

# World Kindness Day

## World Kindness Day®

The date decreed for World Kindness Day is 13th November. This was the opening day of the first World Kindness Movement® conference held at Tokyo in 1998, and the 35th anniversary of the Small Kindness Movement of Japan, which brought the signatories of the 'declaration of kindness' of the World Kindness Movement together in 1997.

The purpose of World Kindness Day is to look beyond ourselves, beyond the boundaries of our country, beyond our culture, our race, our religion; and realise we are citizens of the world. As world citizens we have a commonality, and must realise that if progress is to be made in human relations and endeavours, if we are to achieve the goal of peaceful coexistence, we must focus on what we have in common. When we find likenesses we begin to experience empathy, and in such a state we can fully relate to that person or those people. While we may think of people from other cultures as being 'different'; when we compare them with our own customs and beliefs, it doesn't mean that we are any better than they are. When we become friends with someone from a different culture we discover that despite some obvious differences, there are many similarities.

Sometimes knowledge is passed on to us about different races, different cultures, that has become distorted, and we build up a false, negative impression of these people. It is only when we get to know such people that we realise it is a lie.

Another form of separation is in those people who fail to let go of transgressions that have occurred in the past. This also applies to some groups, where bitterness from many hundreds of years ago has been passed down through generations, and hatred becomes a normal reaction to thoughts of, or association with, the other group of people. The recent genocide in Europe is a tragic example of this. There is a need to let go of past transgressions if we are to live in peace. While we cannot change the past, we can ensure such things never happen again.

If we were to ask ourselves on a regular basis, "Is what I am involved in at this moment promoting joining or separation?", it would remind us of our commitment to kindness. All it requires is remembering. If our memory is not the best, small signs can be created and posted about the home and work environment. Simple solutions are workable solutions. Simple solutions to promote joining, working away at our goal for world peace with little acts of kindness, helping to break down the walls that separate races, religions, cultures. Helping our global brothers and sisters.

During the Great War (1914-18), when the dead were piled high in 'no man's land'; a truce would be declared so the dead could be gathered by the respective sides. When this was completed, the battle would resume as if nothing had happened. One moment joining together in a common cause, the next, mortal enemies again. Do you associate this with day to day living? We have our moments of joining in a common cause — when we pause to be of service, or when we observe Kindness Day, Valentine's Day, Christmas Day, Anzac Day, Australia Day, Clean Up Australia Day, and so on. But then we go back to the way we were before the truce was declared — we go back to being at war! Not physically at war, but psychologically. At war with the traffic, our boss or a co-worker, the neighbour's howling dog, rising prices, rude people, the noisy garbage truck, the promotion we didn't get, unruly children, the computer crash, the noisy party, falling share prices, an argument with our partner, the washing machine breaking down, the late train or bus, the long queue, the parking ticket, the recording that says, "Your call is important to us," the person who didn't 'understand.' It seems as if the whole of humanity is going through some mid-life crisis. All of these stressful incidents in our engagement with the world is creating separation. How can we hope to have a peaceful world when we are incapable of creating peace in our own lives? We give energy to whatever we put our attention on, and how sad that our energy is generally focussed on the negative things (creating stress and hostility), and on the things we don't have (creating feelings of lack and dissatisfaction). What would it take to focus on the good things about our life, and be thankful for what we have, instead of being resentful or irritated about what we don't have?

We can be co-creators of a better world, and we can have a positive effect on world peace, when we bring order into our lives. Be what you want the world to be. Is that difficult? Only if you think it is! When we accept the reality that we can create positive change, we move beyond ourselves, our limitations, our doubts, and realise our infinite power. Anthropologist Margaret Mead said, Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

As mentioned before, as individuals we seem to have a habit of labelling some things as 'too hard,' without giving more than a moments consideration as to whether we might be able to achieve such a thing. To achieve something, all that is usually required is the application of a little persistence (for example,

when we were learning to walk). Persistence is a magical thing. Calvin Coolidge had the following to say about persistence. Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education alone will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. We make an agreement with ourselves to keep working away at whatever it is we wish to achieve, little by little. By chipping away, like a sculptor at their block of marble, it is only a matter of time before we have given form to our thought. Such results are within the grasp of everyone – young and old, rich and needy, educated and uneducated, employed and unemployed or retired. People like you and me, carrying out small acts of kindness, making the world a better place.

Joseph Campbell tells us, "People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonances within our own innermost being and reality, so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive." The "rapture of being alive" is truly a wonderful expression, don't you think? Such raptures give real purpose to our lives. When we carry out an act of kindness it creates a good feeling within us, which surely could be termed as one of the raptures of being alive.

We may be proud of our country, but if we think of ourselves as citizens of a country, it can become easy to distance ourselves from the misery taking place in other parts of the world. The basic principle of kindness is in joining, in acknowledging that we have a connection with every living thing on this wonderful planet of ours. As our kind acts and deeds bring greater kindness to the world, the barriers of separation will begin to crumble, bringing a rainbow of understanding and happiness to the people of the world.

As the name implies, World Kindness Day is about being kind to the world. The "Lonely Planet" not only refers to a travel guide, it is descriptive of the Earth – the only planet in our solar system known to be teeming with life. It's all we have, and it's in everyone's best interest to make it the nicest place to live, because it's the only place we have to live. Yet all we've done since the dawn of civilisation is to destroy anything that stands in our way. And what price do we place on the homeless, the brutalised, the addicted, the downtrodden, the impoverished, and the ever widening gap between the wealthy and the needy? Isn't it time everyone began thinking more about others and less about themselves? There is an obsession in society for a number of things, one of them is the accumulation of material wealth, far beyond that required to live a comfortable life. The power that wealth brings seems to be irresistible to some. But it can have a down side, and we hear from time to time about the principles of such people becoming a casualty.

World Kindness Day is the beginning of a global reaction to the exploitation of our human and natural resources. It could be said that the slogan for World Kindness Day might well be "Healing the World!" – and in doing so, there is the possibility of creating something so intrinsically good and wholesome, that the beneficial effects could be virtually endless.

It has been suggested that the Cosmos flower be adopted as a symbol of World Kindness Day. The Cosmos is an annual with Daisy-like flowers, and many colours are available. Grown in spring from seedlings, they like a sunny aspect with dryish soil. Seedlings will appear in 5-10 days, flowers in about 12 weeks. While they may not flower in time for WKD (13th November) they will be a joy to behold when they do. Flowers have such happy little faces, don't you think?