

Receiving Kindness



I have titled this section “Receiving Kindness,” because in actual fact when someone is kind to us, we are really receiving the kindness. It is not merely that someone is being kind to us, there has to be acknowledgement or awareness that someone was or is kind to us for the kindness to be truly appreciated.

Sometimes kindness is perceived as if it were poisoned candy. Questions may come up such as, “Why is this person being kind to me?” or “Is there an ulterior motive?”

It is sad to note that there are unscrupulous people in the world who use “kindness” as a means to “get something.” Genuine kindness is an act that benefits the receiver, and the giver, who is not looking for a return on his or her investment of kindness. Most people, however, when they give an act of kindness, are sincere.

Some individuals have a hard time accepting a compliment. They may feel embarrassed or awkward. For example, Mary tells Susan that she loves what Susan has done with her hair. Susan then qualifies this kindness, by saying something like, “my hair is just a mess, I haven’t done anything to it in ages.” In her case, “ages” means she still has to go to her weekly appointment at the beauty parlor. In actual fact however, Susan is not fully appreciating Mary’s kind compliment, and as such, is not reaping the full benefits of Mary’s generosity.

It takes openness and a willingness to receive kindness and to delight in its bounty. When we allow people to be kind to us, we are also providing the giver an opportunity to exercise her or his innate goodness.

I think of kindness as a spiritual muscle. The more kindness is used, the stronger it becomes. Similarly, when we accept the kindness of others, we also strengthen our ability to receive.

It is sad to note that some suffering in the world results from people not being able to ask for and receive help. I am always amazed that people often want to help others and will go to great lengths to lend a hand.

Often, we hear stories of great acts of kindness in the media and through social media. Usually, these stories involve a disaster or trauma and thus, our attention is captivated. However, the small, common, everyday acts of kindness in our lives improve the general quality of our lives and help us feel better about ourselves and the world in which we live.

In receiving kindness, or letting another person be kind towards us, we are in our own way developing awareness of the utmost value that kindness brings.

The following exercise will help you to remember and reflect upon an experience in which someone was kind to you.



Receiving Kindness

I experienced someone being kind towards me.

Jot down a few notes about your experience:

What were you doing?

What were you thinking about?

What were you feeling?

What were you aware of?

