

# How Kind Acts Can Help with Social Anxiety on World Kindness Day and Beyond

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World Kindness Day is on November 13<sup>th</sup> and is a fantastic opportunity to recognize ways to improve the world by being kind to others. Brook Jones, vice president of The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation, encourages integrating kind acts into our daily lives: *“What if we made it a point to go slightly outside of our comfort zone at least once a day to make someone smile?”* (2022). There are several wellbeing benefits of expressing kindness towards others and yourself on World Kindness Day and beyond (Kindness.org, 2017)!

One area where kindness can have a profound impact is in managing social anxiety. Experiencing anxiety is common, and there are many strategies for managing symptoms. Helping others is one effective way to manage your fears by focusing on the positive outcomes for others, rather than potential negative ones you might face (Trew & Alden, 2015). One study reported that performing acts

of kindness for others led to “higher self-confidence, more competence, and a greater sense of meaning” (Regan et al., 2023).

For example, if you're anxious about a social interaction going poorly, performing an act of kindness for someone else can shift your focus to the positive impact on the other person, rather than worrying about their judgement of you. Additionally, combining acts of kindness with personal mental health treatments can improve your overall outcome (Cregg & Cheavens, 2022). When you're feeling anxious, you can look for service opportunities, no matter how small. These gestures can be meaningful to both the giver and the recipient.

If you are unsure of where to start, here are five ideas for simple acts of kindness:

1. **Greet someone new:** Look for opportunities to connect with people in your community. You never know what a small acknowledgement might mean to the other person (Kindness is Everything, n.d.).
2. **Listen:** Lend a caring ear to someone when they need to talk, so they know they can work through their thoughts in a trusting environment (American Red Cross, 2024).
3. **Send a letter, email, or text:** let someone in your life know how much they mean to you. Send a letter, email, or text make them feel appreciated (American Red Cross, 2024).
4. **Have a cheerful outlook:** Keep yourself and others uplifted and allow good feelings to spread to those around you. Express gratitude for small acts or gestures with your loved ones (Chundawat, 2018).
5. **Volunteer:** Volunteering has been shown to increase happiness and is a wonderful way to get involved and express kindness (Magnani & Zhu, 2018).

There are numerous benefits for being kind to others, both for the person receiving kindness and for those providing the kind act. Try volunteering, expressing gratitude, listening, writing a letter, or greeting someone new this National Kindness Day. You can visit [kindness.org/get-started/](https://kindness.org/get-started/) or [kindnessiseverything.com/acts-of-kindness-ideas/](https://kindnessiseverything.com/acts-of-kindness-ideas/) for more ways to show kindness to yourself, friends, and even strangers.

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