

Health Promotion Practitioner

Practical solutions for health enhancement programming

Be Kind While You Can

In a recent *Practitioner* issue, there was an article on kindness and its effect on health and well-being. I was reminded just how important kindness is in our lives.

My wife Lani chaperoned our daughter's high school homecoming dance and shared a story about a young man who arrived in a new suit, carrying his date's corsage. Judging by his nervousness, as he waited in the hall checking back and forth for his date's arrival, Lani felt this must be his first date.

More than an hour went by; with each passing minute you could tell he was getting more anxious. Then the young lady appeared with a group of friends, and for a brief moment his spirits lifted. But in an exchange Lani couldn't hear, it became clear that either there had been a misunderstanding or the girl had changed her mind about being his date. She entered the dance laughing with her friends, leaving the young man holding the flower, standing alone in the hallway. Lani and the other chaperones' hearts sank as they could see the boy fighting back tears.

The next morning I opened our local paper to a front page story: a group of kids from another community were in a tragic car accident on the way home from their high school dance; 1 lost his life and 3 others were

severely injured. My mind immediately connected to the story Lani had shared the night before. What if the boy who was stood up had died that night? How would the young lady who left him standing alone have felt? Even if there had been a misunderstanding, she could have accepted the corsage and invited him to join the group. She had a chance at kindness and didn't take it.

If you've raised kids through their teenage years you know these moments of unkindness are too frequent. Kids don't often stop to think how their words and deeds can hurt others. As a parent, you look at moments like this as reminders for your child... that you hope they never put someone in a similar situation or treat anyone unfairly. As adults, we have ample opportunity to show kindness and compassion every day — at home, at work, and in the community — and to be a role model for children as well as everyone we meet.

The data on being good to each other is clear: the more you respect and care for other human beings the more you benefit — physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

I hope you take this chance to share the message of kindness personally and through your program. Be kind while you can. 🙏



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