made his way over to her. It turns out that the day before, he was on his way to kill himself, but when she smiled at him, he decided to reconsider. He said he felt loved for the first time in a long time when she smiled at him. So, the boy thanked my

aunty and swiftly exited the bus. My aunty was so surprised and finally realized why the Holy Spirit spoke to her. They wanted her to save that boy and show the love of God within her.

Performing acts of kindness should be done without expecting anything in return. The actions we take have consequences and our mindset when doing them matter. Our attitude when implementing these acts of kindness can make or break its effectiveness. For example, if you ask someone for help and they complain or whine, then suddenly you may not want their help anymore. Their attitude towards helping you changed your mind. In the same way, when we were “being kind,” are we really doing those things from the kindness of our hearts or did we feel obligated to? Whatever the reason, if we didn’t sincerely want to help, it isn’t really an act of kindness.

Now whatever you did to help someone might have been kind to the other person, but that doesn’t mean you are kind. That would just be considered helping them, but not being kind to them. Helping someone doesn’t necessarily mean you are doing an act of kindness. People help others all the time, but not always for the right reasons. Some do it because they want to seem nice and upkeep the mask they have on. Some do it because they were told to do it. Others do things because they want a reward, praise, or recognition. In other words, you don’t have to be kind to help someone else.

There are so many things to be said about this topic. In summary, you don’t always have to do something extravagant to be kind and make a difference. The simplest things can brighten up someone's day. Just like the boy on the bus, others around us might be going through a hard time. It starts with the little things, such as a smile. As a reminder if you don’t have true intentions then it’s not an act of kindness. If you don’t want to do it, then don’t. Nobody wants to

hear how hard it is to help them or they are being used for clout. Go out, my young padawan. Do good and be kind.