



# HELPING HANDS



## Kindness

(excerpts from Mayo Clinichealthsystem.org, "The Art of Kindness")

Kindness is more than behavior. The art of kindness means harboring a spirit of helpfulness, as well as being generous and considerate, and doing so without expecting anything in return. Kindness is a quality of being. The act of giving kindness often is simple, free, positive, and healthy.

### Good for the body

Kindness has been shown to increase self-esteem, empathy, and compassion, and improve mood. It can decrease blood pressure and cortisol, a stress hormone, which directly impacts stress levels. People who give of themselves in a balanced way also tend to be healthier and live longer. Kindness can increase your sense of connectivity with others, which can directly impact loneliness, improve low mood, and enhance relationships in general. It also can be contagious. Looking for ways to show kindness can give you a focus activity, especially if you tend to be anxious or stressed in some social situations.



### Good for the mind

Physiologically, kindness can positively change your brain. Being kind boosts serotonin and dopamine, which are neurotransmitters in the brain that give you feelings of satisfaction and well-being and cause the pleasure/reward centers in your brain to light up. Endorphins, which are your body's natural pain killer, also can be released. [Discover ways you can create happiness.](#)

### Be kind to yourself

It is not just how you treat other people — it is how you extend those same behaviors and intentions to yourself as well. You can be kinder in your own self-talk and [practice gratitude](#). People are good at verbally beating themselves up, and rarely does that work as a pep talk. Rather, negativity often causes you to unravel and may even create a vicious cycle of regularly getting down on yourself. You wouldn't talk to your neighbor the way you sometimes talk to yourself. This is the "good neighbor policy," which can be helpful. If you would not say it to your good neighbor, do not say it about yourself.

### Take action

Simply asking "How am I going to practice kindness today?" can be helpful. For a homework assignment, pay attention and periodically document during the day evidence of kindness to others and especially to yourself. This positive focus is like planting positive seeds in your mind garden. Where focus goes, energy flows.

**BE  
KIND**

Well-being is defined as a sense of health and vitality that arises from your thoughts, emotions, actions, and experiences. When we have well-being, we feel happy, healthy, socially connected, and purposeful most of the time. Because the meaning of well-being is so broad, let's talk more about the different aspects of well-being some more.

"Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." —Dalai Lama

## Think about what makes you happy

Take time to reflect on these questions to find ways to boost your happiness:

- What are things that you might be able to reconnect with that bring you joy?
- How might you stay focused on tasks at hand when life continues around you?
- How might you find novelty in everyday life?
- What would it look like if you put yourself first instead of making everyone and everything else a priority?

If you've been looking for happiness, the good news is that your choices, thoughts, and actions can influence your level of happiness. It's not as easy as flipping a switch, but you can increase your happiness level.

### Small steps to increase happiness

Surround yourself with happy people. Being around people who are content raises your own mood. And by being happy yourself, you give something back to those around you.



### Make a commitment to practice gratitude

Identify at least one thing each day that improves your life. When you find yourself thinking an ungrateful thought, try substituting a grateful one. Think about what you're grateful for when you wake up in the morning and before you go to sleep at night. Look for opportunities to appreciate the small pleasures of everyday life. Focus on the positives in the present moment, instead of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Focusing on your purpose, and living, in the present can help you be happier. Physical activity releases chemicals in your brain that can lead to feeling happier, more relaxed, and less stressed. Exercising regularly will result in improved self-esteem and a boost in confidence.

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer volunteers do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer volunteers will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that address the difficulty you were experiencing.



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### **WWW EAP Classes** **2023**

Contact your Local Lodge Executive Board to enroll in EAP courses

#### **EAP I**

January 15-20

#### **EAP II**

February 12-17

#### **EAP III**

September 10-15

#### **EAP IV**

December 10-15