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The Ripple Effect: How Parental Kindness Impacts Kids & Teens

MENTAL HEALTH SERIES



Kindness Led By Example

Cultivating a kindness-focused home is an environment most parents are seeking to create. One challenge that often steps in the way of parents are conflicts that seem to arise one after another. Parents begin to help their children navigate conflicts at a very early age and as one parentguidance.org contributor suggested “it seems to never stop.”

So, how do we support our children through these ever so familiar challenges in a kind, supportive and empathetic way? The short answer is working on just that, ourselves first. Modeling what dealing with conflicts in a kind manner in front of our children will give them a foundation to turn to when they inevitably find themselves in a similar situation.

When conflicts arise, addressing them with kindness and empathy can transform challenges into opportunities for growth. Teaching children to resolve disagreements constructively involves guiding them to express their feelings calmly, listen actively, and find mutually agreeable solutions.

Next time you are out in public and a small conflict arises, remember this is your time to model. To successfully model expressing feelings calmly, you may remind yourself to take a deep breath or even walk away from the situation to compose yourself and plan how you will handle the situation in a calm way.

As you make your way back to resolving the conflict, you may say things like “Can you help me understand this policy?” or “Can we work together to find a solution?” Making sure you are making space to model for your child what listening actively looks like.

As you come to a mutually agreeable solution and leave the situation, take the time to share with your child the outcome. You might say “While, I did not get the outcome I was looking for, I was able to calmly work with others to create an agreeable solution.”

Kindness As A Key Component Quiz

Parents are always looking for simple ways and practical advice to help them to integrate kindness into their daily lives because parents know the important role kindness plays in the well-being of those around them.

Parents can ask themselves these three questions to consider their home's kindness climate:

Do we have a kind home atmosphere?

If your home is an environment where you nurture close and supportive relationships that provide positive encouragement - you are off to a great start. To continue this, you may consider setting family kindness goals, creating a gratitude wall, or practicing regular acts of kindness together.

Do we resolve conflicts in a kind way?

If/when conflicts arise within the home they are resolved in a calm manner - you are off to a great start. Discuss ways to handle conflicts in a kind way and do this often. Talking through how to resolve disagreements with empathy and respect will give kids the tools they need when conflicts with peers arise.

Do we have a family act of kindness?

If weekly your family does something kind for another - you are off to a great start. It could be as simple as driving a kid home from soccer practice because his parents get home late from work. Consider what your family act of kindness is weekly and challenge your children to do one daily act of kindness for another child.

Featured articles

Kindness has remarkable benefits for both mental and physical health

Kindness increases health and well-being! Here are some facts!

- **Pain** - Acts of kindness produce endorphins, the brain's natural painkillers.
- **Stress** - Kind people have 23% less cortisol (the stress hormone) and age slower than average.
- **Anxiety** - Anxious individuals who performed six acts of kindness weekly had increased positive moods and decreased social avoidance after one month.
- **Depression** - Giving of ourselves improves life satisfaction, physical health, delays mortality, reduces depression, and increases well-being.
- **Blood Pressure** - Acts of kindness release oxytocin, which dilates blood vessels and lowers blood pressure, protecting the heart.

Kindness might start by changing the narrative...inspiration below!

Do you ever feel like a broken record when it comes to handing out advice to your children? "Say please and thank you, do your best, and be kind."

Share this story with your child:

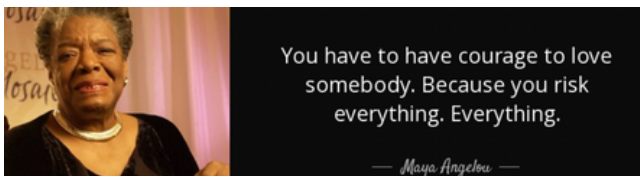
In a refreshing twist on the typical senior prank, the 2024 graduating class of Concordia High School decided to leave a positive mark on their community. Instead of pranks, the seniors raised \$2,680 for Champion Donuts, a struggling business that has been a beloved part of their mornings for years. Their efforts culminated in a heartfelt donation that moved the owners deeply.

Conversation Starter:

Think about posing this question to your child after you share this story. Ask, your child if they think going forward, instead of a prank, will future seniors do a project that spreads more kindness?

Talk about it:

Changing the narrative around kindness benefits everyone. Seeing kindness as a strength creates supportive environments and stronger, more inclusive communities and schools. It also boosts mental well-being, increasing happiness and reducing stress.



Researchers from UCLA, conducted a study in 2019, to find whether kindness can be contagious.

What they found, in short, is kindness is indeed contagious. Spreading kindness can help our whole society!

Need help improving your own mental health? Take a course on ParentGuidance.org



Everyday Happiness

Begin Course

ParentGuidance.org offers several free courses to help improve your own self-compassion, mindfulness, and coping skills to handle anxiety and daily stressors.

Works Cited

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