

The Power of Kindness

By Aishwarya Anand

Most of the time, people believe that in order to change the world, they have to do something huge—like cure cancer, start a large and successful business, or become a famous influencer. But in reality, as you grow older, you realize that not everything amazing or great is huge. “Bigger” isn’t always better. Small gestures can create some of the most long-lasting impacts. A smile, a polite wave, or even helping someone carry a heavy item doesn’t seem like a big deal at the moment. But those little kind gestures can stay with someone much longer than you think: weeks, months, and sometimes even years. A small kind act can completely change someone’s day. Maybe someone is having a really bad morning—they feel left out by their friends, failed their math test, and accidentally ruined their favorite shirt in the wash. But then they arrive at school. Someone new invites them to sit at their table during lunch. Their mom drops off a replacement of their favorite shirt. And a friend makes a remark about how articulate they are.

These things seem small—almost unnoticeable. But one small act can make that person feel valued. Instead of going home thinking, “No one cares about me,” they go home thinking, “I feel so loved and seen.” Something interesting about kind gestures is how it becomes a chain reaction. Even if it doesn’t seem like it, kindness spreads—in many different ways. One person holds a door open. Another says thank you and gives a smile to someone else. That someone else goes home in a better mood and might be more appreciative to their family. And just like that, the small gesture of holding the door open for someone blossoms into a domino effect of kindness, allowing more than just one

person to feel appreciated. Kindness is like dropping a pebble in a lake: it splats into the water and creates ripples that move outward.

Sometimes small kind acts are even more powerful because they showcase courage and bravery. Standing up for someone who is being bullied even if you're scared is a tiny action in the moment, but it could mean everything to the targeted person. It sends them a message that they're not alone, and that they're seen. I believe small gestures matter even more in a world where humans are most often busy or distracted. Everyone is on their phones. People rush from one place to another. It's easy to ignore others even when you don't mean to. Despite a busy life, sometimes all people need is not a big solution, but rather a simple hug or a kind word to make their day.

For example, here is a personal experience that my mother shared with me one day. She was standing in line at a grocery store, waiting to return an item. There was a man in front of her, who had maybe over twenty items to return. That man decided that it was unfair to make everyone else in line who had only one item wait for so long, just for him to return all of his items. He then began scanning one of his items, and letting another person return their stuff, then scanning another one of his items, and letting another person go, and so forth. My mother explained to me how much this tiny act of kindness touched her, and she thought about it for days on end. She talked about how that one man's kindness inspired her so greatly, she wanted to do the same good to others. This is just one of many examples of the ripple effects of small, kind gestures.

Communities are not only built by laws and grand openings, but are also built by daily interactions. A neighborhood becomes stronger when people gather together and greet each other warmly. A workplace becomes healthier when employees and colleagues offer

each other support instead of constant criticism. These improvements not only begin with policies, but also with simple choices—to be kind, understanding, and to show love in small ways. Many people underestimate their ability to make a difference. We might think, “It’s just a small thing. No one’s ever going to notice.” But small things, especially ones that are done with love, are never *truly* small. A seed is small, yet it can grow into a massive tree that stays standing for generations to come. Kindness can grow someone’s heart in the same way.

In a world that mostly celebrates big achievements and grand changes, we sometimes forget the quiet strength of small acts of love. However, the world becomes better not all at once, but with one small act of kindness at a time.