World Kindness Day

World Kindness Day is celebrated on 13 November. How can we become happier by doing kind things for others? And how can we help the world by doing kind things for ourselves?

Before reading

Do the preparation task first. Then read the article and do the exercises.

Preparation task

Match the definitions (a–h) with the vocabulary (1–8).

Vocabulary	Definition
1. …… kindness	a. practical knowledge which almost everybody has
2. …… the soul	b. to give something to somebody
3. …… well-being	c. the part of a person that is not physical and that experiences emotions
4. …… contagious	d. kind behaviour (treating people in a helpful, friendly way)
5. …… common sense	e. a sense of health and happiness
6. …… to complain	f. a small movement that is a consequence of an earlier action
7. …… to hand	g. to talk in a negative way about something which makes you feel angry or unhappy
8. …… a ripple	h. able to pass quickly from one person to another, like a virus

World Kindness Day

Can you remember a time when somebody was kind to you? Perhaps a person allowed you to go in front of them in a queue. Maybe your sister phoned you to ask how your week was going. Or perhaps a stranger or a friend helped you in a much deeper way. There are a million ways to offer kindness. And at a time when the world seems to have so many problems, some people have started to take the issue of kindness very seriously indeed!

Why be kind?

Few people would disagree with the idea that a kind action is good for the soul. It is a win-win situation, leading to a sense of well-being both for the receiver of this kind gesture, as well as for the person who does the action. As a simple example, let's imagine you have a workmate who always does a very good job. How about taking a moment to mention this to them, just in conversation or perhaps by email? The effects of this will probably be quite clear: your workmate will be happy to receive some praise and, in addition, you will probably feel good about yourself for having spread a little joy.

What are 'random acts of kindness'?

Many organisations try to encourage people to do kind acts, wherever and whenever they can. The idea behind this is that it doesn't take any major plan to be kind, just a little bit of effort. Perhaps the strongest supporters of this idea are the Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) Foundation, who work with schools and companies to teach people kindness skills. They operate under the beliefs that kindness can be taught and that it is contagious. Their activities range from suggesting kind acts to allowing their website-users to become 'RAKtivists' (people who officially register themselves as activists of kindness).

How can I be kind?

Apart from using your own common sense, the RAK website suggests some more imaginative ways to show kindness. Generally, these fall into three categories. The first is interpersonal kindness. Some examples are donating old clothes to charity or writing a positive online comment about a restaurant that you like. The second is environmental kindness, which could mean simply recycling or organising a group event to clean a local park or beach. The third category is less obvious: personal kindness, which means treating yourself kindly. Some examples are taking a walk in nature or setting yourself an objective to complain less. The logic is that by being kind to yourself, you will automatically be kinder to the world around you.

What is World Kindness Day?

This is an annual celebration which takes place on 13 November each year. The day is marked in many countries, drawing attention to the amazing work of organisations and individuals in local communities. How do people celebrate this day? Well, by being kind … and having lots of fun. One typical event is to use 'kindness cards'. These are small cards which you hand to somebody when you do a kind act for them – with the message that now it is the other person's turn to 'pass on' the card by doing a kind act for another person.

Most experts on kindness agree that it has a sort of ripple effect. This means that one kind action tends to lead to more and more. So don't wait for kindness to find you today, go and start a new ripple!

Sources:

http://www.randomactsofkindness.org/

Tasks

Task 1
Are the sentences true or false?

		Answer	
1.	The text suggests that the world is not generally a kind place.	True	False
2.	The text suggests that kindness is better for the giver than for the receiver.	True	False
3.	Random acts of kindness can be spontaneous.	True	False
4.	In the third paragraph, the word 'contagious' has a positive idea.	True	False
5.	The RAK website suggests that people should think less about themselves.	True	False
6.	World Kindness Day is not celebrated in every country in the world.	True	False
7.	A 'kindness card' is a little card which you give to a person who has been kind to you.	True	False
8.	The conclusion of the text is that the next time a person treats you kindly, you must do something kind for a different person.	True	False

Task 2
Complete the sentences with the prepositions in the box.

for	from	from	into	on	under

1. Few people would disagree with the idea that a kind action is good ………………………… the soul.
2. They operate ………………………… the beliefs that kindness can be taught and that it is contagious.
3. Their activities range ………………………… suggesting kind acts to allowing their website users to become 'RAKtivists'.
4. Apart ………………………… using your own common sense, the RAK website suggests some more imaginative ways to show kindness.
5. Generally, these fall ………………………… three categories.
6. Most experts ………………………… kindness agree that it has a sort of ripple effect.

Discussion
Can you suggest other ideas for how we can be kind? Do you agree that it is important to treat yourself kindly?

Answers

Preparation task

1. d
2. c
3. e
4. h
5. a
6. g
7. b
8. f

Task 1

1. True
2. False
3. True
4. True
5. False
6. True
7. False
8. False

Task 2

1. for
2. under
3. from
4. from
5. into
6. on