- Courtesy

Making time for kindness isn’t always easy

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KINDNESS isn’t always easy. Sometimes the kind action isn’t something that you want to do.



Sometimes you don’t really like the person who needs kindness.
Sometimes you don’t know where to start with finding the kindest thing to do, so it’s easier to not do anything.
And sometimes you simply don’t have the time.
Or, at least, you don’t think you have the time.
Our modern lives are really busy. We are often dashing from one activity or commitment to another. This can have the effect of making us feel that we don’t have enough time in the day to get everything done.
In this context being kind can feel challenging:
■ Stopping to let another person go through the station door in front of you slows you down.
■ Helping a neighbour to pick up their dropped shopping means you drive out of your road later than you planned.
Listening to a colleague talk through a challenge with their project delays you with your own deadline.
Yet how much of an issue will these delays really be? On occasion, you won’t have the time to stop and help. But often a few extra minutes won’t actually make a difference.
If you find yourself thinking ‘I haven’t got time for this’, maybe it’s worth taking a moment to consider how true that actually is.
Longer-term benefits
In some situations a short-term delay can lead to longer-term gains. Take the example of a young child putting on their shoes. As their parent, grandparent or other adult, it can be tempting to do their laces for them so that you can leave the house quicker. (And sometimes you do need to do that – so you don’t miss the bus into town, for example.)

But if you can keep your frustration in check and give them the time to do it themselves, you are showing kindness in a couple of ways:

■ Tying their laces is a useful life skill that you are supporting them to learn.

■ By letting them work out how to do it for themselves, you are giving the message you believe they’re capable, an important message for self-esteem.

Understanding each other

Sometimes the kindness that we show others, and that they show us, comes from a better understanding of each other.

For example:

■ Knowing that a person collects china teapots might lead you to buying the one that you see in the charity shop as a gift for them.

■ Recognising that a junior colleague struggles with timekeeping might mean you help them plan their daily schedule.

You will need to spend time getting to know each other before you can apply that knowledge and take the kind action.

Time for connections

someone connection Being kind creates between to a you. Sometimes that connection is fleeting, other times it lasts much longer. I believe it is often worth taking a little bit of extra time in order to benefit from the positive uplift of connecting.

What do you think? Sarah Browning is a Kindness Cheerleader, Communicator and Strategist. For more inspiring stories of kindness, visit: www. timeforkindness. co.uk