



MENTAL HEALTH

## KINDNESS IS NOT BEING A PUSHOVER

**Kindness is an amiable characteristic to foster, but there is a common misconception that the kind are naïve and more likely to be weak or easier to persuade or intimidate.**

This could not be further from the truth. Demonstrating kindness in the face of adversity usually requires tenacity and admirable strength of character. Kindness is celebrated globally on the 13th of November on *World Kindness Day* and was established by The World Kindness Movement in Tokyo in 1998.

It's a day for good deeds and acts of kindness between people and nations and anyone can partake by sharing goodwill.

### The kind are strong

Kindness has become such a desirable quality that it is even being emphasised by universities in the application for admission process, "including Harvard," says behavioural expert Karyn Hall.

"Being kind often requires courage and strength. Kindness is an interpersonal skill," she writes for Psychology Today.

"Science has now shown that devoting resources to others, rather than having more and more for yourself, brings about lasting well-being," says Ms Hall.

### The kind are healthier

According to Mayo Clinic, acts of kindness can be associated with the following health benefits:

- fewer symptoms of depression,
- less pain and tension caused by migraines and
- there is even some evidence that it may slow the ageing process.

Dr David R. Hamilton, author of *The Five Side Effects of Kindness*, suggests it is also good for heart health and for relieving anxiety because it releases feelgood hormones like serotonin and oxytocin.

### You can convert to kindness

If you find that kindness is not a characteristic that comes naturally to you, the good news is that you can change this, according to Mayo Clinic. "You can rewire your brain to be more present and kinder to others, giving your mood a daily boost."

This is how the clinic suggests you do that:

- learn about and practice Loving Kindness Meditation,
- set simple goals to do kind acts and then achieve them,
- focus on the things that you are grateful for and practice gratitude daily.