

2019 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

Kindness, A seed that can be Planted in Everyone.

(Original)

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Pen in my hand, thinking about what kindness means to me takes me back to the hot, sunny day in my science class when we were talking about the extinction of elephants. I start remembering the story we were told about these majestic animals: "Class, the disappearance of these animals will severely affect the ecosystem of forests as when elephants eat fruits, they throw the seeds of the fruits somewhere else, thus, spreading diversity throughout the forest." Huh, I thought, in that case, kindness is also like a seed, it can be spread around to everyone, we just need those elephants to do it.

Kindness is a funny thing, it is a simple action that has the ability of changing someone's mood, someone's thoughts, someone's whole life! Kindness can be learning a little bit of the French language and saying "Bonjour" and "Merci" to the bus drivers (these were in fact the first words of French I learned when I moved to Switzerland). Kindness can be helping an elderly with their bags. Kindness can be talking to a new girl who is alone on the playground and asking if she would like to play; and not even knowing that this simple act of kindness would have formed a 7 year long friendship.

To my 8 year old sister, kindness means going to play with someone if they are lonely.

To my mom, kindness means to have empathy and to be mindful of others emotions.

To my dad, kindness is a selfless act without expecting anything in return.

To me, kindness means having an impact on someone's life in a positive way.

No matter our definition of kindness, we would all agree that kindness means a positive change. I am going to be honest with you, I didn't think of myself as a kind person. All my life, people have been kind to me, my parents, my friends, my sister, even strangers and I forgot how important their influence has been to me. Learning about kindness has finally made me realize its importance, and has put me on the path of becoming an elephant one day; now the question arises, how can we spread this seed around to everyone?

When writing about this essay, I myself learned about how I could be a kinder person, and then it hit me, if I can learn about kindness, then can't everyone? It is said that children

learn most of their fundamental personality traits at a young age and are very influenced by their external environment. In my opinion, the first step in creating a kinder society would be to help our young generation learn what it means to be kind. Children often think that being cool means being a rebel; however, what if we changed the perception of being cool to being a kind person? We should all influence them to be more positive and plant this seed early on in their minds so that it can blossom as fast as possible.

Furthermore, I believe that we should be building a society in which people are recognized for their acts of kindness in the world. Every day, we are put down by the discouraging messages on the news. Not once have I heard about someone who carried out a kind act; all this constant negative news affects our way of thinking. Why not also broadcast positive news to give the people hope about our society?

Finally, the best way to build a kinder society is to spread the kindness. We are all influenced by each other and if you carry out an act of kindness today, it would influence others to do the same. In fact, I am happy to hear that people are already trying to be kinder; for instance, the pay it forward organization, which works by performing kind acts to those in need.

Kindness is a special seed as it can be planted in each one of us, no matter how big, small and different we are. So I urge you to go and encourage people to be kinder, because those elephants don't have to go extinct, we can still save them, we just have to work together.