

Chapter 16

Kindness as a Social Bond and the Education for the Future: Guidelines From a Psycho–Social Survey

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ABSTRACT

In the survey Imaginable Futures conducted worldwide in the year of 2022, which had 311 responders across the globe, kindness was mentioned as the one core skill for the future. Together with the importance of education for peace, mental health, and the development of survival skills in case of disasters, kindness is listed as the core skill to social bonds. Children school education and school curriculums are mostly based on content acquisition, whereas research data points to what the new generations will need in the near future. Kindness is connected to happiness, well-being, empathy, and sociability, and it can generate physical benefits, like low blood pressure. However, how can these skills be integrated in the school curriculum? How prepared are the teachers to implement this new acquisition? This research concludes that kindness and hope should be far and firstly implemented as key educational figures at this critical time of Anthropocene.

INTRODUCTION

Kindness is a genuine concern, care, and consideration for another person's wellness and well-being. As kindness encompasses acts of compassion, empathy, generosity, and respect, it also strengthens social bonds, triggering positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, and happiness. Within this cycle of kindness, social connections, and sense of belonging, the future will certainly be brighter and more welcoming (Curry, 2020)

The cultivation of kindness and empathy has become imperative for building better resilient societies in our interconnected and digital world. Kindness has been taken for granted across many generations, potentially because it was passing from one generation to the next. With so many challenges and ruptures,

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this essential skill is now at bay due to a variety of reasons from an extremely egocentric social-media based society to the period of lockdown that strengthen isolation. Therefore, Kindness Studies are highly relevant in today's world due to an increasingly interconnected and complex global society (Post, 2018)

The exploration and understanding of kindness have become crucial for promoting positive social interactions, well-being, and community development. Here are some key reasons why Kindness Studies are pertinent nowadays. Kindness has been shown to have significant positive effects on mental health, reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. In the face of rising mental health challenges worldwide, research on the psychological benefits of kindness is essential to develop effective interventions and support systems (Post, 2018). Also, acts of kindness foster a sense of social connection, trust, and cooperation among individuals and communities. In a diverse and often polarized world, understanding the role of kindness in promoting social cohesion and harmony is critical for addressing societal challenges and building inclusive societies (Seppälä, 2018).

Kindness education has gained prominence as an important aspect of character development in schools and educational institutions. Research in this field helps identify effective approaches to teach and cultivate kindness in young people, shaping them into compassionate and empathetic citizens (Nelson, K.; Shouse, R. C., 2019).

Workplace and Organizational Culture show that kindness in the workplace has been linked to higher job satisfaction, improved employee well-being, and increased organizational productivity. As organizations recognize the significance of positive work environments, Kindness Studies offer insights into fostering kindness and compassion in the workplace. Moreover, understanding the role of kindness in addressing social issues, such as prejudice, discrimination, and conflict, can lead to more effective interventions and initiatives. Kindness can be a powerful tool for promoting understanding and empathy across diverse groups. (Keltner, D.; Marsh, J., 2018). As technology continues to shape human interactions, the study of kindness in virtual spaces, social media, and online communities becomes increasingly relevant. Understanding the role of kindness in promoting pro-social behaviours and collective action is vital for achieving sustainable development goals.

The field of Kindness Studies for the future is new and has an interdisciplinary nature allowing researchers to explore kindness from various angles, making it a valuable area of study for creating positive societal change that is requested to foresee the new generations humanity aims. Rooted in compassion, empathy, and goodwill, acts of kindness contribute to positive social interactions, well-being, and the creation of harmonious communities. The study of kindness, known as "Kindness Studies," is an emerging interdisciplinary field that seeks to explore, understand, and promote acts of kindness, their psychological and physiological effects, and their impact on individual and societal well-being.

Kindness Studies draws on various disciplines, including psychology, sociology, neuroscience, anthropology, philosophy, and education, to examine the multifaceted nature of kindness and its significance in different contexts. The field delves into the cognitive processes, emotions, and motivations that underlie acts of kindness, investigating how individuals perceive kindness, how they choose to be kind, and the factors that influence these decisions.

Researchers in this field utilize a variety of methodologies, including laboratory experiments, field studies, surveys, and qualitative analyses, to explore the intricate nature of kindness and its far-reaching effects. What are the psychological and physiological benefits of receiving or performing acts of kindness? Can kindness be cultivated and taught? If so, what are the most effective methods for promoting kindness in educational settings and beyond? What role does culture and social norms play in shaping

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