

2022 International Essay Contest for Young People

[Children's Category – Honorable Mention]

BE KIND.

(Original)

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The first time I heard the word *Value* being used in this context was in my Civic Education class. My teacher wrote 'values' on the chalkboard, describing it as a principle of one's character, one's judgment of what is vital in life. She gave us homework to write out ten values that we know. I went home thinking about this. What are the things that represent people's standards of behavior? What are the things I hold dear?

I got no answers to these things after I pondered for a while, so I did what every lazy student does in that position; I copied from my friend in class.

On my way home, it started to rain. The rain poured without giving prior indications. Everyone frantically ran towards shelters to hide their heads and properties. I remember a younger boy tripping under the burden of his heavy school bag, but I was too much in a hurry to care.

My struggle paid off. I was finally under the roof of a bookshop. I looked at the other people still running helter-skelter and giggled in satisfaction. I was the fastest and luckiest one.

A few minutes later, the man beside me dashed out into the rain. I was perplexed and curious at the same time. If he would end up running out back into the rain, why did he struggle so much to get in initially? Did he have to pee? My eyes followed him.

It turned out he didn't need to pee; He had to go and help.

An old woman who sells *Garri* under an umbrella outside was struggling to keep it over her goods. The young man helped her out while standing in the rain himself, carried her bowl of *Garri*, and arrived with the old woman in tow. I remember there was something shiny in her

eyes. Maybe it was tears.

After that, I decided to be more observant of my immediate environment. While so many were frantically running to beat the rain as I did, I saw the policewoman at the T-Junction carefully guiding some ducklings to safety. I saw the young boy that slid earlier run back into the rain to pick up my water bottle (it had fallen off my basket earlier). I saw many shop owners kindly opening their doors to strangers seeking protection from the belting rain. I was in awe. Many people were doing their part in keeping others safe.

That is when it hit me. This is something one should hold dear. This is value. Kindness is value.

Think about it. If we were all kind to one another, a lot of the violence we see today would vanish. If we all had compassion, wars and genocides would find no place in our world. If we hold kindness dear, we will care for -not just ourselves- but other co-habitants of mother-earth; and the ecosystem will greatly benefit. Look how fast our environment is changing with the emergence of global warming. We do not mind how our actions affect our environment and others. If we have kindness at heart for the future generation, we would choose our actions with them in mind. Topics like climate change might even start to become obsolete. Most importantly, if we were kind to ourselves individually, even when it is inconvenient, society would be filled with happy people.

I did not completely figure all these out on that rainy day obviously, but I decided then that kindness is a core value through which we can create a sane society. And although there are other important values like honesty and integrity to mention a few, I believe kindness is one value that can cause a massive change in the society we live in.

Next class, I wrote another solution to my assignment. This time, it was original. And kindness was the first on my list.

It didn't have to rain the first time I intentionally tried out kindness, you see. I filled my brother's bottle with water after I did mine. He was pleasantly surprised. I was happy. Win-win.