



Wellbeing Tips

Practicing mindfulness for yourself and others



Practising mindfulness through kindness

Practising mindfulness through kindness is a simple yet powerful way to nurture our wellbeing. Like mindfulness, kindness is a human quality that requires intentional action and practice to realise its potential, and also like mindfulness, kindness is good for our physical and emotional wellbeing. Research shows that practicing kindness stimulates the vagus nerve, which is connected to the brain's receptor network for oxytocin, the soothing hormone.

Kindness triggers the reward system in our brain's emotional regulation centre, releasing dopamine, which is responsible for positive emotions. Kindness reduces stress, anxiety and depression, putting us, and others, at ease. Practising kindness works wonders in the relationship we have with ourselves, and with everyone around us.

The more we practice kindness, the better we get at it, until we unconsciously choose kindness over our habitual reactions, even in challenging moments. Kindness can begin with small acts; offering a smile to a stranger, giving way in traffic, or patiently helping a colleague – there are countless ways to show kindness to others. But showing kindness to yourself is equally important. Ways to practice self-kindness include:

- Noticing your self-talk and speaking to yourself with positivity and kindness. Treat yourself as you would a loved one or friend, with acceptance and support instead of judgement.
- Practice being kind, especially when you are cranky, as this is when it is hardest. Use the acronym S-T-O-P: Stop; Take a breath; Observe what is happening; Practice responding rather than reacting.
- Practice daily loving-kindness meditation by spending time repeating affirmations such as “May I be peaceful” or “May I be filled with loving kindness” (or one of your own choosing), then directing the same wishes towards the people around you, even those you find challenging.

Over time, these practices can increase positive emotions, build resilience and foster more compassionate relationships, promoting personal and communal wellbeing.