

"Anonymous Kindness"

From *Kindness: Making a Difference in People's Lives: Formulas, stories, and insights*

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There is a very valuable consciousness-raising practice of doing daily acts of kindness without anyone knowing who did them.

There is an incentive when the person you do something for knows what you did and is grateful. The expressions of gratitude are a form of bartering. Your kind act is still a kind act, but there are aspects of a business transaction. When others are aware of the kind act you did, there is a sense of obtaining honor and respect. Again this is a form of bartering. But when no one knows what you did, there is a purity and wholeness to your kind act.

At times we might do kind acts because it is difficult for us to refuse. We feel emotionally coerced into doing them. But an anonymous kind act is motivated by a true desire to do acts of kindness.

Enjoying the process of doing kind acts anonymously increases your love for acts of kindness. It enhances your motivation for situations when your kindness is known and appreciated.

But what if I can't find a kind act to do? Major kind acts aren't always available. But you will always be able to find minor kind acts. Just thinking about this everyday will have a strong effect on your character.

Some kind acts that people have done anonymously:

- * When you are happy with the services provided by an employee, call up his employer to tell him about it.
- * When someone starts a new business, tell people you know to give that person patronage.
- * If you know that someone needs a job, tell a potential employer in his field to contact him.
- * Put money in a parking meter when the time left is running out.
- * If your friend is hurt about not receiving an invitation to a wedding or another occasion, call up the host to correct this oversight.
- * Send an unsigned card saying, "We think that you are great and we wish you well."
- * If drinks or food are being served in a big crowd, remind a waiter to serve those sitting to the side.

- * Send a helpful book as a gift.
- * Send flowers with a note: As a token of appreciation from someone who respects you.
- * Send someone a paid for ticket to a lecture or course that he will gain from.
- * Send a tape or CD of relaxing music.
- * Pay someone's bill (such as a grocery bill) without their knowing who paid it.
- * Send a gift subscription for a magazine with a note: This has been paid for by a friend.
- * Suggest to others that they praise or compliment someone who could use it.
- * Pay a highway toll for the person behind you.
- * Send money to someone who is experiencing financial difficulties with a note: Some time in the future you will be able to repay this by doing this for someone else.
- * Tell people to do acts of kindness anonymously. The kindness they will do in the future is part of your anonymous kindness.

The author heard this story:

I was the recipient of an anonymous kindness and I know how much I appreciated it. Someone paid for a month worth of taxis to help me save time. Not knowing who the person was gave me the great feeling that there is someone out there who wants to help me. Not knowing who it was increased its pleasure for me. It made me realize that there are people who truly care about me.