

# Health Benefits of Kindness

Written by Allan Luks

Monday, 01 September 2008 00:00 - Last Updated Wednesday, 05 February 2014 09:47

Being kind has a profound impact in the lives of others but you may not know how much of a positive health benefit it delivers to you as well.

People who perform acts of kindness would agree that being kind to someone else makes them “feel good.” Scientific research shows that it not only can make you feel good but being kind has a significant health benefit, both physically and mentally.

Allan Luks, the former executive director of the Institute for the Advancement of Health and executive director of Big Brothers/ Big Sisters of New York City studied kindness and documents his findings in his book, *The Healing Power of Doing Good: The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others*.



**GRATITUDE**

*"How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these."*

— George Washington Carver

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People who perform acts of kindness would agree that being kind to someone else makes them “feel good.” Scientific research shows that it not only can make you feel good but being kind has a significant health benefit, both physically and mentally.

Allan Luks, the former executive director of the Institute for the Advancement of Health and executive director of Big Brothers/ Big Sisters of New York City studied kindness and documents his findings in his book, *The Healing Power of Doing Good: The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others*.

Luks’ study involved more than 3,000 volunteers of all ages at more than 20 organizations throughout the country. He sent a 12-question survey to those volunteers, asking them how they felt when they did a kind act. A total of 3,000 surveys were returned to Luks, and after a comprehensive analysis, he was able to draw cause-and-effect relationships between helping and good health. Luks concluded, “Helping contributes to the maintenance of good health, and it can diminish the effect of diseases and disorders serious and minor, psychological and physical.”

Luks made a number of significant findings as a result of his research. We hope this research not only excites you but also encourages you to share the gift of kindness daily.

Helping others contributes to the maintenance of good health, and it can diminish the effect of diseases and disorders serious and minor, psychological and physical. A rush of oxytocin, followed by a longer period of calm, after performing a kind act is often referred to as a “helper’s high.” It involves physical sensations and the release of endorphins, the body’s natural painkillers. This initial rush is then followed by a longer-lasting period of calm and improved emotional well-being.

Stress-related health problems improve after performing kind acts. Helping increases feelings of depression, supplies social contact, and decreases feelings of hostility and isolation that can cause stress, increasing ulcers, etc. A drop in stress may, for some people, decrease the constriction within the lungs that leads to asthma attacks.

Helping can enhance our feelings of joyfulness, emotional resilience, and vigor, and can reduce the solubility sense of isolation.

A decrease in both the intensity and the awareness of physical pain can occur.

The incidence of attitudes that negatively arouse and damage the body, including chronic hostility, is reduced.

The health benefits and sense of well-being associated with helping return hours or even days later whenever the helping act is remembered.

An increased sense of self-worth, greater happiness, and optimism is achieved, as well as a decrease in feelings of helplessness and depression.

Once we establish an “affiliation connection” with someone—a relationship of friendship, love, or some sort of positive bonding—we feel emotions that can strengthen the immune system.

The practice of caring for strangers translates to immense immune and healing benefits.

Regular club attendance, volunteering, entertaining, or attending a faith group is the happiness equivalent of getting a college degree or more than doubling your income.

More article references and author information here:  
[www.pathwaysofbigbrothers.org/resources.html](http://www.pathwaysofbigbrothers.org/resources.html)

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Helping others contributes to the maintenance of good health, and it can diminish the effect of diseases and disorders serious and minor, psychological and physical. A rush of euphoria, followed by a longer period of calm, after performing a kind act is often referred to as a "helper's high." It involves physical sensations and the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers. This initial rush is then followed by a longer-lasting period of calm and improved emotional well-being.

Stress-related health problems improve after performing kind acts. Helping reverses feelings of depression, supplies social contact, and decreases feelings of hostility and isolation that can cause stress, overeating, ulcers, etc. A drop in stress may, for some people, decrease the constriction within the lungs that leads to asthma attacks.

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