

The Kindness Diet

Written by Mari-Lyn Hudson Harris
My vision and passion is to have world kindness.

At the end of this book, I ask you to create some Kindness Bucks and help seed kindness with hour bucks in your world. Spread kindness around, three acts of kind deeds per day would result in World Kindness.

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The Headlines

Unappreciative Bosses – lose people in a meaner & tighter job market; try killing employees with kindness.

“It’s all about the relationships. **Why haven’t more companies embraced the relationship component in the workplace?**” Background the New York Times May 31, 2000

“Why aren’t we more family friendly? With great people you can go anywhere. What’s your competitive advantage?”
www.morebusiness.com

“Are you profiting from rudeness & bad manners?” Gievinella Gonther co-author of Rude Awakenings

It’s amazing how companies will invest in human capital and create economical capital.” Washington Post Oct 2003.

“How are you branding your biz? Why do we need to complicate relationships?” from the inside success show.com Randy Gibert

“Kindness is a superior approach to HR” www.canadaone.com

There are pages of headlines of our challenges and problems, what are we waiting for something that is packaged up and expensive? Why?

The link is between innovation and altruism. Paul Newman has donated over \$150.M over 23 years. “Shameless exploitation, in pursuit of the common good.”

Supervalu stores generated 25% of the \$385.8 Million, in net revenues for sociopreneurism, by selling products that are just good for business and the people who buy them.

“A value led business can be highly profitable, there are plenty of companies thriving today. Altruism is the old answer. The new answer is it’s just good business. If you want to be more profitable, why don’t you try it?” Ben & Jerry Ice Cream Homemade Products

The Good Brand is:

Authentic, healthy, it articulates to the core values of the company, to project to the world view of who you are about, and the people get to experience who you are. It's about Love, Loyalty and Passion.

My Wake Up Call

It was in 1999, I was burnt out, from working with start-up companies, coaching, mentoring, helping new entrepreneurs develop their business plans. My business partner Ann Peters and I decided to write a book for all those that needed help, we named it BYOB – Build Your Own Business. An owner's manual in growing and developing your business.

Shortly after getting the book written and self-published, I went off marketing it, I became burnt-out, emotionally and spiritually bankrupt. Some would call this a Spiritual Awakening.

I started to do some self-reflection into what my purpose was - who am I? What am I doing here? I had a hard time to ask for help or receiving it for that matter. After some time in not finding work I ended up living with friends.

Surrendering

One day one of my dearest friends, Sandie suggested that I just surrender. She had been doing it on her own, and she would be willing to support and walk me through it.

I spent a lot of time pacing the floor just surrendering, letting everything go. Sandie would call me, or I would call her, sometimes we would talk up to 10x per day. "How am I doing?" I didn't know if I could last another day just by surrendering and doing nothing! Then, one day I decided I was going to watch TV, when the remote wouldn't click on, I started to laugh, I realized in that moment, I didn't have control. In a spiritual level anyway, I did in an emotional one, as we do have free will, the choice in how we respond and react. I was doing a lot of reacting on my way to be bankrupt, by not receiving, allowing or simply by not asking for help.

During the spiritual awaking process, I experienced my car not working, I lived in an area where wasn't a bus service, I felt like I was in the middle of nowhere. Everything was going wrong. Then one day, I just asked God "What should I be doing? What's my purpose? The answer: To be of Service. WHAT? What does this mean? How? From that moment, when I asked for help things started to shift.

When is it a time when we become conscious of living? I say, when we come into ourselves, it is when we question of the kind of footprint what we want to be know for, when we grow up. Or when a disaster strikes, our health fails us, friends and family are passing on, we may feel empty inside, we are not happy, for many reasons we question our life.

For some people that may never happen, for those of us who are inspired to be a BIG difference or want more out of life, we have a responsibility to take action. Our action is what leads us to become want we want to become. Where are we is what we are. To know that we are wonderful loving beings which God has created us to be. The gifts that we give back will be up to us, this is our gift that we will share with the world.

Kindness is my gift that I give from one heart to another. I am challenged many times to be more conscious of what I am saying or doing. Spoken words and actions that need to be kinder, "**Kill them with Kindness**" this will turn people around in their perceptions and beliefs. Does it? Will it?

Kindness has been my journey to discover, to speak about, to take a look at and to learn how to be more kind to myself. Simple things, like thanking myself for cooking a wonderful meal, taking myself out for a walk, being grateful for my own company and birthing my own passions.

Many people have asked me about surrendering, why did I do it? I would answer do you want the marketing story or the truth? The Marketing story was simply a change, to re-invent myself. The other persons reply would be "Oh."

The truth is, this was my experience, "my truth". We all need to be open and willing for the answers to come to us. The answers will find us, we just need to be aware and listen. These awakenings I believe really occur during an illness, or a family tragedy, or when we just finally give up, let go, or surrender.

I began to ask God how he wanted me to be of service? "Kindness." Kindness? "Yes do a Kindness Conference." I said, "what?!!" At the same time I am remembering that I made an agreement with God, to get me out of this mess and I will speak of you always. Listen, "God has a plan for our lives, it/she/he/the Universe whatever you want to call it, has a bigger dream than what we can possibility dream for ourselves."

Our job is not to figure out of 'how' it is going to come to be, we just have to ask, believe, then everything will happen for us, it's like things are attracted to us. Sandie, (my friend who listened and coached me through it all) used to say

“Get off the ways and means committee.” Or “Quit going to the curb to recycle the things we have let go of by surrendering it.”

I started in asking people for help to put together a Kindness Conference – since I didn’t know a lot of people in Edmonton, I just asked that God put the people in front of me to help me pull this conference off.

I also connected with a few Gals who started a Random Acts of Kindness week, (Colleen Ring & Debbie Riopel, who formed kindness week from a random act of violence) they introduced me to a few more people, one of my greatest supporters and sponsor was Brian Sherrington of Signature Printing. After hearing about kindness on Oprah, he created **Kindness Diary for Friendships**. He gave us some to sell at the conference, since our conference was aimed for companies – workplace wellness. Since, we were doing the conference on Kindness in the Workplace, we collaborated and created another book for workplaces. Kindness for Workplaces.

From all the people that I met and wanted to be on the committee for this Kindness Conference we gathered speakers, we got sponsors to pay for most of the products and services. Even though our tickets sales were not enough to cover the expenses we carried on. Brian asked me if I had the energy to do it again the following year. My answer – “Sure why not?” We carried on for another year 2001 & 2002. It was in 2001, that I began the Heart on the Line Awards. People could nominate other people or workplaces or companies for the various awards.

I rekindled my love for art and began to produce hearts out of clay for the awards, calling them “**Heart on the line Awards**” there were many hero’s that were nominated and still are being nominated, every year. Since 2001, over 33 awards have been presented to individuals, colleagues and workplaces from across Canada and into the United States.

Out of this experience I decided to carry on with Kindness in Business. It still is so much needed. The headlines are still there, I began a business plan and my company was formed under Heart@Work.

The challenges I had in getting companies to embrace kindness in their workplaces is difficult, as I ran into a lot of people who thought I was either a flake, a Pollyanna, or some other wonderful choice of names. People seem to think that the simple gesture of kindness, or kind deeds wouldn’t make a difference in how their relationships could work at work.

Once when, I was giving a talk to a group of Rotarians, and one guy jumped up and said, "You obviously don't understand that I have productivity problems." To me, if that is your biggest problem then why not ask your employees in how you can improve on those issues? Get them involved in helping you solve the problems and grow your business. There are so many great successful stories in using a simple Act of Kindness or enhancing your communications to create a happier work environment. My answer for this guy was simple, "That we need to help each other, and be of service to each other." That's it!

Kindness has been lost for a long time. When I started my biz, some people would say "What does kindness have to do with business?" my answer to this question is "Duh?" My answer was not one, of which was expected nor professional as some business people would say I could or should say.

Kindness is the barenessicity of life – (like Winnie Pooh would say) it's the fabric of goodwill that holds each of us together.

Kindness relates to relationships, through customer service, to retention of employees and customers, it is an ongoing concern. How are you going to keep them? Everyone stays where they are appreciated and valued? Do you stay as a friend or employee or customer if you aren't valued and appreciated? No likely. Kindness is a tool, something you can use. Yes, it takes action, it takes words, that are thoughtful and uplifting. So, you see how the simplicity of kind words and deeds can make a difference whether it is in the workplace or with our friends, colleagues or co-workers?

Putting 'human' back into HR

A friend and colleague of mine Olivia McIvor who is a HR professional joined Canada Trust, where she went to work by putting the 'human' back into HR.

She had challenges to overcome, using a word like 'Kindness' in business taken a paradigm shift. Olivia introduced a Kindness program at Canada Trust when TD were merging together. The take-over, the merging and downsizing that was happening at CT was becoming unbearable.

She wrote to everyone to say: "That Kindness is a very tangible and actionable way to bring people together." Everyone came up with ways to add Kindness to their existing initiatives, like the Black Diamond Awards, Healthy Living program, Gallup Opinion Surveys and Community Service Initiatives. Olivia's program was rolled out to 72 branches and approximately 20,000 employees. The Kindness to Colleagues concept was a comprehensive retention tool that effectively was communicated and reinforced with employees that CT/TD that it was a great place to work, even through the merge.

In 2001, TD Trust received the Marketer of the year award, no doubt in my mind that the Kindness program helped them to win this honor.

Still the concept of Kindness is still too much of a pioneer idea. Olivia and I were interviewed together for Canadaone.com and of course we are individually working on our own projects to further advance Kindness as an actionable idea in business, to create healthier and happier places to work.

When people ask me what's kindness got to do with business? To me it's a no brainer – to explain it, to give it a definition: It's about relationships, which start with yourself and what you are willing to share with people. It's about the truth, being honest and perhaps this is the biggest challenge that we all have, we don't want to hear the truth, we would rather blame other people for our problems rather than seeking something different to use, like Kindness to improve the quality our everyday lives.

“Organizations in which employees perceive higher levels of virtuousness have a significantly higher profit margin. Not only revenue and profits are up, but employees are more productive, morale is higher, employee turnover is lower and customers are more loyal. Companies can now cash in on Kindness, up to a 15% return. It's amazing companies that invest in human capital are creating economic capital.”

This study was completed by a UM researcher. Cameron and his research colleagues, David Bright of Case Western Reserve University and Arran Caza of the University of Michigan, first did case studies of companies with a national reputation for being kinder and gentler, including Griffin Hospital in Derby, Connecticut. CH2M Hill a Denver-based engineering and construction firm currently rate by Fortune magazine as one of the top 100 companies to work for. They made it tough, as they sought out organizations that had experienced downsizing in the past five years.

Virginia Gault wrote an article of “**How compassion creates loyalty, as unkind and heartless bosses prompts employee departures**”.

Professor Frost and Dutton advise managers say that “**Actions speak louder than words,**” even if the gesture is as simple as cooking a pot roast for a terminally ill person. That's what a Sr. VP of Cisco Systems Inc., of San Jose, California did.

The Benjamin Group a Silicon Valley based PR Firm, demonstrates its value by taking a stand on how employees are treated, not only by their colleagues and managers but also by their customers, suppliers and other business partners. One day the company a client was abusive to their employee and dropped a million-dollar account, at the time this account was worth 20% of their annual business. Employees were startled that the firm would go so far as the, however the employees were energized too. Inspired by their PR Firms actions they worked extra hard in bringing in new clients, they all won.

What is Kindness?

Can we describe it as a person? It is actually a verb – it is a 'call to action'. To give generously, as we are all connected – it's circular, it sticks us together, like glue. Kindness shares an intrinsic value in our communities; it is what keeps the fabric of goodwill that weaves everyone and everything together. Each thread, whatever the color is, it passes thru to each one of us. It seems every color of thread has a different meaning, a different opportunity to express itself.

Having a business is about having relationships that work, after all who provides the service? Computers are to be an aid or tool to be more productive, they are not the ones who relate to people.

As Barbara Striesand wrote and sang

"People who need people, are the luckiest people."

One of the lessons I learned in my Spiritual Awakening was to treat myself with more kindness. Yes, I practiced it a lot with other people. Yet, I was not treating myself well. I am getting much better at it. I have become more assertive, speak my mind and know my boundaries and how I am going to be treated by other people.

In 2004, I got a few people together to form an advisory board to see what could be done to give Kindness a voice – many ideas came forth. It almost became to be a political party in order to change peoples ideas or opinion of what kindness can do. My question was, "What are we going to do about it?" Kindness is a verb. It takes action to make a difference. After many discussions, we could become the "Shameless Capitalists" these words were to be only used in a positive frame work.

Shameless meaning "without shame" the goodness of people expressing good; a Capitalist is someone who earns money in an honest way, who gives back to the community where 'we' make the profits. When I mention "Shameless Capitalists" it would raise the hairs on peoples back, as people in general would

take the words and misuse this definition. We generally seem to do it a lot with other words, in our language, rather than looking up the word in a dictionary.

Our little newly formed board continued to meet, until we decided that if we each took a small action in being Shameless ourselves we would see change in other people picking up a small step.

My goal is to take Kindness to the New York Stock Exchange. People tend to put their money into something if they think that they will make more \$\$\$. So why not sell kindness shares?

Do you think 911 was a mean for more kindness to be generated? Yes, it was a tragedy, it devastated the world in many ways, economically, many lives were lost. Could it be possible that at the moment of tragedy that more people came together to help each other? As in life, that is all we really have – is each other. Could it be that it happened to create good?

On a daily basis we have many opportunities to give to humanity, the guy who is impoverished begging on the street, we have the opportunity to give him a kind word, buy him a sandwich, bless him, or just have a conversation with this person.

To help someone go across the street, or mail out random acts of messages to encourage people whether we know them or not. (I mailed out my new business cards to people who I had not spoken to for a while, with a individual message to them, the responses I got back were: "Thank you, I am speechless," Thanks for brightening my day." "What a beautiful card and the message just for me." There were those who did not reply back, that's okay.

Every where we are, we are at the right place at the right time to make a difference for someone else. It's not about us, it's about the other person feeling good. What seeds of kindness can we plant?

"Kindness is the glue that sticks us together...use it generously."

Mari-Lyn Hudson

Kindness works from the simple gestures of opening for people, going around with a smile on your face. It's simple, it comes in all shapes and sizes. It is faith, hope trust, Love, peace, success, authenticity, integrity, fun, playful, it's respect, acceptance, appreciation, it's thankful, it's grateful, inspiration, its abundance, it sharing, its creative, it expresses itself by us, through us, through our feelings, by who we chose to be.

Kindness is all knowing, its always here with us, to use to pass it along, to share it to play with it, we can hold it in our hands, in our minds, to meditate on it, to use it generously, it's supportive, its like a comfortable bra, its' our friend, we can take pictures of it, it can be placed near our hearts. It all works best in passing it on.

For some people Kindness is not in their vocabulary, much less to be spoken or acted upon. It's not a word that we think of very often, yet it is there all the time. Always waiting for us to use, to exercise our right to express it, to demonstrate it. In our business environment it's a paradigm shift, a new language to practice.

It's in our personal lives, in our spiritual life, in our businesses, in our workplaces in our playing, it is in our lives period!

It's free, there's no cost to use it, to give it, perhaps I ought to rephrase that, it costs us – we decide how and what. We decide or think it costs perhaps that is why people expect it to work for them only if it is expensive.

How can we get it to be a commodity? Some people think it cannot be. Can it be an intellectual property – Yes, but not a commodity. Why not? It's a currency to spend, to plant in fertile soil.

Kindness is a progressive new brand

It is about being fresh. Being open to inspiration, about collaboration, it's easy, it's got full potential, a triple bottom line, it will improve your quality of life. It is something we can do great together. It's a diet of Kindness to have a happy vibrant life.

Kindness can come in a shape of a heart, or anything that represents Kindness. Some of us expect kindness not to work, because, we think it's too simple of a cure. Some people think it is whitewashing, its' not real. I guess, it could be not real, especially if you don't see it or use it.

Guess what? There isn't a benefit until it is expressed.

You cannot receive happiness until you give it away. It is like Love when you give it away it returns to you. Just like money, you have it you give it away and somewhere, in sometime it is returned to you. Love touches you in an unforeseen place, somewhere where you can't see it. But it is there.

How can we demonstrate Kindness?

It can be demonstrated anywhere, anytime, anyplace it needs to go. So does it need to be directed? Does it know where it is going? Kindness works just like the story in Pay it Forward – what a brilliant idea to be conceived to transform the world, by a little boy, who has a dream. World Kindness by passing forward around the world kind gestures, words, thoughts whether they are small or BIG they each play a part. The idea can be very simple, yet it costs nothing but brings much such as a smile. How many times to you think you can smile or say hello to people on the street? Hug people all day long.

When I was in Jamaica a few years ago, come to think of it, many years ago, the locals greeted people by smiling, saying hello, good morning etc. by the end of the day. By the end of my day, my mouth was sore from smiling so much. It was a feel good, as I felt a connection to the people. They were no longer strangers nor did I feel like a stranger.

One day, my friend and I took a bus into town, in our return to our hotel we missed our bus stop at the very end of the bus's trip. The driver noticed that we were still on the bus. He chatted with us, and drove us all the way back to our hotel. What an adventure!

How can we Pass Kindness Forward?

What do we do, keep track of our actions. How about if we had a 30 day experiment? Everyday to do a simple gesture 3x per day until the end of 30 days. That's 90 kind acts per person per month. If I had 30 people to repeat this exercise that would be 2,700 acts. Get the picture? I believe that we could easily have world kindness in no time flat.

What if we decided to take on bullying in our schools. What if kind deeds were practiced rather than hitting or beating someone up?

Mental Health Association in 2005, was targeting the schools saying being mean is cruel. Being kind is cool. Be kind, smile, laugh it's good for your immune system.

"A kind word or deed can reduce stress and have a very positive effect on the immune system" *According Dr. Susan Abbey of the Heart & Stroke Foundation of Canada.*

One day someone asked me "Do you know how many times your little Hearts go around?" (I make little hearts out of clay with inspiring words on them, they are

meant to uplift someone's day, to be heart-felt) My reply was no, this gal said "she would really like to know".

You see, I wanted to contribute in some way to give kindness a voice, so originally, if I sold the little hearts would give a voice to Kindness and get on the New York Stock Exchange to give its own currency. All that needed to be done is to sell 200,000 of them. The Inspirational Hearts would sell for \$5.00 a piece. This was an exciting idea and very simple to do. I use them sometimes as my calling cards. Not too many people give them back or not chose to take one.

One time a guy got one that said, "Mentor" as he picked it anonymously from my bag, "WOW" that is what I think I am. Maria, says she leaves her heart on her desk, which she says her co-workers come by once in awhile for a bit of inspiration for the day.

"According to Mark McCormack, author of What They Don't Teach You at Harvard. The art of spreading kindness is not only emotionally satisfying; it may even help you to reap rewards in the future."

The idea that Olivia had in launching her Kindness to Colleagues program, that there were themes of Kindness in our lives are:

1. Kindness to ourselves
2. Kindness to our colleagues
3. Kindness in our communities

"Kindness is woven into our lives many times over, it's actually everywhere –seen and unseen. All in all it is recognized as a kind act; sometimes we think it's an obstacle or challenge to overcome. Everything is a blessing, it is all a matter of changing how we look at things."

Wayne Dyers from "Power of Intentions"

Kindness to Oneself is one of the most challenging aspects to do. This for me was by biggest challenges, to really look at. I was always willing to help others 1st before me, even sometimes beyond what my resources were. Being kind to myself meant how can I make a difference and still be healthy and happy? I had to start treating myself as a valued and deserving person. It's true we train people how to treat us. If we teach people to disrespect us, then that's what they will do. I began to ask myself what brings me Joy? What makes me feel happy?

One of the first steps is that we need to look after ourselves. We are #1. Here are thirty ideas that you can do for yourself.

Kind acts for our self ideas:

1. Take time out for yourself 15-20 minutes per day
2. Drink 6-8 glasses of water a day
3. Go for a walk
4. Take yourself out on an artistic date to a place you have been putting off
5. Buy yourself flowers
6. Treat yourself to a massage or spa day
7. Buy a gratitude journal and start writing
8. Take a laughter class or stand up comedy course
9. Learn to say Yes or No more often
10. Keep your promises
11. Sing in the shower
12. Meditate, pray daily
13. Take a well-earned vacation
14. Step outside your comfort zone and do something that rekindles your passion
15. Attend a social event and meet new people
16. Create three positive affirmations
17. Buy yourself a gift you have always wanted
18. Visit a friend you haven't seen in a while
19. Pour yourself a bubble bath and light candles
20. Join a book club and explore reading more deeply
21. List all the things you would love to do and dare yourself to do one
22. Start playing music and swap your favorite music
23. Nurture your body with healthy foods
24. Take a nap
25. Ask for what you want
26. Write a thank you note to someone
27. Love and appreciate yourself
28. Be civil and honor yourself
29. If you make a mistake own it
30. Be your own role model

Kindness to our Colleagues

Who are we? We need to get to know people not just the role that they play, but who are they?

I had this wonderful boss, I was a new recruit on staff and I was warned that my boss could be a bitch. Most of the time in my experience is that people will be tough just to set a boundary and they don't know how, so they may just become that bitch.

Anyway, I just simply got to know her as a person, I would bring her coffee in the morning, and if I had a situation I did not know what to do about it (I was in sales) I would ask her. Soon she took me under her wing and introduced me to other people, and we became friends in the years to come. A couple of years later I got to work with her again. This was truly an intrinsic relationship, just because I treated her with kindness and it was reciprocated.

I have had many experiences that have worked out well. When you give kindness, rudeness, joy or ? it usually comes back, generously many times over.

Whether you are at work, or on a committee take someone out for lunch or coffee and get to know them. See how you can help them or work together at some point of time. Remember it is always about giving back, how big or small is up to you.

PT & Co. Says "The workplace is now as a community more than ever." One of the strongest needs of the soul is for community. We continue to believe that the people who make up the workplace community represent not only a company's greatest asset, but its strength and consolation during dark times. From the recent times dark times in NY, material resources like money is always replaceable; the precious human resources so fundamental to the soul of PT& Co. are not. That's why taking on clients that harm our immediate community or the external communities to which we operate is simply not an option. Preserving the workplace is the quickest, surest way to regain the ground lost, and then some when the economy finally turns the corner into the light of better times."

Kind acts in the workplace ideas:

1. Praise the work or attitude of someone you work with
2. Bring a cup of coffee or tea to a colleague
3. Commit to a random act of kindness day/week/year with your co-workers
4. Put an anonymous supportive note on a co-workers desk
5. Buy a box of popsicles to share with the staff in the summer
6. Hold a diversity potluck lunch and have everyone bring ethnic foods
7. Say Good Morning to everyone you work with if, you don't already
8. Drive a co-worker home or walk them to their car
9. Extend an invite to a shy or new co-worker to lunch
10. Commit to not support gossip or bullying in the workplace
11. Buy flowers and place one on the desk of all your co-workers
12. Clean your staff room and put a table cloth on the lunch table add fresh flowers so that each of your co-workers can enjoy their lunch in splendor
13. Create and celebrate annually a co-workers day
14. Pay attention to positive news and pass it on
15. Start an inspirational library with donated books for everyone to enjoy
16. Commit to helping our your co-workers in their work even the dirty jobs
17. Start a lunch and learn program with topics that are an interest to everyone
18. Seek out a new employee and volunteer to be their buddy for their 1st month on the job
19. Give employees the option to take a half-paid day to volunteer at a local charity of their choice
20. Raise money for your employee initiatives
21. Set up a reward system for kind acts in the workplace
22. Set-up a kind act corner in your office or lunch room
23. Mentor someone and share your knowledge and abilities with them
24. Send out a survey to find some ideas to champion a project that the employee group is interested in doing
25. Send out a survey to find some ideas how to work better with each other
26. Say "Thank you and Please" more often
27. Celebrate each other and your accomplishments
28. Tell your boss how much you appreciate him/her
29. Be willing to report bullying, or unkind acts towards each other in the workplace.
30. Do a Kindness Challenge

Kind acts in your community

Creating a community where everyone gets to know each other seems to take the time to care for on another. When I was working up in the NWT at Norman Wells camp which I went up there to get away for a while (another story) anyway I befriended the wife of the owner of the company who I worked for – she gave me a moose roast. We had this community dinner in one of the houses on the camp, I cooked the roast, everyone chipped in, all those that came for dinner, we all had so much fun. It was an opportunity for all of us to come together to share, after that dinner we all started to look after and out for each other.

I am a big believer in volunteering. Most of my life I have volunteered, whether it was the school yearbook, cooking dinner for orphans at Thanksgiving, being a team leader; helping someone else; mentor; or teach a class. There are many opportunities to be of service.

When you give back to your community, are you doing it for the right reasons? Give because you want to give. Need a pick me upper? Help someone else.

"Turn a scar into a star."

Dr. Robert Schuller Sr.

Oprah has her use your life awards and the Angel Network. These types of ideas are possible wherever you are. Take something that you would like to see changed and use your life to change it. It's your cause, and don't let anyone tell you to quit or give up on yourself.

I just had a meeting with a Linda, who wants to support a woman who is coming out of an abusive relationship and she wants to give her \$50.00 per month for a while to help her get back on her feet. Wow! I got pitter patters in my heart when she said, this is what she wants to do. You may think it won't make a difference – it will without a doubt.

Each and every one of us can make a difference, we do anyway, as our presence makes that difference. What kind of energy do you send out?

The Kindness Diet

It's the new revolution, it's about being happier in our everyday lives, not once in a while, or every second day, it's everyday. Testimonials speak loudly each day, they are endless. Kindness has affected and infected people daily.

When I first spoke of *The Kindness Diet*, people would say, "Hey, we need more of that." Someone is finally doing something positive. An associate of mine, P, Kinkaide tells people of a story in how and when we first met, he thought I was a bit of a flake. Someone is actually promoting Kindness in business??

When I was working at WECA, I put everyone on a Kindness Diet. This meant, everyone gets harmed or hurt by gossip. Since, I may not be able to stop gossip, I just asked that they find something good and gossip about that. Go out and uplift someone else's spirits rather than tear them down. (as time goes by, you are only really tearing yourself down, by putting someone else down) I had given this assignment to all the staff, Board of Directors and our customers.

The Kindness Diet is really about changing how to live your life. We have been so ingrained in not to be selfish – if we are not selfish by putting ourselves 1st, then how can we be of service to others?

Perry later told a story in how we met and what he first thought of me promoting kindness in business. After many discussions, he introduced me to his business network, (yes all 100 of them), sharing with them how I have and how kindness has played a role in turning around Whitemud Equine Ctr. Association, the changes that have occurred in a very short time.

Some of the basic things, that Whitemud desperately needed someone in with people skills, marketing help and could reach out and engage people. There was certainly lots of room to do to improve the communication between all those involved. Like most things, everything seems to get worse before they get better. There are still a couple of people who would rather blame someone else rather than take responsibility in their actions or departments. This is still learning experience that needs to be killed with kindness, patience and firm guidelines.

Service is the key.

If you have read or seen the movie "Pay it Forward", you know that it is at some level has changed you inside. Kindness is everywhere, what are you doing for yourself and others?

Kindness is an action which influences others to accomplish an act or acts that directs people to be more cohesive, collaborative and cooperative.

Kind Acts in the community ideas:

1. Learn to recycle
2. Become a volunteer in some capacity
3. Take pledges to walk or run to support a cause
4. Give a pint of blood
5. Let someone merge into the traffic
6. Donate your time at the local soup kitchen
7. Send a box of donuts to your competitor or organization
8. Participate in a company charity
9. Become a mentor in your community
10. Pay for someone else's coffee
11. Pay the next person's toll
12. Give to a child your time
13. Shovel snow or rake the leaves of your neighbor or senior
14. Become a foster parent
15. Support the environment in using green friendly products or services
16. Pick up litter as you are out and about
17. Undertake a full community project
18. Adopt a 'family in need' at Christmas
19. Find a need in your community and champion the cause
20. Get involved in global or local issues
21. Contribute to your workplace initiative for the community
22. Plant a tree for the planet or do something green for the community
23. Gather professional clothes at work and donate them to a dress for success program
24. Gather eye glasses and donate them to optical stores for Third World countries
25. Read to children and adults in literacy programs
26. Put money in an expired meter
27. Pay for your employees to volunteer in the community on your behalf
28. Perform one kind act per day of your choice
29. Have fund drives such as: books, donating blood, cash etc.
30. Sponsor something you believe in

Other Kindness Capitalists:

Dazzling Gourmet a small home-based business makes jeweled serving utensils. Someone in her family died of Diabetes, so they give 5% of the sales of her bookmarkers to the Junior Diabetes Association in memory of the people who have died.

Serendipity Designs, Carol makes glass jewelry. When she has old stock it is donated to her local Battered Women's Shelters, just to give them something beautiful in their difficult times.

The **Mustard Seed** receives food from restaurants to serve to the homeless or economically challenged people.

These are stories from people who believe Kindness has worked for them:

Kindness at Work

Submitted by Jessica Lloyd

My contract was for 12 months, in my first full-time job ever. I had moved from New Zealand (home) to Sydney, Australia to fill the position as a Product Specialist for an international brand. I am trained in computers, and but it was mostly a sales role. My job was to go through the database at the distributors, and call everyone who bought my brand, to tell them I was a specialist and to call me if they had any problems.

I was not really a specialist, and had to always call someone else when a customer had a problem but this was alright, as I was good at customer service and knew about computers. The problem I suffered was exhaustion. The reason for this was fairly easy to pinpoint, but at the time I didn't understand it. The joy of hindsight!

When I was 20 I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, with only some slight recurring numbness and fatigue as my symptoms. I chain smoked cigarettes, sat on my computer all day and drank lots of coffee. As a poor student, my diet consisted of toast with various toppings – mushrooms, jam, peanut butter – and not much else. No water, no vitamins. Very little of any use entered my body, and it was no wonder I got sick. I was a toxic waste dump.

At 21, when I moved to Sydney, my MS symptoms disappeared, except for the fatigue. This stayed, and my lifestyle there didn't help either. I was tired all the time, but that was normal for me, so I didn't really take steps to fix it. I didn't really understand that there was a problem – not having numbness was so much for me,

that I thought I was healthy! I was actually far from it, but yes, I was better than when I left New Zealand.

After about three months in Sydney and starting my new job, I found a boyfriend, Jeremy. He is my soul mate, and we moved in together three months after meeting each other. Because of an accident which left Jeremy's thumb immovable, he had to find a new way of making money. So, he started selling drugs, and we both had a large supply of all kinds of things at our fingertips. Both of our lives took the normal downward spiral that accompanies heavy drug use.

My work suffered because I was perpetually exhausted, I never got enough sleep because I was 'enjoying' my weekends too much – I would get no sleep on the weekends. I had to sleep in my lunch hour at work, and I found it hard to work up any enthusiasm or energy.

Because the role of Product specialist was for someone who could work autonomously, I was badly suited in my current situation. I had a team leader, but she let us do our thing without much intervention. We were supposed to be mature enough to handle it. She was there for us if we needed help, and was a perfect model team leader, taking care of us any way she could, helping us to meet our targets and move forwards in our careers. If we wanted her help, that is.

The brand that I worked for had mostly forgotten about me, and so my monthly performance indicators were kept very low due to nobody bothering to update them. I was able to keep below the radar, and only do what was required of me. I was bored and tired with no challenges, and an overactive social life.

Near the end of my contract, in fact 2 months before I was due to finish, I was in a state of nervous exhaustion. My relationships were suffering, my health was ok, but I was exhausted mentally and emotionally. Jeremy and I fought a lot, and didn't seem to be able to sort out our problems. I have never had any recurrences of MS, and I wasn't afraid of that, but I didn't realise why I was so exhausted. I just wanted to quit work, and have a rest. To breathe again.

I wasn't coping, I was at the point where Jeremy would ask me if I wanted a cup of tea, and I would have to think really hard about it – my decision making process was being interrupted, which is a sure sign of something wrong. I couldn't even decide if I wanted a cup of tea or not. This is unlike me, as I am normally quite assertive, and know what I want and how to go about getting it, and a cup of tea? Well, that's easy – yes or no.

I emailed my sister from work, telling her I couldn't cope and would she approve of me quitting my job? I bounced my ideas of my wise and sensible older sister lots of the time, and she said if I really wanted to, then perhaps I should. That afternoon, I went to Janine's desk and asked her if she had a spare minute.

She invited me to sit down and I said, "Janine, I want to quit. I'm not coping, and I just can't do this anymore." She was concerned for one of her "children" as she

liked to call us, her eight little children, was looking so forlorn and miserable. She took me into a little room and sat me down.

“Ok, tell me what’s going on.” She demanded of me, and I told her that I was too tired and my motivation and staying power had come to a crumbling end. I just didn’t have it in me, at 22 years old. I was a mess.

Janine worked me through a solution, and explained to me that quitting a perfectly good, well paying job, was not a solution and it would only cause more problems than I started with – having no money is not a joke. I would have to go and find another job, wouldn’t I? What she didn’t know was that Jeremy was a drug dealer, and he had enough money to support both of us for a while until I could get on my feet again. If I didn’t fall flat on my face.

I couldn’t tell her this, and I let her help me. With infinite kindness, even though I had lied to her so many times and had not been the best I could be, she supported me, and helped me to make some proper progress with my accounts. First things first though, I had a week off on paid leave.

She walked me through my job like I should have done months and months ago, turning my messy workstation into a proper place where I could organise my thoughts and actually make more sales. I stopped taking so many drugs on the weekends, and just had them on one night, instead of all weekend.

She wouldn’t let me quit, and for that, I will always be grateful. Imagine what would have happened to me if I had? I did need a rest, but that wasn’t possible, so instead, I got help from a team leader who was always kind to me no matter how many sick days I called in, no matter what excuses I gave her. For this, I will be eternally grateful.

Her kindness changed the path of my life, by allowing me to grow in her presence. Instead of throwing me out on my useless backside, she coached me into productivity and a renewed energy was born. Kindness at work changes peoples lives!

Dog days in Oakville

Mar 19, 2007 08:42 AM

www.thestar.com These stories are what the Star Staff collected. Thank you.

Two weeks ago at the leash-free dog park in Oakville, I was playing fetch with my dog Tyson. There was another dog with his owner who took Tyson's tennis ball, but I figured it was no big deal and did not think twice about it.

The next week when I came back to the dog park, the owner of the dog that took our tennis ball gave me back a ball, apologizing for his dog. It was such a kind gesture and took me by surprise. When going to the dog park, one assumes that you might lose a tennis ball or two - it's just the nature of the dog park. But, he gave us

back a brand new multi-coloured tennis ball for Tyson which he now walks around with in his mouth all the time!

Audrey Brozovic, Oakville



Sometime during the late 90's when I was young, we came to Toronto for a New York Yankees, Jays game.

We parked on Lakeshore and then did a little shopping downtown. When we returned to our car, my dad realized he had left his dome light on and the battery was dead.

We had no other choice but to walk around with a heavy battery and try to find some place to recharge it. Most service stations were either closed or could not help.

Then we ran into a middle-aged man who owned a fleet of converted vans. The man recharged our battery free of charge, gave us drinks and on top of it all, took us back to our car.

What a nice man. It's been probably seven years now and I'm 18. Things like that have made me love the city passionately. I would like to thank that man for his help. I deeply appreciate it.

Johnny McCormick, Penn Yan, New York



In October, 2002 I ran the Toronto Marathon. It was my first and I had set the lofty goal of qualifying for the Boston Marathon.

I felt great and was well on my way to qualifying until the last two kilometres, when I had severe cramping in my calves. I was reduced to stopping every minute or so to stretch and relieve the pain. With about 100 metres to go and only two minutes left to meet my qualifying time, I decided I needed to sit on the curb to rest.

Another runner pulled me up and along [to the finish], giving words of encouragement. He cheered me on as we ran across the finish line together, then disappeared into the crowd.

When I think back to that first marathon, I don't remember the excitement of crossing the finish line so much as the act of kindness from one runner to another. Thanks you for that special memory.

Natasha Cochrane, Vancouver



People read the newspaper to update themselves on the world around them, but more often than not, we read of war, terror, declining economies, and stories of distress.

A friend recently told me to read this section for a change. I was skeptical at first, but after reading a few of the stories, I am hooked. Every day I read through the archives to give myself a boost.

Thank you to the Toronto Star, and the readers for contributing to my renewed sense of optimism and hope.

Pavi Gill, Brampton



Just a note to say how much this forum means to me. I am a news junkie and visit at least a half dozen news sites per day. As we all know, most of the news is depressing.

As a transplanted Canadian living in Florida I make it a point to visit this site to read the positive stories from my homeland, it's a great way to end the day. Thank you for sharing.

Paul Giroux, Sebring, FL



As a Canadian of Japanese descent, I visit Japan every few years. During one visit, my younger sister was careless and left behind a digital camera and camcorder at the Tokyo airport.

When we realized of the loss a few days later, we thought the items were lost for good. But we decided to file a report with the airport security anyway. Just as I was relaying details over the phone, the lady attendant asked me if I was from Canada. I responded that I was, and she said that my name tag was still attached to the bag.

When I arrived at the airport to pick up my items, the security staff told me that I was very fortunate that someone would turn in the items. I asked if the good Samaritan had left any contact info, but they regretfully told me that the family did not.

But they do remember that the family who returned the items, all held Canadian passports.

Kito Takahashi, Woodbridge

In 1981, my then 10-month-old nephew was diagnosed with leukemia and was in SickKids Hospital in Toronto. He was a very sick little boy, and one day my sister got a call that she should hurry to the hospital because things had taken a turn for the worse.

My sister raced downstairs from her apartment and flagged a cab and, sobbing in the back seat, told the cabbie where she needed to go. When they arrived at the hospital and she was fumbling in her purse for money for the fare, the cabbie told her to not worry about it and to just go and take care of her son.

I'm happy to report that my nephew is now 26 years old and a truly terrific person. I'm always moved to tears when I think of the kindness of that cab driver.
Meg Crawford, Kitchener, Ont.



I was 5 years old and was visiting Toronto for the first time with my grandparents. We were walking in Agincourt Park on a beautiful spring day, when all of a sudden my grandpa dropped to the ground. My grandma asked me to run and get help.

It seemed like I was running forever before I ran into a Chinese restaurant. The only thing I could tell them was that my grandpa was sick and needed help. The restaurant staff immediately called for the ambulance and drove with me to where I had left my grandparents.

One of the waiters said there was no time to waste, so they carried my grandpa to their car and drove to the closest hospital themselves. Luckily, my grandpa had only suffered a mild heat stroke and it was nothing serious.

During the very stressful situation, the owner of the restaurant stayed with me and comforted me. It was a tough day for my family, but we got through it.

The kindness of the people from the restaurant really made an impact on me. I will always be grateful to them for their help. And in turn, I make an effort to help others when they ask for it.

Margaret Kipper, Huntsville



I am a single mother of two young girls and one Saturday, we were out doing our errands and running late for a swimming pool birthday party.

I stopped at Walmart to purchase the girls bathing suits, put the kids in the car, got in and drove off to spend my last \$20 for gas. I put gas in, but when I went for my purse, I realized what I had done.

I jumped in the car and sped away having not paid, but hoping my purse was still going to be in the cart where I left it. The cart was there, but my purse and purchase were no where to be found.

I went into the store, but no luck. I was distraught. I took the girls to my mother's and drove back to the parking lot. I searched the garbage cans, hoping that whoever found my purse, took what they wanted and discarded the rest.

Again to avail. I drove home holding back my tears. I parked and walked to the front of the building to get buzzed in because my keys were also in my purse.

A pick-up truck pulled up and the passenger leaned out and yelled: "Are you Julia?" No longer able to hold back the tears I replied: "Tell me you have my purse."

She produced it and the bag. The gentleman and his wife had seen me leave my stuff behind, grabbed it and followed me. They lost me and went to my home to deliver my purse.

I am very fortunate to have angels looking out for me.
Julie Hilliard, Etobicoke

Anonymous acts of kindness catch on

By Jack Broom *Seattle Times* staff reporter

 enlarge



An anonymous person paid for the dinner bill of Mary Ann Johnson, who was eating at Chinook's at Salmon Bay in Seattle. Johnson says she "told my friends about it, and the first thing they said was they'd like to do something like that. So it spreads."

Before Bob Haslam had a chance to thank her, she was gone. In the drive-up lane at a Starbucks in Lynnwood, Haslam reached out for his usual — a nonfat raspberry latte with two Splendas stirred in. But the barista wouldn't take his money.

"She leaned way out and said, 'You're not going to believe this, but the lady ahead of you paid for your latte. She said she wanted to make your day.' " Mary Ann Johnson had a similar experience. She had just finished a salmon pot-pie dinner at Chinook's at Salmon Bay, topping it off with a chocolate sundae.

"When I got ready to go, the waitress told me, 'Your meal's been paid for by another patron. They said it was a random act of kindness.' "

Events like those don't typically make news. There's no Samaritan Index to say whether anonymous good deeds are up 11 percent or down 2 percent from last year, or whether Seattle ranks 7th or 77th in per-capita goodness.

Has this happened to you?

Have you been the beneficiary of an anonymous good deed? Or do you know about one? We'd like to hear about it at: talktous@seattletimes.com

But in countless — and uncounted — ways, gestures like those that touched Haslam and Johnson travel through the community like a good-deed contagious." I told my friends about it," said Johnson, "and the first thing they said was they'd like to do something like that. So it spreads."

Doing good unto others isn't a modern invention, but its place in the American consciousness was influenced partly by a couple of occurrences in California.

In 1982, according to popular account, writer and peace activist Anne Herbert scrawled the suggestion, "practice random acts of kindness and senseless acts of beauty" on a place mat in a Sausalito restaurant.

Then in 1993, a Bakersfield College professor, Chuck Wall, heard a radio report of "another random act of senseless violence" and urged his human-relations students to perform a "random act of senseless kindness."

Many bumper stickers, coffee mugs and refrigerator magnets later, the notion of doing something good for a stranger circulates under various names — making someone's day, "paying it forward" (from a 2000 movie) — or no particular name at all.

A word about kindness

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"

— Martin Luther King Jr.

"My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness."

— The Dalai Lama

"Goodness is the only investment which never fails."

— Henry David Thoreau

—

"Kindness gives birth to kindness."

— Sophocles

—

"You cannot do kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Source: Random Acts of Kindness Foundation

My Kindness Experience at Work

By Sheilah Findlay

I started working at **Whitewater Composites Ltd.** on September 12th of this year, 2006. One week later, on September 19th, when I got home from work, I found out that my sister had passed away during the day. The next day I went to work and told my boss Greg Hawkins about my loss. He was extremely sympathetic and told me that if I needed any time off, please do not worry, to take all the time I needed. As I had just started there a week before, I tried to not to take any time off at all, but ended up leaving early on that Tuesday. I returned to work on Wednesday and was presented with a lovely bouquet of flowers and a beautiful sympathy card, signed by all of the office staff. Their thoughtfulness and concern for me was overwhelming and they will never know how much this gesture meant to me.

I have been at Whitewater Composites Ltd. now for 2 and a half weeks, and I must tell you - I have never worked with a better bunch of people. Everyone has been a joy to deal with and I believe that we are blessed to have such a wonderful company located right here in the Okanagan. Whitewater Composites Ltd. exemplifies the type of workplace that you want to honor and I believe that they ought to be commended for their actions.

***"Kindness that is brought forth, always brings kindness."
-Sophocles (447 B.C.)***

"Could I gain greater cooperation right now by showing genuine kindness and respect than by demanding it?"

By Chapter 91

A couple days ago, I was watching 'Santa Claus is Coming To Town' with my three year old son, and I noticed an important principle of life playing out. In the story, the village dictator (the Burgermeister) had outlawed toys because he had fallen on a toy and broken his leg. No child was to play with any toys or they would be locked up.

Well, Kris Kringle (a.k.a. Santa Claus) was delivering toys to all the kids, so he was branded an outlaw. Public Enemy #1.

When Kris confessed to giving the town's children a bunch of toys, he was to be arrested. In a flash of quick thinking, he presented the Burgermeister with a toy--a yo-yo.

For a moment, the Burgermeister began playing with the yo-yo, reminiscing about his youth, until he was reminded that he was breaking his own law. This

gave Kris an opening to escape.....into the forest, which was the home of The Winter Warlock, who captured Kris.

Again, Kris gave him a toy--a choo-choo train. This kind act melted the heart of the warlock, who let Kris go.

Isn't this how it usually happens in your life?

If you aren't the type, yet, who can inspire the cooperation of others because your kindness makes people want to help you and be around you, then it's time to try ...And even get good at it.

But before you do, think back. And look around.

Who gets the admiration and support of others? Who do people work harder for? Is it the one who brings in the doughnuts for co-workers occasionally, the one who asks respectfully or the one who rants and raves that nothing gets done?

Who would you work harder for?

To make this easier to see, imagine how you would like to be asked (not told) to do something.

Isn't it easier to take when you're asked to drop what you're doing, if the person says something like this?

"I know you're busy and this looks important, however I need to ask you a big favor. Could you...?" Or, "I wonder if I could ask you to take a few minutes to help me with this...?" Or, "I know you've got a lot to do, and I don't want you to get behind on account of?"

Man, wouldn't you like to hear that? What do you hear from the people who make your blood boil?

Things like:

"Get in here, I need your help!"

"You're working OT today, so cancel any plans you have." "Get doing your homework now!" "I need a ride and I have to be there in 15 minutes." Boy, that makes me want to blow a gasket. How about you?

Also, this can be extended to times when we make mistakes. Let's say someone made a big boo-boo. Of course, they get called on it. The boss, co-worker, spouse, whoever it may be loses their temper. They don't care why the mistake was made.

What do most people do? They deny responsibility, of course!

Aaarrgh!

Mistakes are not death sentences. They're truly chances to see where your weaknesses are... golden opportunities to identify what you need to work on to make your health, your business, your relationships and your finances better.

But what do most of us do?

"It wasn't me!! The copier was broken. They didn't return my call. I was stuck in traffic." Etc.

Try this. When you make a big blunder, whether you're alone or if someone else catches it, immediately admit it... ..Immediately. Gracefully.

This takes the wind out of the sails of the person who wants to pounce you. If you admit a mistake before it's even noticed by others, they'll likely react in a way that's only about 10-20% as strong as they would if you deny it or blame your circumstances for the error.

And... Try not to repeat it. And smile. Because, you can do this.

Francois's Story about restoring his belief in Kindness

To place this story in some context, my wife and I have moved to the US from Canada. Some weeks ago, we were almost home from a long walk. I developed some bad blisters and finally just had to stop, still a little short of home. Bette went on to get the car and come back for me. I found some shade and cooled down. Then I realized that I forgot to ask for some water: my bottle was empty, but Bette was carrying 2 of them, and I forgot to ask for one!

There's a fellow across the street who is looking at me, probably wondering what I am doing? casing the joint? Suspicious terrorist activity? He comes over and asks if he can help me and he offers me water... Bette arrives at the same moment, but I'm so grateful of his solicitude. A good example of the famous American generosity. Lots of nice people to make up for the odd characters. I'm touched by this man, and all the friends I made since our arrival, especially through Rotary, our new family.

Last Sunday we walked 14 miles; we stopped at a private golf club for bathrooms and water, because there is nothing public along the road we took; some guy looked us up and down like we were the scum of the earth (I guess I was wearing my sexy purple spandex shorts!), and then he said to Bette "This is not a public facility". My thought was that a gorgeous young female athlete training for the Olympics would

have been ok, but we didn't qualify. We were really down that day, for all kinds of reasons, but that just topped it off; we were ready to leave this place. We continued the long walk, our minds no longer at peace...

Almost home, my feet are threaten blisters again, I have to stop. We get off the more major road, Foothill, onto a side street and I sit on a fire hydrant, remove my runners and socks, cool down, massage. Some lady driving down Foothill saw me, turned her van around, came back down the side street and rolled the window down: "Can I give you a ride anywhere? Are you sure? You're ok then?"

And she's gone, just like that! I wish I could have properly thanked her. This is big, for me right now, it's huge, it's an emotional day. I wish I could publish my story in a local paper, maybe she would read it. My faith in humanity is restored, my morale is saved. Small acts of kindness can do so much to someone else, even someone you don't know. You never know what is happening in the life of the person who's path you cross...

Small gesture, big impact June 2006

Anonymously submitted

My son and I were in IGA recently and one of the women working there noticed that my son was in a mischievous mood.

She offered to take him out of the cart and behind the till. She had him help her scan and bag the few items that we bought.

He was absolutely thrilled with being able to help her. Now, let me tell you why this small gesture by this woman made such an impact on my son and me. My son is almost six years old and he is autistic.

Most people simply dismiss him and give him odd looks because he does not speak like most boys his age and does some things that others might not view as 'normal'.

But this wonderful woman looked beyond that and saw a boy who was just being a boy. She took the extra few minutes and made him feel special. The look of pride in his face was priceless.

This few minutes out of the woman's day was probably nothing to her, but made our day.

It just goes to show that instead of judging people on first impressions, we can break that cycle and take time to appreciate people for who they are and how very special each and every child in the world is."

A Genuine Act of Kindness

By Perry Kinkaide

I was but 21 and hell-bent on finding my future. In the '60s the Peace Corps had more allure than Vietnam, as did graduate school. Venezuela and the Peace Corps had called and I had accepted, when I heeded some last minute advice to "go to grad school, my lad. You'll never have the chance again."

I returned my Peace Corps ticket. In the face of late deadlines--it was already August, I mailed my resume to every bloody research university in North America...and waited. By late August I had a few acceptances. But it wasn't until mid-September that my future arrived..."Accepted to the University of Alberta," it read. But I was from a village on Long Island and had no idea where "Alberta, Canada" might be.

The next day, I packed the family steamer trunk, with a bank loan and was driven by my parents to Grande Central Station in NYC. Among the tears, the "good byes" and the "good lucks," I boarded the train to find my destiny.

That evening, deep in the woods of Vermont, the train stopped briefly at what I recall was a very narrow rail platform at Brattleboro, Vermont. I was thirsty and hungry and spied a vending machine. I popped off the train for treat. When I turned, to my shock, the train was gone. I dashed to the platform's edge where stood the Stationmaster with a lantern. "When is the next train to Canada," I puffed. "Is that your train?", he asked, wide-eyed. He promptly jumped to the tracks and swung his lantern in a high-wide circle over his head. "Go get your train," he smiled. My future came back to me, as a genuine "act of kindness."

Winners of the Heart on the line awards:

Tracey Burkitt of UniglobeGEO Travel

Tracey went far beyond in being a cruise agent when she booked a ticket for Kenn & Deb's honeymoon. As Tracey's relationship was developing with the Burr's, Tracey found out that Deb was trying to locate her birth mother. Upon the Burr's arriving back from their honeymoon cruise, Tracey said, "I have good news, I found your birth mother." In shock and happy at the same time Deb's birth mother and all her siblings were reunited.

Kenn Burr wanted to recognize Tracey in this extraordinary kind deed, thus Tracey was presented with a Kindness Hero award in 2002.

Barbara & David Wilson

Barbara & David Wilson were apartment managers in a Westend apartment complex. Every week, they would take up a collection of bottles and take the money and food to the food bank.

One of their tenants wanted to recognize them with a Kindness Hero award 2002.

Robert Petit

Rhonda a co-worker at Emergency Services in Montreal, Que wanted Robert to be recognized for a Kindness Hero award because he welcomed her as a new co-worker and took the time to get to know her and assist her whenever he could.

Wendy Enders

A single mother volunteered at the Youth Services, she barely had enough food to feed her children. She would get up at 5:00am go down to a local bakery and take bread down to the Youth Services to assist the kids on the street so they would have something else to eat.

Lisa Storrard, nominated Wendy to receive a Kindness Hero award.

Marne Junk of Suicide Prevention, Red Deer, AB

Was awarded a Kindness Hero award from a colleague, because Marne went above and beyond just taking calls. She would listen, recruit volunteers to help to take important calls.

Ann Dow from Community Services.

Leah Baumgartner from Instaloans, Red Deer, AB

Was awarded a Kindness Hero award, simply because she gave friendly, courteous service to a customer - single mother who relied on welfare and cashed her cheques at Instaloan.

Olivia McIvor

She was presented with Kindness Hero awards in 2005. Olivia for her continuation of promoting Kindness in Business.

Brock Tully

For Brock & Wilma Tully who produce World Kindness Concerts in Vancouver, BC to raise money for www.kindacts.net.

In all these stories is something that everyone and anyone can do, from simple little gestures to BIG Dreams. What is your legacy going to be? What is it that you want to be remembered for?

My hope is that you decide to go and make a positive difference for someone else if not for someone else, perhaps just yourself.

Here are all the winners who were presented with a Kindness Hero Award:

2001

- Telus -
- The Distress Line
- The Arts Group
- David Alpin & Associates
- Circle K – Kiwanis Youth Group

2002

- UniglobeGEO Travel
- Bioware
- Yotta Yotta
- EPCOR
- Signature Printing
- Grower Direct
- Ardrossan Elementary – Environmental Club
- Robert Petit – Emergency Services, Montreal, Que
- Barbara & David Wilson
- Wendy Enders – Youth Services
- John Riley of Intercoast Sales Agency Inc.
- U of A Nurses in Dialysis Services

2003/2004

- Intuit – Bruce Johnson
- ORMED – Chris Sheback
- Quik Card – Lyle Best
- Taylor Financial
- Marnie Junk – Suicide Prevention, Red Deer, AB

2005

- Cupid Car Wash
- Peter Kossowan – Toast Masters, Edmonton, AB
- Sara – Mediation Society
- Olivia McIvor – McIvor Consulting, Vancouver, BC
- Brock Tully, Vancouver, BC
- PT & Co., New York, NY –
In 2007, I received a card from them, to honor "Acts of Love & Kindness" they gave all their staff the day off to perform an act of Kindness to honor their award that they received.
- Leah Baumgartner, Instalozans, Red Deer, AB

If you are so inclined to nominate someone for their extra-ordinary act of Kindness, please fill out the nomination and email it back to us. stories@heartjam.com. The deadline is October 15.

Nomination Form for the Kindness Hero Awards

Person who is nominating Contact info:

Name: _____

Company: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Nominee – Contact information, why you would like to thank them in this format and the reason why they deserve this award.

Name: _____

Company: _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

_____ Postal Code _____

Why are you nominating this person (s):

E-mail to: stories@heartjam.com Website for more info: <http://heartjam.com>
Awards are presented in the week of November 13th.

Resources and Links

Olivia McIvor, *The Business of Kindness – Creating work environments where people thrive*. Her book will be out October 2006
ISBN: 0-9682149-9-1

www.kindacts.net

You can get your copy of "The Business of Kindness" workbook. Written by Olivia McIvor

www.canadaone.com

Kindness is The Superior Strategy in HR and interview Olivia McIvor and Mari-Lyn Hudson by a staff reporter of Canada One – an online magazine.

www.randomactsofkindness.org

This is the site for the foundation of kindness

www.payitforward.com

It is the trailer of the movie – if you haven't seen it yet, I would highly recommend that you rent it and watch it with your family. It is based on a true story about a boy who created a strategy to help others.

Nominate someone for a Hero Award email: stories@heartjam.com for an application.

One Brick www.onebrick.org start your own volunteer group

Help Others www.helpothers.org

World Kindness Concert <http://www.kindacts.net/> November 14 & 15th,

There are hundreds of organizations and books you can read and get to help you to reach out and be a kindness ambassador.