

“Small things change the course of lives more readily than all the grandest coincidences ever could.”–*Charming Artemis* by Sarah M. Eden.

Imagine you are a young child at recess. Everybody has a playmate, except you. You ask to play; everyone says no. You just stand there, alone. It feels like no one wants you. You are forgotten. Then, imagine a kid runs up to you and asks you if you want to play. You are surprised at first, then a huge grin splits your face. You are overjoyed.

That day, you go home and your mother is standing alone in the kitchen, downcast. You want your mother to feel the happiness you feel. You run outside, and pick handfuls of wildflowers. You wrap your arms around her, holding the flowers before her. Her face lights up as she smiles.

This is called the ripple effect. When you throw a stone into a pond, there is a splash and then ripples spread from that spot outward. The stone you throw doesn't have to be big. A small stone will still spread wide ripples. A simple smile, a kind gesture, or a compliment can have a big impact. Then those 'ripples' can spread through the whole 'pond'.

There are times where we feel forgotten, unneeded. Sometimes, it takes all we have to hold back from crying. At times like that, we think 'I just want to be alone'. Sometimes that is true. The thing is, a lot of the time when we are alone, we are not able to convince ourselves that we are actually wanted, something that can happen when we are with other people. When they say the most simple things, like 'are you okay?' or 'do you want to join me?' it can lighten our day, help us look at things from a new perspective. We don't need grand gestures. We just need a hug, a kind word.

The small actions we choose are what shape us into good people. No one can fix every person's problems, but we can lighten their load and help them keep going. Someday, maybe they will do the same thing to others.

Margaret Astrid Lindholm Ogden once said "Every small, unselfish action nudges the world into a better path. An accumulation of small acts can change the world." I wholeheartedly agree with this sentiment. Even if you are the only one taking these small actions, you can still make a difference. As Anne Frank wrote "One small act of kindness may not change the world, but it may change the world for one person." You don't have to impact the whole world. One person is enough.

Sometimes when you make a kind gesture it won't affect a person, and that is okay. When you are kind, it can help *you* and change *you*, regardless of whether or not it helps the other person.

Every little thing we do can affect another person's life. It is up to us to choose to affect lives by being kind. As Leo Buscaglia once said, "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." With one small act, we can change a life, and someday, the world.