



Stress & Altruism: Why Acts of Kindness Reduce Stress

by award-winning author / stress-relief expert Susie Mantell

Our sense of self-worth is largely defined in our own eyes. We've all read about "random acts of kindness," and I often recommend doing something kind for somebody every single day as a powerful and effective stress-relief exercise. I suggest they be *conscious* acts, even though they may *occur* randomly. There is often a cumulative, positive transformation that occurs when we help others. A constant, often imperceptible, exchange of energy flows between living things and even a simple exchange can boost the "feel-good" factor.

For example:

1. You brake 30 seconds for a man struggling to hail a cab in Boston.
2. There is a positive exchange that influences you, him, and those who witnessed this act of kindness.
3. That man gets on an airplane to Dallas feeling a bit happier.
4. When he lands in Dallas, he notices a frazzled woman has drop her keys in the airport, and he runs after her to return them.
5. Others witness this, smile, and get a hit of "feel-good" too.
6. The woman, whom neither the man, nor you, have ever met, is so appreciative of the man's kindness that when evening comes, she goes home to her kids in Texas in a terrific mood, hugs them all, and they feel deeply cherished, because of something you did for a stranger in Boston this morning that took all of 30 seconds. See how it works?

Depending upon your personal beliefs regarding the existence (or non-existence) of a supreme being or universal force or about the intrinsic goodness of mankind... many find peace in some spiritual belief system that brings comfort, whether that is found in a cathedral, mosque, a temple, shrine, in a forest, in the face of a child, or at the ocean's edge. I wish you gentle comfort wherever you find yours,.

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