

The Kindness effect

How it contributes to our well-being

Text by Pina Anna-Grace De Rosa

Avatars' photos by Maurizio Raffa



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GentleBooklets It is a series of long-form articles written by different authors. The booklets, designed for a quick read, feature texts and images. We have kindly asked to the authors to comment on the term “kindness.” Authors and photographers have donated their work. The motivations behind the project are the same as those of Gentletude, the desire to spread awareness about the need for “kindness” in our society, a society too focused on personal success to remember the basics of everyday living and respect for the environment that hosts us. Our decision to present these ideas in a series of publications is due to the awareness that, in order to stimulate people to think about these issues, it is necessary to present some concrete examples. In this case, the examples will be provided in the texts written by the authors.

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Kindness is partnership, but not just with others - with ourselves as well. Kindness is sisterhood, anticipating other people's needs, compassion, generosity, the space to be ourselves and letting others be who/how they are, unedited, without judgment towards self or them.

Whilst kindness is empathy and compassion, it is important not to confuse it with self-sacrifice, which often lacks kindness to ourselves.

I once took a workshop called "The Shadow Process" led by the late Debbie Ford – her powerful work amplifies Jung's postulation that "what you resist persists" and ultimately has us look at and embrace our darkness as much as our light.

Before the workshop started, there on the stage was one bar stool and a baby-doll laying on it.

Before even introducing herself or welcoming the participants, Ms. Ford started the workshop by grabbing that baby doll by one ankle and smashing its little head numerous times against the top of the bar stool. Then she stopped, looked at us and said "We would not do that to a baby, why do you keep doing it to yourselves?" ...and then proceeded to introduce herself and get going with the 2 days workshop – her point having already been made: kindness to ourselves is not an automatic way of being, yet primordial in a balanced, empowering and complete experience of life.

The role of Kindness in my life

I apply kindness in my daily life by being able to speak someone's greatness whilst looking into their eyes. Seeing their truth and allowing it as it is, whilst maintaining our boundaries.

Often times I find that we forget kindness towards ourselves and are quick to self-judgment. In our daily life, catching it and releasing it is crucial.

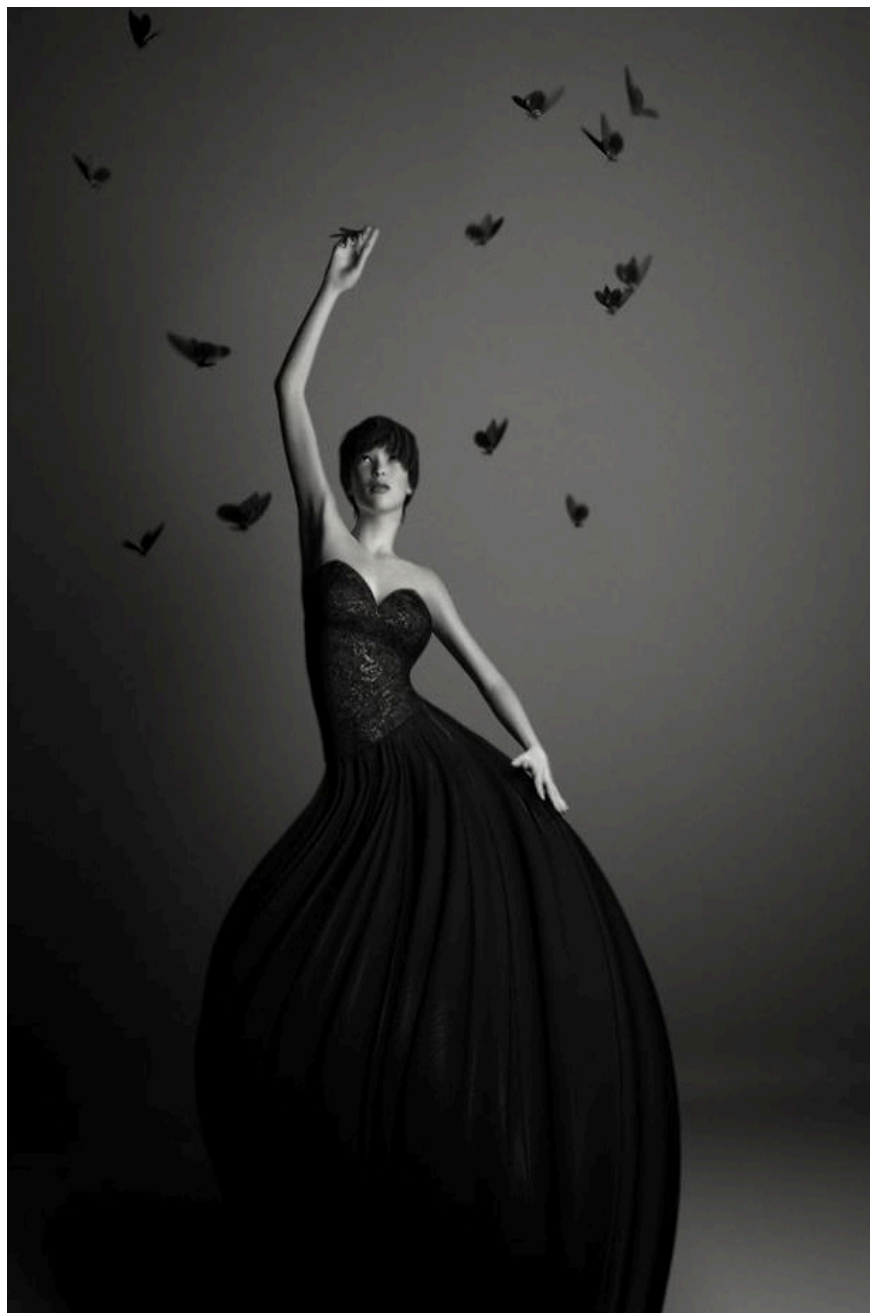
Forgiveness, as well as being allowing and welcoming of the challenges life presents us with. Listening, to ourselves and others; granting the other person space.

Granting ourselves the understanding that we are human and giving ourselves permission to go through whichever spaces we need to go through; even, and especially, as the emotions we experience may seem challenging or trying. It's not so much what we say to say to our family, boyfriend, colleague, the baker....but actually how generously we listen to them that makes all the difference.

So here's a key that I want to pass on to you – this key is a question that brought me to create what some of my clients have nicknamed “Jedi Listening”.

I was in a seminar 12 years ago – it was a big room with a couple hundred people of all ages and de-

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mographics; everyone open to being inspired and taking action.

I was there considering taking a 6 months self-improvement program, learning about leadership. I wanted to check it out. At one point, the speaker said: “if you’d like to register for this program, this would be the time to do so. Oh and if you have any questions, this would be the time to ask” – and she said that in a voice that, to me, sounded like nails on a chalkboard.

So I raised my hand and I said: “I don’t have a question, I have a concern. I love this thing you just presented: 6 months of self-improvement and learning about leadership...the promises of the course, it all sounds brilliant the timing of it, could not be better for me. I have one concern - I cannot stand the sound of your voice and I am not sure I can make it through the 6 months ...and if I am going to get any value.”

And, in that moment, you could hear a pin drop. I was in my 20s at the time, so...I wasn’t as diplomatic as I am now in my 40s and the speaker said something to me that made such a huge difference for me in THAT day and I still carry it with me.

It was so simple yet profound, so I am going to pass it on to you because it’s really shaped the last 20 years of my life; she said: “what if you could listen

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to everyone the same way you listen to your best friend?”

I signed up for the 6 months program, including the sound of her voice, and getting past it, yes; and I created what some of my clients have nicknamed “Jedi Listening”.

It is what happens when someone says something, and you disagree with that opinion they just shared, or you can't stand the sound of their voice, or how they are communicating might come across not as effectively (you know how sometimes people communicate through complaints?) and what I came up with is this: Imagine a telescope lens and imagine pulling the telescope lens back and see if you can hear behind the words, behind the crazy accent, behind the complaint, behind how they are expressing it - what is it that they are really saying?

Listen for their dreams, their values, their aspirations, their passions.

We often can hear someone's commitment inside of a disappointment, their integrity in their complaint.

Sometimes when people complain, it turns us off; we try to fix it, make it better, or after a while we just wanna walk away, but what if we could pull the telescope lens back, put on the “Jedi Listening”, and hear what that they are really saying, where they are coming from. “What if we could listen to them

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the same way we listen to our best friend?"

Yes, you will find opposition.

You will find people who try to fix it (or change you). You will find people who want you to play small, just so they feel safer. You will find your own impetus to avoid failure.

So what if you fail? You can either beat yourself up (be unkind to yourself), or you can beat your results, next time: it's the same expenditure of energy and calories! ..it's up to you to choose which one empowers you and supports you and is congruent with your heart's desires and your purpose.

Such generosity and kindness in the listening of the other person, is what allows us to shift any situation into an empowering one.

...it's a choice, it's always a choice..even when it looks or feels like there's no choice

...look deeper.

Remember "you can either be a leaf in the wind, or you can be the wind".

Kindness is also a crucial element in my professional life.

Often times clients come to me with habits that do not serve them, and that they wish to change; these are self-sabotaging patterns of behavior such as overwhelm, self-doubt, fear of failure or even success...Kindness allows me to operate from a space

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of compassion, being fully on their team, without judgment, and having the tools for their transformation to take place in a safe, deep and permanent way.

Karen was a client who came to me because she wanted to break the habit of washing her hands, incessantly, up to 8hrs/day.

The habit had started a few years earlier, without any particular reason (or impetus that she could remember).

Aside from being time-consuming, it was also disrupting to her family life and to her health, as her hands had been getting drier and drier and they were bleeding now every time she'd wash them.

As a result of the Breakthrough Process that Karen did with me, we were able to find the unconscious (invisible) catalyst to that behavior (it was connected to her experience of 9/11) and we were able to shift it at both the conscious and the subconscious levels.

The catalyst was deeply hidden; someone unkind might even say farfetched.

But with kindness, and no judgment of her experience, being totally and fully on her team, we were able to shift the inner fear that was triggering the behavior, and the inner judgment that was keeping it in place.





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The techniques used for the shift to take place are a blend of hypnosis, neuro-linguistics-programming and cognitive re-patterning with the strategy scrambler.

Once that shift happens at such deep level, it stays. This is the type of process that is more to surgery than therapy; and just like with an appendectomy, once the appendix is removed, we do not go check every six month or so if another one has grown in its place.

The process is deep and permanent. Of course, should the client hit turbulence or go through an earthquake of sorts, if it tears open the wound, then we can go back in and do a simple clean up, tune up and close up again.

Karen, to this date, has the softest hands she can ever remember.

The gentle relationship, the royal road to coaching

In my coaching practice, kindness is a key context from which to operate. I could have all the best tools in the world, but if used in the absence of kindness, they would not be effective – the client would not experience the safety necessary to have the courage to make a deep and empowering shift.

The clients who come to me are very often aware of their potential, yet they feel there's something in

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the way and they can't quite figure out what it is the analogy I like to use is that they know they are a Ferrari, but they experience being stuck in 2nd gear. When we work together, I help people to identify their blocks, at both the conscious AND the subconscious levels, which is where the shift needs to take place to be able to overcome that obstacle, and get rid of it once and for all.

It is extremely important as, together, and working inside a context of kindness, we get rid of those patterns that we keep repeating, even when they don't support us, whether in our personal or business lives.

There is a mutual feeling of trust, safety, and truly being on the client's team without any judgment for the experiences and the consequences that they have had to deal with. The client's emotions will run the gamut from excitement to fear, from self-doubt to relief and hope.

I believe that we only allow coaching in when we feel understood by someone – just as well, we do NOT allow someone's contribution when we think/feel they do not understand us. Kindness is truly the context in which that understanding lives and thrives.

Even with the best intentions and the finest tools, if those tools are used in a yard that has weeds, the results will be hit and miss at best. When we



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get in the way of our own greatness, it feels like an internal push-pull; part of me going in x direction, and part of me is going in y direction. As a Mindset Effectiveness Expert, my processes and techniques leverage a deep understanding of neurological pathways to empower people to operate at a new level of effectiveness. This occurs at both the conscious and the subconscious levels which is where the shift needs to take place: that is THE key to deep and lasting results!

Well, we could ask, how is it not? Personally, I specifically like to use techniques that involve both the conscious and the subconscious minds that way the level of shift goes beyond the surface, the transformation is lasting and the change is deep and it is permanent. Just like surgery, we take out what's not healthy, replace it with healthy patterns/behaviors and then watch the results become congruent (and consistent).

with the vision. Respectful kindness, and a deep sense of compassion for where the client may have been feel stuck or held back in some way, are crucial elements to the unfolding of their transformation.

These results which relation have with kindness (self-awareness, courage to create bigger dreams, new habits, new behavior and personal satisfac-

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tion, achieve results in business, health, wealth and relationships)?

The more kindness we have towards ourselves and others, the more freedom, inner-peace and self-expression we can experience, the lesser distance between us and us achieving our intended outcomes and reaching our vision.

Be kind means be more happy. Which is the relation between coaching process and happiness?

True happiness is an inner state of being, lacking nothing and wanting for nothing more. Experiencing a sense of contentment for what is, how life is unfolding, and what we are learning from it all, is a direct access to the feeling of happiness, and therefore our intended coaching outcomes.

The path toward a kinder state of mind

In our society, we are often confronted with the Wonder Woman Syndrome, which can leave us (as well as the men who love us) disempowered. For those of us who are a Wonder Woman, whether a busy entrepreneur or a busy mom (or both), having the desire to transition to a more balanced way of being, where do we start?

There is a simple yet powerful tool that I share with





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my clients that ensures the transition from doing too much to regaining balance.

Women (and the men in their lives) can easily implement what I call the “SKS Factor” in any area of their lives. SKS stands for Start, Keep and Stop. Pick an area of your life that is important for you to shift, and simply ask yourself: What is one thing I can Start doing right now? What is one thing I can Keep doing right now? And what is one thing that I can Stop doing right now?

Imagine taking on one daily habit. It does not need to be rocket science. It can be as simple as Starting drinking ½ gallon of water every day. If you did that daily for the next 50 days, or if you took on a specific daily action in your business, or with your family, or in your fitness, what would your year look like if you finally took on that one thing that you’ve been thinking about doing all year?

If you are not sure which action to choose, I invite you to look at the one area of life that has the most pain connected with it. Apply the SKS factor to that area for the next x number of days, and then be willing to be pleasantly surprised with the outcome. When I took this on last year, not only did I lose 40 pounds, going from a size 10 to a healthy size 4, I also doubled my business revenue.

Then, in that same area of life, look at one thing

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that you are going to Keep doing every day. Finally, what is one thing that you are going to Stop doing daily that would make the biggest difference in the area you are working to regain power? You can make anything happen if you put structure to it. Structure is there to support you, not to limit you. Imagine how powerfully you would be able to complete this year as a result of applying the SKS factor to your life.

Imagine having no overwhelm.

Imagine no second guessing, no inner doubt, no inner conflict and actually fully trusting yourself 100% ...and then easily taking action from that! That is what is available to you when you are ready to take that on, own it and yes, regain control, once and for all!

My invitation to you is pick the area in your life where you've been experiencing the most pain or where you may have been spinning, and choose your SKS-factor for it, and apply it for the next 30, 60 or 90 days, and watch your life shift.

My hope and desire is for people to be kinder to themselves first, without feeling guilty: unfortunately still today I meet women, and some men, who think that putting themselves first is a selfish

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act – so they tend to opt for self-sacrifice and put themselves last, instead of taking the time for self-care. I say that it's selfish not to! It is when we are finally kind to ourselves first, when we challenge ourselves to take care of our physical, spiritual and mental well-being, that we can then best take care of the people in our lives.

This may sound counter-culture still, but not having that kindness to ourselves first, would be the equivalent of having a great new Ferrari parked in the driveway without enough air in the tires.

Filling up those flat tires, and ensuring that all the fluids in the tanks are topped up (i.e. being kind to our Self first) is what will allow that Ferrari to take on passengers for the joyride of a lifetime!

AUTHOR

Pina Anna-Grace De Rosa

As a Mindset Effectiveness Expert, a TEDxSpeaker, an Award Winning Producer and International & High Performance Results Coach, Pina De Rosa has been designing and leading live workshops, teleclasses and webinars for over 12 years now.

She has been nominated for the Los Angeles Business Journal Woman Making A Difference 4 years in a row (2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013).

She speaks 5 languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish and German) and holds 4 passports.

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PHOTOGRAPHER

Maurizio Raffa

Maurizio Raffa was born in North Italy in the '60s. From the very beginning his professional career has been attracted by technology, especially by virtual world, and he became an esteemed webdesigner.

He spent his daily life planning avatars looking so similar to human beings to create strong public reactions. In fact, it looks almost unacceptable that they are a mere mix of pixels. He adores photography and he integrates it skillfully with the virtual reality, creating so thrilling and colourful worlds that everyone would like they could be real. Maurizio himself loves to define his characters "Virtual creatures reproducing the reality, that reproduces the virtual".

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GENTLETUDE

Gentletude is a neologism composed of the words “gentilezza” (gentleness/kindness) and “attitudine” (attitude). It pursues the aims for a better world without violence, arrogance and rudeness. A world where caring and paying attention to others, common sense and balanced competitiveness are the most important things. The production provided by the association was completely free, based on the Commons Creative Criteria. Gentletude in Italy is a non-profit organization (NPO), and in Switzerland is a non-profit association.

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