

People Are Born To Shine!

A newsletter rooted in the Christian faith created to inspire and support all people, irrespective of nationality, race, and religion.



ACTS OF KINDNESS

EXCERPTS REPRINTED
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Be the Lighthouse

The importance of being kind when no one else is.

When someone hurts you, you are presented with a choice. You can give in to the emotional need for revenge, or you can practice kindness.

When we decide that someone is our enemy, we sever our emotional attachments to them as people. They are an enemy, not a human any longer—this extra degree of separation means that they are easier to hate, easier to hurt, and, above all, easier to be unkind toward.

Kindness requires empathy, and empathy is the mortar that keeps society from crumbling.

Anyone can be made an enemy. It can be a family member, a co-worker, a friend, or a stranger. We can even deceive ourselves into thinking our unkind actions are just. And because enemy begets enemy, and unkindness begets unkindness, this spreads like a disease. Entire groups of people dehumanize entire other groups, and thus feel little or nothing when they hurt one another.

And now, as our world is becoming a storm of strife, the likes of which many of us haven't seen in our lifetimes, it is more important than ever that we choose kindness—that we choose to be the lighthouse in that storm, guiding others back toward a better way of life.

But you've heard this message before—calls for kindness are coming from every corner, and there is no shortage of guides to show you how to be kinder. Let's go beyond the how, though, and get into the why. Why should you be kind? What does being kind actually do?

Let's take a look at the answers to these important questions, and find out the importance of being the lighthouse in a stormy world.



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Things That Bond Families Together

There's nothing like spending time with family.

Strong family bonds make a world of difference. Family members lean on each other, build memories, and enjoy time together.

A 50-year review in the American Psychological Association's *Journal of Family Psychology* links rituals and routines with stronger family bonds. The connection between family members last when they meet a person's needs of acceptance and belonging.

Traditions

Traditions reveal and reinforce family beliefs and values with significant and recurring practices. They also celebrate the culture and history of a family. Decorations, stories and rituals create favorite memories, whether the family opens gifts or games associated with the special day. Involving grandparents can bridge generations, and studies show their interaction increases the father's involvement and lowers maternal stress. Pictures capture the memories and joy you share.

Rituals and routines

Predictable routines encourage healthier and better-behaved kids. They fall asleep faster and sleep better. They feel secure and like they belong when parents give consistent care. These patterns in early life become the building blocks for lasting relationships. A nighttime routine may start with piggyback rides, story time, brushing teeth and a goodnight kiss. A shared exchange or song will also add to the bonding.

Play and laughter

A study by Concordia University confirms that the family that plays together stays together. Laughter and play are the glue that bonds generations. This bonding may include grandparents sharing their hobbies or grandchildren showing grandparents their hobbies. We create happy memories when we laugh as we play, from board games to sharing in imaginary tea parties.



Basic activities of everyday play and backyard fun don't cost much.

Family stories

Culture creates a sense of family identity. Sharing the lifestyle and family ethnic background into adulthood builds a sense of identity. Sharing foods, customs and stories deepens the family and connects them. This sharing also encourages adopting family values among individual family members. These stories may show colorful and unique relatives or ancestors who learned lessons that inspire us to follow our dreams and embrace the family's uniqueness.

Family meals

Food is central to relationships. The rhythmic action of sharing food, sitting together, and conversing has numerous benefits. A meal is a perfect place to plan activities, trips and other opportunities for bonding.

Spending time together as a family is essential for all family members. It helps deepen connections and create memories that will last a lifetime. If you feel like your family doesn't spend enough time together, try your best to start thinking of ways that your family could spend more time together. Whether it's a family meal or planning a vacation, you won't regret the decision to spend more time together.

Source: beliefnet.com



Mushroom Consumption May Lower Risk of Depression

Mushrooms have been making headlines due to their many health advantages. Not only do they lower one's risk of cancer and premature death, but new research led by Penn State College of Medicine also reveals that these superfoods may benefit a person's mental health.

Penn State researchers used data on diet and mental health collected from more than 24,000 U.S. adults between 2005 and 2016. They found that people who ate mushrooms had lower odds of having depression.

According to the researchers, mushrooms contain ergothioneine, an antioxidant that may protect against cell and tissue damage in the body. Studies have shown that antioxidants help prevent several mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and depression.

"Mushrooms are the highest dietary source of the amino acid ergothioneine—an anti-inflammatory which cannot be synthesized by humans," said lead researcher Djibril Ba, who recently graduated from the epidemiology doctoral program at the College of Medicine. "Having high levels of this may lower the risk of oxidative stress, which could also reduce the symptoms of depression."

White button mushrooms, which are the most commonly consumed mushroom variety in the U.S., contain potassium, which is believed to lower anxiety. In addition, certain other species of edible mushrooms, especially *Herichium erinaceus*, also known as Lion's Mane, may stimulate the expression of neurotrophic factors such as nerve growth factor synthesis, which could have an impact on preventing neuropsychiatric disorders including depression.

Source: sciencedaily.com

A Prayer for Peace

Lord Jesus Christ, who are called the Prince of Peace, who are Yourself our peace and reconciliation, who so often said, "Peace to you" - please grant us peace.

Make all men and women witnesses of truth, justice and brotherly love. Banish from their hearts whatever might endanger peace. Enlighten our rulers that they may guarantee and defend the great gift of peace.

May all peoples on the earth become as brothers and sisters.

May longed-for peace blossom forth and reign always over us all. Amen.

— POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II



GO GREEN

LET'S TEACH CHILDREN TO TAKE CARE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Love and respect for nature is a positive and necessary attitude toward the environment and living beings. It connects us with the natural world and reminds us of reality: our dependence on it.

One of the most important and necessary values we can teach children is the love for nature. In this way and without forcing it, they will become aware of the importance of taking care of the environment and respecting the nature surrounding them when they are older.

Why is it important to teach them to raise environmental awareness?

BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION

The environment is home to various plants and animals, and their preservation is essential to maintain biodiversity and healthy ecosystems.

IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE

A healthy environment can improve people's quality of life by providing fresh air, clean water and nutritious food.

PREVENTION OF NATURAL DISASTERS

Respect for the environment can help prevent natural disasters, such as floods, droughts and storms, which can cause serious damage to health and property.

EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE

Teaching children to respect the environment is important to ensure a sustainable future for generations to come.

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How can children be encouraged to take care of the environment?

MAKE SIMPLE ANALOGIES

To make them understand, you can compare the environment to a house and explain that it is important to keep it clean and tidy to make it a pleasant place to live.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES

You can involve them in hands-on activities, such as planting a garden or picking up trash in the park, to help them understand how their behavior can affect the environment.

ECOLOGICAL BOOKS AND TOYS

Read them some books or show them eco-friendly toys that teach them about the importance of the environment and how to take care of it.

SHARE YOUR OWN ACTIONS

Talk to them about your own actions to protect the environment, such as turning off lights when you leave a room or recycling, to help them understand how their behavior can have a positive impact.

EXPLORING THE OUTDOORS

Take them to explore nature in person, whether it's a nearby park, a botanical garden or a walk in the woods. Let them experience the beauty and diversity of nature for themselves.

FOSTERING CURIOSITY

Encourage them to ask questions about nature and answer their questions patiently and in a way, they can understand. For example, during a nature walk, explain to them about the different plants and animals you encounter along the way.

SUSTAINABLE ACTIVITIES

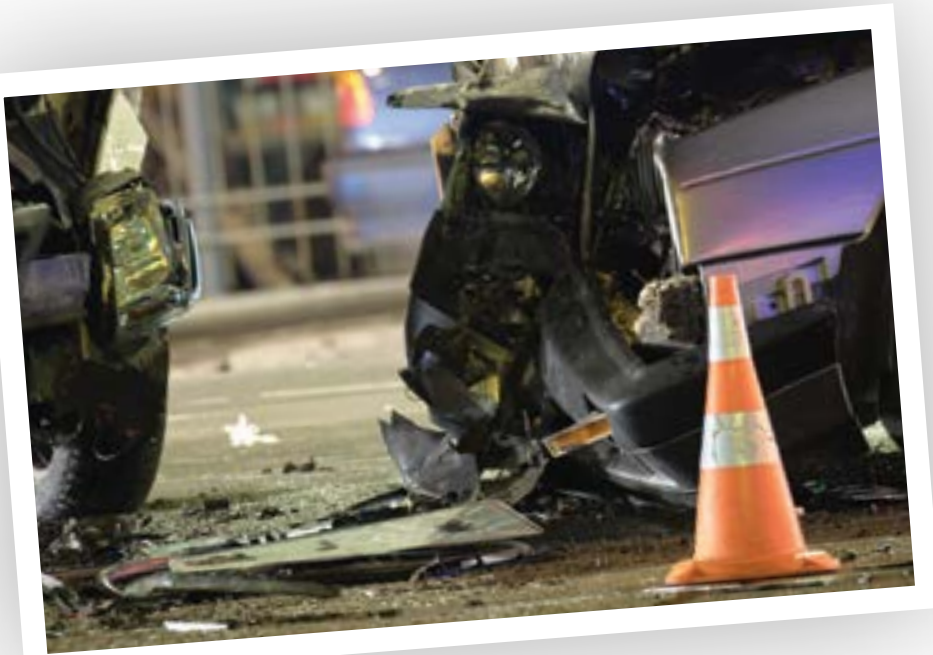
Participate in sustainable activities with the children, such as recycling, gardening and garbage collection. Show them how their actions can make a positive contribution to the environment.

INSPIRING RESPECT

Instill a deep respect for nature, teaching them that all living beings deserve to be treated with care and consideration.

Source: wellwo.es

Data-driven Policymaking can Save Lives and Reduce Road Trauma in Eastern Partnership: The Eastern Partnership Road Safety Observatory



Fatality rates in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) are still about twice as high as in the European Union (EU27) area, triggering high socio-economic costs, estimated at 2.6% of the region's GDP. Policymakers rely heavily on accurate data to set objectives, act, and measure progress. Still, data discrepancy in the EaP region reported at the national level and corrected by WHO has been estimated at between 14 to 22% in 2009-2019. This shows a high level of underreporting in the region presumably due to a lack of robust data collection systems that are interlinked with hospitals, police, and other actors within the countries.

IDEAS IN ACTION

In this context, road safety has been prioritized as a key component of the World Bank (WB) support to the Eastern Partnership (EaP) Transport Panel. Partnering with the European Commission towards improving road

crash data across all EaP countries, the development of the regional EaP Road Safety Observatory is one bold step.

The World Bank jointly with the European Commission are committed, in this context, to have a close cooperation with all EaP countries since 2017. This joint work has several faces and includes a range of activities like exchange of good practices and lessons learned, analytical missions and practical tasks, workshops and capacity building, consultations, and preparatory studies, among others.

The Technical Secretariat of the EaP Road Safety Observatory will be hosted by the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia and is involving a consortium of partners: the International School of Economics at Tbilisi State University (ISET) Policy Institute as a lead agency and the Eastern Alliance for Safe & Sustainable Transport (EASST) – consortium partner.

A regional observatory serves as a formal network of government representatives and as a forum to share practices data, and information regarding road safety policies and action. But very importantly, it requires ownership of decisions at each country level.

The EaP Road Safety Observatory will support countries of the region in boosting their capacity to collect, analyze, and share reliable road crash data, with the objective to drastically reduce the number of road deaths and crash injuries in the region.

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Source: roadsafetyfacility.org

First on the List

Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. — Matthew 6:33

The morning commenced like a track meet. I practically jumped out of bed, launching into the teeth of the day's deadlines. Get the kids to school. Check. Get to work. Check. I blasted full throttle into writing my "To Do" list, in which personal and professional tasks tumbled together in an avalanche-like litany:

"...13. Edit article. 14. Clean office. 15. Strategic team planning. 16. Write tech blog. 17. Clean basement. 18. Pray."

By the time I got to number eighteen, I'd remembered that I needed God's help. But I'd gotten that far before it even occurred to me that I was going at it alone, trying to manufacture my own momentum.

Jesus knew. He knew our days would crash one into another, a sea of ceaseless urgency. So He instructs, "Seek first [God's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6:33).

It's natural to hear Jesus' words as a command. And they are. But there's more here—an invitation. In Matthew 6, Jesus invites us to exchange the world's frantic anxiety (vv. 25–32) for a life of trust, day by day. God, by His grace, helps us all of our days—even when we get to number eighteen on our list before we remember to see life from His perspective.

—Adam R. Holz

Source: odb.org



REFLECT & PRAY

How can we turn to God first each day? On stressful days, what helps you trust Jesus with things demanding your immediate attention?

Father, thank You for your invitation to relinquish my anxiety and to embrace the life of abundant provision You offer me each day.

Will You Further NCF's Work?

The Naji Cherfan Foundation was founded after the passing of the beloved Naji Cherfan. Our main goal is to praise the Lord through community work.

The foundation works to improve the quality of life of the poorest of the poor of all ages, both those who are healthy and those with health problems, and those with brain injury of any kind, resulting from accident, stroke, etc, while promoting Christian values.

If you like the work NCF is doing and wish to participate, we invite you to become a member of our Board. The goal is to share our inspiration and activities in your country. Please contact us for more information at +961 (0)4 522221.

info@najicherfanfoundation.org

Quotable!

"If life were predictable it would cease to be life, and be without flavor."

— Eleanor Roosevelt

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KINDNESS STOPS THE CYCLE OF VENGEANCE

Archbishop Desmond Tutu fought against apartheid, the often-violent segregation and expulsion of black South Africans. This was a system that caused immeasurable suffering, death, and displacement. It was also powerful, backed by the government, itself. Despite all of this, Archbishop Tutu successfully fought it through nothing more than the power of kindness.

Tutu's opposition to apartheid was intense and outspoken, yet he didn't wield his considerable influence as the spiritual leader of Cape Town to incite violent uprisings. Instead, he brought reconciliation through talk, peaceful marches, and forgiveness.

When the systems supporting apartheid collapsed, he encouraged his people to forgive those who had abused them, and although this was no easy task, his encouragement helped reunited a fractured land, and to end a system of abuse without the abused turning into abusers, as so often happens.

Vengeance may sometimes wear the face of justice, but it is not the same. Vengeance is carried by the desire to hurt, to strike back. It does not stop when the appropriate punishment is meted out, but keeps hurting and hurting. True justice, on the other hand, hurts just enough to correct, and pulls back.

There's that's quite as destructive as the cycle of vengeance—it keeps us locked in battle, locked into a cycle of hurting one another. It keeps us in the storm. When you are kind, especially when no one else is, their unkindness stops at you. It can go no further. When one person does this, a little unkindness is removed from the world at a time. When many do it, so much more is removed.

KINDNESS SETS AN EXAMPLE

Kindness doesn't just take the bad out of the world—it multiplies the good. You've probably heard of the term "Pay it forward"—it's the idea that someone's act of kindness will impress someone, who will then pass on that act of kindness to someone else.

Well, this idea works. Acts of kindness produce a positive response in others, and that positivity is addicting. Psychologically, we're wired to be kind—we enjoy it, and when we're not kind, we

physically suffer for it. This simple biological fact is why even the smallest acts of kindness have far greater implications than you might think. You might think your small contributions will mean little on the grand stage of the world, but when you consider this—the fact that when people see or experience kindness, they want to be kinder, themselves—you realize that you have the power to create chain reactions of kindness.

You also have the power to be an example for developing minds—for young people who have yet to decide who they're going to be. This is just as powerful an opportunity. Being kind to those around you makes you a lighthouse in the truest sense—others will look to you for direction. Don't hide your light. Set a good example.

KINDNESS IMPROVES SOCIETY

Knowing now how acts of kindness not only cancel out evil, but also propagate goodness, it should come as no surprise that kindness can change the world. But let's look more deeply.

Kindness requires empathy, and empathy is the mortar that keeps society from crumbling. Empathy is simply the ability to understand someone's point of view, to be able to get inside their head. It's what helps us see others as human, rather than as a dehumanized enemy. And what more could we ask for, in our contentious age of wars, racial strife, and political turmoil, than that?

When you put kindness out into the world, you help people build empathy, and with greater empathy, the world simply runs better—people are better able to work together for the greater good, achieving together what they could not do alone. And a better society equals a better life for you, personally. Who wouldn't want to live in a more cooperative world, after all?

SHINE BRIGHTLY

There's something immensely important about being kind. Nearly every one of the major religious founders—Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammad, and others—advocated for a level of kindness many would see as a weakness today.

But if such kindness is weakness, why are these people still remembered today? Why are names like Desmond Tutu and Martin Luther King Jr. and Desmond Doss remembered?

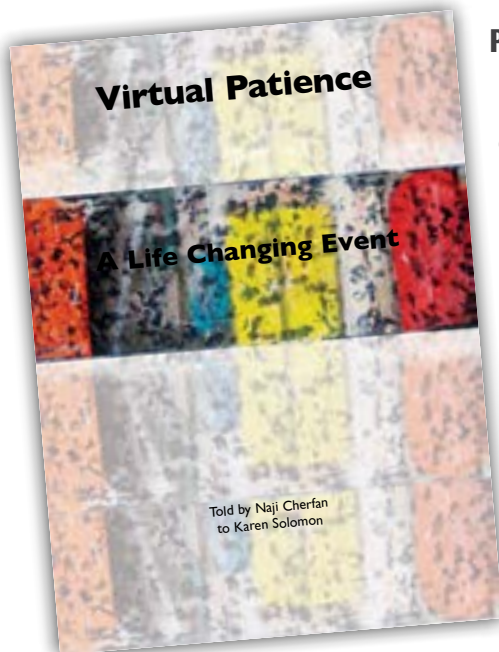
It is because they were lighthouses—some of the tallest and the brightest, in fact, and ones we still look up to today. Their teachings and acts of kindness reach through years, still setting an example for us today.

You can do the same. You have the why behind kindness now. You know what it can do. Better, you know what you can do. So get out there and start being kind in every single thing you do—in every action and interaction. You just might change the world.

Source: beliefnet.org

How I Remember Naji...

Excerpt from *Virtual Patience*



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Although he had trouble concentrating when tired, Naji's mental abilities remained strong after the accident. He was not aware of how powerful the mind could be until he became more serious and said to himself "Man you got to challenge yourself big time and consider everything possible". This idea motivated Naji to function normally in a body that refused to listen and couldn't remember what it did before his brain injury. His mind remembered physical freedom and urged his arms and legs to go there. They followed

his command, but with limitation. Thought wills the physical and emotional structure to stretch and be challenged. Slowly, Naji learned that the mind is a double-edged sword. One side is the enemy while the other is the savior. Naji sent this fax to a friend in Athens:

"One day in school, I couldn't focus on the problem being explained in class. Then I started asking myself, why am I having such trouble focusing? An idea came to me. It's a tension in the mind. WOW!!!. If the mind can have tension and we know that everything comes from the mind, then I see that the tension in my body comes from my mind. GREAT! I Get it? I



relax my mind; my body relaxes. Simple. So simple, it seems to be too easy. OK, how does it work? How can I relax my mind? Focusing on too many things creates tension. Solution. Focus on one thing at a time".

As a result of "lots of therapy and lectures from people who love and support him", Naji threw away his judgmental attitude. Maturity convinced him that "he couldn't leave and he couldn't get out". Naji does his own therapy by concentrating and using self-discipline. Slowly, he is gaining an understanding and appreciation of the meaning of respect for himself and others.

People Are Born To Shine!

People are Born To Shine is a bi-monthly, electronic newsletter owned by **The Naji Cherfan Foundation** focusing on spirituality and health. The objective of **People are Born to Shine** is to raise awareness among our readers on health challenges and disease prevention, while inspiring them to live a fuller, more abundant life guided by Christian values. This newsletter is dedicated to people of all ages, those who are healthy and those with health problems, and those with brain injury of any kind resulting from accident, stroke, etc.

The content has been carefully selected from internet sources considered reliable and accurate to bring you good news of health and spiritual well being. However **The Naji Cherfan Foundation** assumes no responsibility for inaccurate information. The NCF would like to recognize the devoted work of its volunteers, mainly Marianne Debs, Me. Kamal Rahal, Me. Harold Alvarez, Zeina Costantine, Joyce Abou Jaoude, Rita Kassis, Marleine Nassrany, Dalia Ghostine Nassrany, Dima Rbeiz, Father Joseph Abdel Sater, Father Joseph Soueid, Reine Kassis, Nabil Khoury, Roland Khoury, Father Elia Chalhouh, Valéria de Proença, Athena and Christina Georgotas, Violette Nakhle, and all the field volunteers who are supporting NCF in spreading the words of Jesus through their institutions, churches, hospitals, establishments, etc.

This issue is available in Arabic, English, Greek, Dutch, French, Spanish and Portuguese. The NCF management and staff are very grateful for the efforts of the chief editors who are volunteering to translate and edit the newsletter into several languages, namely: Isabelle Boghossian for the Greek language, Inês Pedregal for the Portuguese language, Myriam Salibi and Rita Abou Jaoudé for the French language, Professor Lydia and Ambassador Alejandro Diaz for the Spanish language, Roly Lakeman for the Dutch language, Lina Rizkallah and Rita Abou Jaoude for the Arabic language.

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