



KindnessRipples

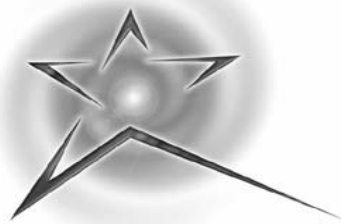
52 Ways to Ripple Kindness
'Round the World
(That Don't Cost a Thing)

MamaRedKnight

Kindness Ripples

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'Round the World
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igKnight Your World Publishing



Legal notice

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Words of Wisdom

“Kindness in words creates confidence.”

~Lao-Tze

Kind words for “Kindness Ripples”

“I have so many friends from different cultures, religions and backgrounds. This is the one book that I could give as a gift to them all and know they would feel valued – after all *kindness* is a universal language we *all* understand.”

~Karolyn Hart, Founder, *Live with Thrive*

“Every once in awhile a person with an idea shows up that is so astonishing that you know you're seeing Spirit at work. MamaRed and *Kindness Ripples* are out to make the world a kinder place, and they will! This book will touch your heart, heal your hurts, and inspire you to join the *Kindness Campaign*. You'll begin to see kindness everywhere, and wonder how you could have missed it before! Thanks, MamaRed!”

~Wes Hopper, Author, *The Astonishing Power of Gratitude*

“Thanks for being a great and entertaining guest on our show! *Kindness Ripples* is a *must read!* “


~Suzie Greenman, “RadioSuzy”

“When I first started reading MamaRed’s book, “*Kindness Ripples*, I thought ‘Who really needs this?’ Well I found out rather quickly, it was me! We all can use a little help in remembering the little things that can make a difference in the lives of others. Not to mention the joy that comes back to oneself with the little acts of KINDNESS. This book is a *must read*.”

~Paul C. Holgorsen

“Great interview!!! I’ve SO enjoyed this book. A *must read...only if you're human!!!*”

~Michael Ray Dresser, *The Michael Dresser Show*



“MamaRed's words of kindness have a positive impact on the world. She inspires us to remember what's important in life!”

~Laura Bank, Author, *Pearls of Wellness*,

“With all the negativity we hear about in the world today, *Kindness Ripples* is a breath of fresh air. The possibilities lift you up and help you remember the difference kindness can make in our lives. This book is such a reflection of MamaRed’s personal exuberance, joy for living, and enthusiasm for making a difference in the world. “

~Evelin Saxinger, ND, “*The Transition Doctor*”

“...From my own experience I have evidence what you have written holds a BIG TRUTH and may your book ring globally! I already have giggles and a wonderful feeling of “that's how it has to be” when I imagine the stunned faces around the world when a woman or man walks in a shop fearless and calls the clerk with their name. And immediately love floods two hearts who may need it most.”

~Silke, Public Relations, Europe

“MamaRed has some very unique, but simple ideas that she brings to the world in her book, *Kindness Ripples*. She clearly understands that in order to have a different life, you must practice a different life. Spelled out in her book are practices that are simple, clear and, when followed, will most assuredly enhance the lives of those who practice the acts of kindness. In turn, the lives of all those that are touched by the acts of kindness will then become ripples of inspiration for others to practice and pay forward in a world that desperately needs these acts of kindness.”

~Jack Needham, Author, *Stop Fixing, Start Leading!*[®]

“MamaRed has a way of inspiring others to try out delightful ways of spreading kindness. I couldn't stop reading. It is easy to think we can't make a difference in the world. This book gives lots of ideas, stories, and possibilities for how we can lift someone's heart. That makes a difference.”

~Nancy Lennon, Co-author, *Angel On My Shoulder*



“There is power in simplicity. From her own honest, personal story to her cultivation of kind-consciousness, MamaRed has offered up a range of free ways to reach out and make a difference. They will be familiar to you when you see them, she only asks that you pay more attention. Kindness doesn't grow on trees, but the seeds sprout from awareness, and flourish in our actions. *Oh yes, she will remind you!*”

~Toni Josephson, *Tan*Dao for Evolving Martial Artists*

“To borrow and paraphrase a line from MamaRed’s book “Just think how far a simple ‘kindness’ can ripple outward!” While reading *Kindness Ripples* I was struck with how she expounded on simple everyday occurrences like they were precious jewels—and really isn't that what simple acts of kindness are? A smile, a hug, a birthday wish, can change a life, a destiny, forever. Each of these acts of kindness are within my power, within your power, to distribute daily, even lavish, on the people around us. We are such wealthy people when we share kindness with another.”

~Melody Campbell, *Building Your Coaching Business*



Words of Wisdom

“The flower of kindness will grow. Maybe not now, but it will some day. And, in kind, that kindness will flow, for kindness grows this way.”

~ Robert Alan

Acknowledgements

Oh goodness, I've been blessed by so many amazing friends, teachers, mentors, and coaches. The list is *endless!*

To my family, especially my mom, Barbara, who has loved and supported me without cease for many decades.

And my son, Matt, who inspired this book with his heart of gold and his joy of sharing his heart and kindness with others.

To Karen PK, the inspiration for an entirely new life, even if she didn't know it. She opened my eyes to a world I didn't know existed.

To Betty Ann, who has walked through hell and back with, and for, me.

To Joyce, who taught me what it looks like to live with joy and abandon. She is true to her name, in all areas of her life.

To Jodee who has been a fantastic cheerleader and taught me what confidence and standing in your personal power does for the world.

To Silke, who has supported me as I stepped onto the skinny branches and helped me see the world through the eyes of another culture.

To the hundreds, no **thousands**, of others who have graced me with kindness, love, and joy. I stand in awe of your contribution to the world.

To **Kevin Dooley** for taking an exquisite photo and giving it a Creative Commons license so I could also share it with you!



Words of Wisdom

*“Practice kindness—
particularly when you feel
irritated or things are not going
well. Kindness hardly ever goes
wrong.”*

~ Lewis Richmond

From a kick-in-the-butt to ripples of kindness

I sat in stunned silence as the words “Mom, I want to jump in front of a car and die” came out of my 13 year old son’s mouth.

As the impact of those words hit me full on, I realized I was in a car, driving toward some mundane destination that no longer mattered.

My precious son was hurting so badly he wanted to die?

Somehow I kept driving as if this were any normal day. All the while, my mind raced with questions, with a terror so complete I don’t know how I managed to keep the car on the road.

All I knew to do was “pretend” his statement was a normal part of everyday conversation until we could get home. And it seemed, to me anyway, that he was totally calm, cool, and collected, like he had just asked for a burger and fries, not dropped a bombshell.

While I, on the other hand, was totally freaking out.

How could this be?

What could have happened to send him over the edge this way?

What signs had I missed?

What do I do now?

Who can help me?

Who do I call?

At the time, there were a lot of school shootings going on and the painful tragedies were splashed across the front page of all the newspapers and online news services. Those stories were running through my mind as I did my best to figure out what to do, how to handle this situation.

I immediately got in touch with his dad, my own counselor and the school counselors, begging for their help, asking “what do I do now?”

After many frantic calls and terrifying moments of wondering what to do, the school counselors referred me to a special program for troubled teenagers in the area and everyone pulled together to get my son an appointment for the following week.

I had worked out all the details of the program with my son’s dad, my son’s school and the nearby facility, without telling my son about it, fearing some sort of trouble at the school if I did.

The day I was to take him for the first evaluation, I was terrified and hoping I had made the right decision.

As I drove to pick him up from school, my mom stayed on the phone with me, encouraging, supporting, being there from a distance. I heard myself say...

“Mom, I know this sounds really weird...in a strange way I’m grateful for the shootings and the news coverage of them.

“I know the losses were devastating and I wouldn’t wish that pain and fear on anyone, even my worst enemy. I can’t **begin** to imagine how painful the situation was for all those involved.

“AND I’m absolutely certain one positive came out of those events. Because I was aware of those tragedies, I had a heightened awareness of how serious my son’s cry for help was.

“I believe I would have ignored him when he said he wanted to die, thinking he was going through the ‘typical’ teenage years full angst and hormones.”

Things went relatively smoothly, and my son spent about 16 weeks in the outpatient program, working through the pain of being a teenager who was bopping between two households and wasn’t wanted by the stepparent in either one.

Add that to feeling like an outcast at school and we had the formula for desperation. During this time, his dad and I worked like a well-oiled machine. His stepdad thought I was “overreacting” and thought my son was “bucking for attention.”

I didn't care what he thought, which was the final straw for our relationship.

And throughout the entire situation, complete strangers stepped forward to lend a hand, provide support, give advice. Friends and family lifted me with their prayers and words of encouragement.

Fast forward a couple of years. My son completed the program and came out of it in much better shape than he went in. My husband left for greener pastures and I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, or be.

My son and I were at the grocery store debating which we wanted most: pizza or ice cream. (What a healthy set of choices, eh?)

As we stood there, a very tiny elderly woman walked down the aisle.

We both glanced at her, and at each other, mentally noting the difference in her size compared to ours (I'm 5'9" and my son was 6' at the time, dressed in his best Goth black duds).

A few minutes later, this frail woman started back toward us and, looking right at my son, asked if he could help get an item from a top shelf.

Before she even finished making her request, he was walking with her toward the case, slowing his long stride to meet her short one.

As they returned, I heard him saying to her “Is there anything else I can do for you? I'm sure my mom can finish her shopping by herself.”

The woman responded, “No, that is all I needed, thank you so very much.”

Then she turned to me and said, “You have the kindest son, you are a very lucky, blessed woman...it is rare to see that in the young these days.”

She then turned and went on with her shopping.

As the tears rolled down my face, I realized kindness **IS** an amazing gift and my son was kind in spades.

How blessed was I? Truly, how blessed was I?

The thought flashed through my head, “There are a million acts of kindness every day. There are millions of kids who do their homework, their chores, act kindly toward someone.

“Where are the stories about **those** kids? Why is it we only hear about the horrific, the negative or the sad?”

Time went by and I forgot about the flash of insight I received so many years ago, not realizing those flashes are gifts given to us to act on.

Knowing me, I would have been caught up in the “hows” and what I didn’t know, as I was not yet aware that all would be revealed when I took a step out in faith.

In 2006, I was a newlywed and, for some reason, my health failed about 2 weeks after the honeymoon and I became bedridden, sleeping almost 18 hours a day. And the doctors hadn’t a clue what to do.

What a way to start a marriage! Sadly, it ended it too, leaving me bereft and heartbroken. And no healthier!

During one of my few awake times, the idea of “One Million Acts” popped into my thoughts again.

I don’t remember the why of it: I *do* remember it seemed as if someone was standing right next to me saying “Now, **NOW** is the time. Go!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Years of training in transformational processes had taught me to pay more attention, and this time I did.

I did what I could given my health at the time. I sent letters to friends and acquaintances, asked for stories, asked for ideas on how to create something to raise the world’s positive energy.

I got a lot of “That’s a great idea, it’s really needed.” And that was the end of it, not many stepped forward with stories or moments or other ideas. Although I took a few more steps forward, I simply didn’t have the energy to do what was needed.

One year went by. I knew more and had made a choice, with the support of many who held me high, to step into the gifts I bring to this world and to live my passion to help others bring their message to the world by conquering their fears, misgivings, and technology.

Although I found lots and lots of different ideas, campaigns and websites, I didn’t see quite the vision I had in mind (especially since I had more training in building partnerships).

So I created a baby website and started adding stories and inviting subscribers to share their acts of kindness.

There is still more to be done for my “heart project,” and one of the next steps is this book.

My vision is to partner with corporate sponsors and nonprofit organizations and donate a portion of each sale to 1 or more nonprofit organizations.

Let’s work together to collect a million moments of kindness to share with the world.

How does that sound to you? You in?

I want to hear from you...see the give me a call (203.626.2054) or **send me an email**. Meeting a fellow KindnessWarrior absolutely rocks my world!

Those moments, those stories, are there, waiting to be recognized and shared—to uplift the world and change the focus from tragedy to triumph, from sadness to joy, from war to peace, from a ravaged heart to one filled with passion.

One moment at a time. And that moment is RIGHT NOW!



Words of Wisdom

“Be kind to people whether they deserve your kindness or not. If your kindness reaches the deserving good for you. If your kindness reaches the undeserving, take joy in your compassion.”

~ James Fadiman

Using this book

The best way to use this book is to dive right in, scan the list of Ripples in the **Contents at a Glance**, read the Ripple that most interests you at the moment and put it into action right away. There is no “right order” or “right time” or, well, “right way. There’s YOUR way. What works for you and your definition of an amazing world to live in and share with others.

Need some other ideas? You could...

- Start with the first Ripple and focus your kindness efforts on that Ripple for the entire week.
- Scan the **Contents at a Glance** and find something that suits your mood or other activities for the week.
- Do a Ripple a Day and, when you’re done with all 52, start over again.
- Find something that suits you and track what you see, do, or hear about.
- Create a little friendly competition. Get your family, friends, co-workers (heck grab strangers on the street!) in on the act and have each of you keep track of the chosen Ripple. See who can collect the most examples of the Ripple of the Week. The winner gets to pick the next challenge.
- Choose another Ripple from the wealth of ideas on the Internet to make deposits to the Universal Bank of Kindness™ (U B OK).
- Use this book as a starting point and create your very own list of Ripples to change the world around you.



Dedication

This book is dedicated to
the 7 billion, and counting, amazing souls
navigating this journey called “life”
to the very best of their ability, one moment at a time.

May you always know...

you are loved...

you are lovable...

you are loving.



Words of Wisdom

“The kindness planned for tomorrow does not count for today.”

~ Unknown

Contents at a Glance

Legal notice	
Kind words for “Kindness Ripples”	
Acknowledgements	
From a kick-in-the-butt to ripples of kindness	
Using this book	
Dedication	

Kindness Ripples: 52 Ripple Kindness 'Round the World That Don't Cost a Thing

Ripple 1: Say “thank you” at the store	19
Ripple 2: Hug someone	20
Ripple 3: Share a smile	21
Ripple 4: Hold the door open	22
Ripple 5: Return your grocery cart to the cart corral	23
Ripple 6: Laugh out loud in your own home	24
Ripple 7: Blow bubbles	26
Ripple 8: Let someone cut in front of you in a traffic jam	28
Ripple 9: Call a friend	30
Ripple 10: Live your passions, live on fire!	31
Ripple 11: Look in the mirror and say “You are amazing”	33
Ripple 12: Receive a compliment graciously	35
Ripple 13: Compliment a stranger	37
Ripple 14: Ask what someone needs	39

Ripple 15: Give away some of your books	41
Ripple 16: Forgive someone	43
Ripple 17: Pay attention to kindness	45
Ripple 18: Change your tone, shift your attitude	47
Ripple 19: Stop and look for beauty	49
Ripple 20: Do someone's chores	51
Ripple 21: Read to someone	53
Ripple 22: Search for kindness in the midst of tragedy	55
Ripple 23: Share a word of encouragement	57
Ripple 24: Dance around your home!	58
Ripple 25: Give of your heart	60
Ripple 26: Take charge of what you focus on	62
Ripple 27: Say “hi,” “hello,” “how are you”	64
Ripple 28: Scrape the ice and snow off a car	66
Ripple 29: Express your love... to someone!	68
Ripple 30: Leave a note for a challenging co-worker	70
Ripple 31: Laugh on purpose	72
Ripple 32: Pick up the trash	74
Ripple 33: Acknowledge an author, teacher, or speaker	76
Ripple 34: Create giveaways to keep with you	78
Ripple 35: Create a connection between youth & elders	80
Ripple 36: Recognize your team's contributions	82
Ripple 37: Pull your team together in a common cause	84
Ripple 38: Create a fun, funky greeting or comeback	86
Ripple 39: Share that you care, share you	88

Ripple 40: Foster an “Attitude of Gratitude”	90
Ripple 41: “Spring clean” your world	92
Ripple 42: Let someone else have the last word	94
Ripple 43: Revel in the small pleasures	96
Ripple 44: Be on the lookout for good customer service	98
Ripple 45: Listen with all your heart	100
Ripple 46: Choose responsibility, not guilt	102
Ripple 47: Take action!!!!!!!!!!	104
Ripple 48: Celebrate diversity, celebrate similarities	106
Ripple 49: Play!!!!!!!!!! Have fun!!!!!!!!!!	108
Ripple 50: Create a garden	110
Ripple 51: Encourage yourself and others	112
Ripple 52: Help out at a local prison or detention center	114
Let’s connect!	
About the Author	117



52 ways to Ripple Kindness 'Round the World (That Don't Cost a Thing)



Words of Wisdom

“In everyone's life, at some time, the inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being.

We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit.”

~ Albert Schweitzer

Ripple 1 – Say “thank you” at the store

I know, I know, it seems simple enough, doesn't it?

And it is!

And we get so darned busy, we can easily forget this little...nicety.

It is very effective (when done sincerely) and is even more effective when you combine the “thank you” with a person's name.

Many people rarely, if ever, hear those words combined, unless it's to criticize or hurt.

So, the next time you stop by to pick up something from the store, sneak a peek at the counterperson's name badge...let's say the badge reads “Sophia.”

She rings up your order, hands it to you, and you say “Thank you, Sophia.”

That's it...at least 50% of the people I've tried this with give me a “what the heck” look, then a smile.

And who knows what difference you just made with that simple act of kindness?

You could be the first person of the day who has even acknowledged Mary is a human being.

By doing this, you've lifted her up, yourself up, and betcha money, a bunch of other people in “Mary's” life, including everyone else Mary is around that day, whether it is other customers, her family, her friends, her pets.

Just think how far a simple “thank you” can ripple outward!



Words of Wisdom

“A hug is a great gift—one size fits all, and it's easy to exchange.”

~ Author Unknown

Ripple 2 – Hug someone

Is there anything as heartwarming as a nice big squeeze? You know the kind I mean, right?

The kind where the hugger wraps the huggee all up in warmth and snuggliness and comfort? Not one of those remote “teepee” hugs, a real big wraparound bear hug! Beats the heck out of a handshake! And yes, you can give them out to complete strangers. Now I know some people aren't as fond of hugs as others are, so you may want to give folks a chance to tell you “no thanks” by checking in with them if you aren't sure.

You could say something like...

“Do you do hugs?” or

“I adore hugs, you up for one?” or

“I could use a hug right about now, how about you?”

In fact, one day a wonderfully kind seafood clerk went out of her way to help me get more shrimp for my dollar. When she came out with my lovely frozen shrimp, I impulsively hugged her as I thanked her.

I was stunned when I heard her whisper in my ear “that’s the first hug I’ve had in 2 years.” As my tears started, I gave her another 1...the smile on her face lit up the store and my heart, big time. (And no, I didn’t even **think** to ask her, oops!)

I mean according to studies I’ve seen, we need at least 12 a day, which means she had a lot of catching up to do to get her quota! Ummmmmmmm, feel the warmth? It is spreading all over the world at the speed of light.

Thanks bunches...you do good hugs, didya know that?

Simple enough. See, I told you they were freebies!



Words of Wisdom

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

~ Leo Buscaglia

Ripple 3 – Share a smile

Seriously now, how hard is it to smile? Curve your lips upward and there ya go!

You've raised your own energy and you've raised the energy of the person who gets to see that smile. And I realize sometimes it **can be** quite an effort, especially on those days when you wonder if you'll ever smile again. Life is simply too hard. Too full of sadness. Too much.

Smile at a stranger, smile at yourself, smile at a spouse, or your kids, or your friends or your family.

Give this a try. Look around wherever you are. Notice the person who looks sad or tired or worn out from living.

Catch their eye. And smile. Whether they respond or not, I guarantee you've made a difference with that simple act.

Who knows? You may be the only person that shares the secret gift of a smile with them that day.

I did this one day.

There was an elder sitting on a bench beside the exit to the grocery where I was shopping. I watched as people walked by her, acting as if she didn't exist or had cooties or whatever else she had that might be “catching” to them.

My heart **hurt** from watching this precious soul sitting there, looking lonely and forgotten, the world passing her by as if she didn't matter anymore.

As I walked out the door, I smiled at her, and said “hi” too).

She lit up like a light bulb...she had been seen and the smile she shared with me in that 1 brief moment **lit my life for hours.**

**Smile. It's catching! And ya never know where that smile will end up.
Could be all the way over on the other side of the world!**



Words of Wisdom

"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I do know:

The only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought, and found, how to serve."

~ Albert Schweitzer

Ripple 4 – Hold the door open

This is another one that is pretty easy. You look behind you and there is someone about to come in the door. You hold open the door and, voila, a kindness is done.

Now, how many people you hold it for is up to you and what you feel up to at any given point in time.

When my son was old enough to start learning some of the social niceties, I wasn't sure what to teach since the "men hold the door for women" approach was no longer politically correct.

So what to teach?

I taught him to open the door whenever there was someone behind him or almost behind him. If the person was older than he was, he was to stand back and let the person go in the door first. If the person was the same age, or younger, he would still hold the door, and he could go in first if he wanted to. Done!

I saw similar example at work the other day. A young boy of about 10 or so held the door open for several people at a grocery store. His mother had already gone into the store and didn't realize her polite young son was still standing outside being very sweet.

You should have seen the looks on the faces of those he did this for and on his mother's face too. People smiled. They complimented the young boy *and* complimented his mother.

In return, the boy's smile radiated like the sun itself.

Perfection, wouldn't you say? So what approach do you want to create for yourself?

Whatever you decide, I'm sure it will be perfect and increase the balance in the Universal Bank of Kindness™(U B OK)!



Words of Wisdom

“If there is any kindness I can show, or any good thing I can do to any fellow being, let me do it now, and not deter or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again.”

~ William Penn

Ripple 5 – Return your grocery cart to the cart corral

OK, so you may think this the silliest tip ever. And I get that. AND, here's my question...

Have you ever been zooming around the parking lot in the pouring rain, noticed a great spot, started to park, then realized “oh crud, there is a ****&\$%^** cart in the way!” ARGHGHGH.

Now you get to start looking for another spot and the whole frustrating process starts over again! Does that make for a great day?

I'll tell you what, this frustrates the bejeebers out of me. Couldn't people return the cart and not block half the parking spots in the lot? It isn't *that* hard, is it?

The funny part is my son picked up on this one while he was growing up. He knew it frustrated me and didn't like to be around mom when she was in **that** mood. Because, to be honest, my language wasn't exactly fit for a youngster! And yes, it was a pretty small thing to throw a temper tantrum over.

I guess I consider it rude **and** I was being rather judgmental (now that I look back on it).

To this day, he puts his cart back and usually grabs another one on the way. He usually gets some very funny looks and some “thank you’s” to boot! And both of us have had some folks say “that is awesome, now I won't chip the paint on my car.” What’s even more fun is to catch someone else putting the cart back and say “thank you.”

The look of surprise is worth a million bucks!

So, next time you're using a grocery cart, return it to the corral and, if you're really feeling generous, put another one back too! That'll put some positive energy into the world.

What think you oh Awesome One?



Words of Wisdom

“The most wasted day of all is that in which we have not laughed.”

~ Sebastian Roch Nicolas Chamfort

Ripple 6 – Laugh out loud in your own home

We’re born knowing how to laugh and slowly, surely over time most of us forget how. We get caught up in the “seriousness” of life, the bills due right now, the illnesses dragging us down, the responsibilities for everything and everyone, the state of world affairs, the car with a dead battery.

And pretty soon, laughter is a thing of the past. Poof. Gone. No more laughter for me, thank you very much. I’m a “proper” adult...all seriousness and responsibility. How does that feel? Good? Great? No?

Oh my, tho’, when we laugh all sorts of great things happen...

The world doesn’t seem like such a tough thing to handle.

Those aches and pains take a hike.

You feel like you’ve got the world by the tail!

Did you know scientists have discovered laughter truly is the best medicine?

It strengthens your immune system, your intellectual performance, helps you remember stuff and even gives you abs of steel!

(OK, maybe that last 1 is pushing it a bit too far.)

Ever notice how you can’t laugh, or at least smile, and be a grumpy guss at the same time? The two simply don’t go together, do they?

So give this try...

1. Make sure no one is around (you don’t want to get someone else laughing, now do ya?)
2. Think of something that has made you laugh sometime...a joke, a situation, something you’ve done that was ever so silly

(If you can’t think of something, laugh anyway...your body will get the idea VERY quickly.)

3. Now laugh...right out loud
4. Now laugh harder, get every part of you involved
5. Repeat as needed

Need some more ideas of how to inject more laughter in your life?

Do a quick online search for laughter therapy and you'll find a bunch of resources to give you great reasons to laugh!

Try it. And let me know what happens!



Words of Wisdom

“To give pleasure to a single heart by a single act is better than a thousand heads bowing in prayer.”

~ Mohandas Gandhi

Ripple 7 – Blow bubbles

Is there anything like blowing bubbles to lighten the load and make us feel like a kid again?

Just thinking about the floaty uppy shapes, sometimes with neato colors in the middle, gives me a smile. And a smile is a good thing, for you and anyone who gets to see the beautiful upward curve in those lips of yours!

So this one is a “twofer.”

I long ago gave up blowing bubbles as being way too childish.

Totally irresponsible. A waste of time.

I mean really, there were much more adult things I needed to be doing, right?

Well, after a lot of years with that kind of thinking, depression set in and the world looked full of crap and crud and none of it was too pretty.

Then one day, while wandering around in a daze, I saw a child blowing bubbles and the laughter bubbled up and out of me before I could even catch it.

Just like the bubbles, the laugh floated up and out and into the world, joined with lots of other giggles.

I soon forgot about bubbles again and went back to my serious ways, until a few years ago when I was in a transformational leadership class.

My partner (yes, she was a fully grown adult even) was talking about how much she enjoyed blowing bubbles and, lo and behold, what did she have in her car?

Yup, you got it. Bubble-making stuff.

A big ole flat tray to hold the bubble solution and a humongous bubble blower. She yanked that thing out of the trunk and started waving bubbles around all of us.

And we all smiled. And we all laughed.

And it was so awesome! And to this very day she blows bubbles when she wants to lighten the load.

I also met an amazing woman who uses singing to heal and she does bubbles too! She keeps them in her car and yanks them out when there is a traffic jam.

She says the looks she gets are positively priceless! And it beats the socks off sitting there stewing over something you can't change anyway!

And another vote for bubbles comes from one of the Million Moments of Kindness subscribers. She bought herself an inexpensive bottle of bubbles and blows them when she is stuck at a red light.

One day another driver pulled up beside her and commented that she looked like she was having a lot of fun.

The subscriber said "I'm on a smile campaign. I'm trying to get people to smile more."

The other driver quipped "Well, it's working! In fact, if I had some bubbles I'd be joining you."

The subscriber decided it might be time to purchase some spares and give them to others who are stuck at a red light with her!

How cool, eh?

So how about it? Wanna go on a bubble-blowing tour? It'll be a blast!



Words of Wisdom

“Remember, there is no such thing as a small act of kindness.

Every act creates a ripple with no logical end.”

~ Scott Adams

Ripple 8 – Let someone cut in front of you in a traffic jam

When I was a little girl, I was taught “cuts” (cutting in line in front of someone already in line), weren’t nice.

So, I didn’t do “cuts” and I got really honked off when other people did it...and got away with it!

Traffic jams, at least in the U.S., seem to be the norm in many areas of the country, especially the big cities like Chicago, New York, Los Angeles.

And the powers-that-be seem to pick the day I have a meeting to get to or need to pick someone up from the airport.

(Or anything else I think is time critical) to close down 5 of 6 lanes on the “high speed” highway I’m traveling on.

It’s as if those folks took a look at my calendar and said “ah ha, let’s see what we can do to frustrate the heck out of MamaRed and see if she lives what she teaches.”

And boy, you want to see the tempers flare? Ones that might not flare anywhere else?

Sit in a nasty traffic jam with something important to do.

People in traffic seem to have a magical ability to ignore the desperate, pleading looks of those stuck on the on ramp. There are those trying to merge into a million miles of other desperate travelers.

It’s like they consciously look the other way...trying to ignore those pleading looks of desperation. Realizing that, if they look, they’re sunk and they might do the right thing.

And that would mess with their plans to get where they **think** they need to be ASAP.

Pretty soon looks that could melt metal are rampant, the horns are so loud and so angry your stomach hurts, and the finger (you know the one I mean) starts flying fast and furious.

Well, what if you did “cuts” the other way...you let someone cut in front of you when you're sitting in one of those nasty traffic jams and the frustration is boiling over, hotter than a kettle on a stove?

And you did it with a big belly laugh?

A big ole' welcoming wave, a cheerful heart, knowing you've given a free kindness?

And if you really want to go all out, let in two cars. Twice the fun, double the kindnesses.

Whoo hoo. Think of the all those good vibes and good will rippling around the world!



Words of Wisdom

“If instead of a gem, or even a flower, we should cast the gift of a loving thought into the heart of a friend, that would be giving as the angels give.”

~ George MacDonald

Ripple 9 – Call a friend

Ever found yourself saying “you know, I should call” and thinking “aw, I’ll do that tonight.”

Don’t put it off...grab the phone and make the call, you may not know why you’re calling and you may not know what to say.

That’s OK! Make the call anyway.

Why? I believe that you’re receiving a message that this person **needs** to hear from you.

Maybe they’re down for some reason...they lost their job, a loved one, a beloved pet, a partner. Maybe they feel they’re totally alone in the world and no one at all cares about them anymore.

Or maybe a dear friend of theirs is in trouble or pain and they don’t know how to help.

And your call, out of the blue for no obvious reason at all, could be just the thing to help this person go on with their life, feeling a bit more loved, a bit more cared for, a bit more “noticed” in a world that seems to pass them by without even noticing.

I can’t even remember the number of times I’ve made this kind of call and heard an exclamation of “Wow, I was just thinking of you, how did you know?”

I **love** hearing that and I love the opportunity to help someone just when they need it most.

So give it a try...pick up the phone, dial the number and even if you get voice mail, leave a message and let the person know you’re thinking of them and would love to chat.



Words of Wisdom

“Imagine what a harmonious world it could be if every single person, both young and old shared a little of what he is good at doing.”

~ Quincy Jones

Ripple 10 – Live your passions, live on fire!

Why in the world would living your passions, finding something you love to do, be an act of kindness?

Wouldn't that be considered “selfish”?

Making it “all about you?”

The answer is a resounding “hell no, it isn't selfish and **it is** all about you!!!!!!”

When you do something you love to do, you're happier.

Ever notice that? You're more satisfied with life, laughing more, enjoying more, being all you can be.

You're going with the flow and all seems right with your world.

You're not fighting an upstream current that is sucking you under, pulling you into the dark abyss of dislike, pain and downright misery.

We're all part of a big web of life, with the ripples and currents going out into places we never dreamed of.

When anyone on this planet is unhappy, the rest of us “catch it”...kinda like an Earth-wide “unhappy” virus going ‘round the world at the speed of light.

Actually, the opposite is also possible.

The rest of the world can just as easily catch the “happy virus” as quickly as they can catch the “unhappy” virus.

So which would you rather **share**?

Which would you rather **be**? Happy or sad?

Joyous or in the dumps? Laughing or crying?

Take a look around you...you'll see what I mean.

Ever been in a great mood, singing along with the radio on your way to get something done? Get those chores out of the way?

You're bouncing along, filled with joy and happiness. You've been at work all day, doing what you love and are good at and you feel great.

On top of the world. Filled with love for all (even if that driver **did** cut you off in traffic).

Then "boom," you get home and someone close to you has had a horrible day, totally horrible. Nothing has gone right.

The world sucks.

They're grouching around, whining, moaning about how awful life is.

You try your best to keep that happy mood, be understanding, be caring.

And suddenly you find yourself going under.

Being drawn down into the muck and yuck of the other person.

Pretty soon you've forgotten how cool it was to be you, to be doing what you love and are good at.

In pretty short order, you find yourself grouching around with the best of 'em, forgetting what it was like to laugh and feel good.

So you tell me, is it selfish to do what you love to do?

Is it selfish to share the joy and passion that comes from doing so?

Ummmm, don't think so.

How about you sharing a shot of the "happiness vaccine" today by finding something you love to do and doing it!

It could be something as simple as reading a good book or taking a walk or shaking up your life by doing the work you've always wanted to do.

I'd love to hear how you spread happiness...write me and let me know!



Words of Wisdom

“You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you’ll discover will be wonderful. What you’ll discover is yourself.”

~ Alan Alda

Ripple 11 – Look in the mirror and say “You are amazing”

So often kindness is said to be something we do for someone else.

We look outward and plan, act spontaneously or think about what we can do for others. The environment...our pets...our kids...our parents...our friends...our co-workers.

Anyone except ourselves.

Yet how can we practice kindness, model kindness, *be* kindness, if we treat ourselves like second class citizens?

So this week’s tip is to be kind to yourself.

Treat yourself as the Amazing you are, recognize yourself as the Amazing you are.

You are a Light-filled being on a human journey doing the very best you can, in every moment of every day.

- Maybe you got out of bed this morning. Congratulate yourself, especially if there are many days when you pull the covers over your head when the alarm goes off and hide away from the world, believing you are unworthy, unwanted or unlovable.
- Or maybe you hauled yourself out of bed and decided to take that walk you’ve been talking about taking for days, months, years, maybe.
- Or maybe you ate breakfast at 7 am rather than 10 am, and actually made it something decent for you rather than a pot of coffee (my personal favorite).

If you look around you, you’ll find the things you do are awesome. Give yourself credit for them. Honor yourself for your efforts. Ease up on yourself a little bit.

Remember the bright-eyed child you were, or have, and great yourself with gentleness and kindness. You ARE truly amazing.

You are an Amazing.

You are loved.

You are loving.

You are lovable.

AND you deserve a kindness today.

When you're kind to yourself, you can spread kindness everywhere you go...without even trying.

Because you are, after all, the most perfect YOU you can be!

My deepest gratitude for the gifts you are.

I am in awe of the wondrous being you are.



Words of Wisdom

“When we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves.”

~ William Arthur Ward

Ripple 12 – Receive a compliment graciously

Yup, you read that right.

Receive a compliment from someone, with grace and gratitude.

A simple “thank you” works perfectly.

Why is it important to receive graciously (whether a compliment or anything else)? Because you are accepting your greatness and honoring the other person’s contribution to you at the same time.

It is a two-way street!

Like many of us, at least in the American culture, I grew up feeling I **must** push off a kind word if it was personal.

So, for example, someone would tell me “oh goodness, what beautiful eyes you have” or “wow, that dress looks great on you.”

My first response used to be “oh no, my eyes are really red because I was out till midnight and now I look like Christmas, all red and green” or “this old thing, I got it years ago for a \$1 at Kmart, it’s nothing, really.”

I managed to deflect about every compliment I would get, thinking I was being properly humble and “good.”

And in a lot of cases, I never even **heard** the compliment or kind words...I was used to looking for the “slam” about what I wasn’t doing well.

I put my focus on what was “wrong” with me instead of what was “right” with me.

The sad part?

It carried over into the world around me! That became what I taught others, simply because of my own behavior.

Then my mentor at the time said something that stunned me to the core of my being.

She said, “I know you to be a kind, warm, caring person. Do you realize when you reject someone’s compliment, you’re basically telling them ‘you’re stupid, shove off, get a life, you can’t possibly believe that’? Because that is what you’re doing.”

It **never** occurred to me that I was doing that...it was totally unconscious and automatic. When she put it **that** way, I realized I needed to change because that isn’t what I intended to keep putting out in the world.

It took an amazing amount of practice to reach the point where I could say “thank you” when someone gave me a compliment.

Two simple words and they were HARD!

Over a two decades later, I **still** practice what my mentor shared with me.

And I still forget sometimes and shuffle my feet, look to the floor, and start to say “ah shucks, not me.”

Then I catch myself and remind myself that I don’t believe this person is stupid.

They are an Amazing and they’re sharing a wonderful gift with me.

So try it, listen for the compliment, accept it and share your gift of acceptance and gratitude with all those in your path.

Who knows, you might just make your day AND someone else’s at the same time. And isn’t that a grand thing?



Words of Wisdom

“What this world needs is a new kind of army - the army of the kind!”

~ Cleveland Amory

Ripple 13 – Compliment a stranger

A compliment brings such joy...and it really is easy to do when you get out of your own way and focus on the other person and consciously look for something you like, or could like, about them.

So let's say you're out and about, running errands, focused on the next thing you need to do. It is, after all, a very busy day for you...you've worked all day, you still need to make 5 stops before you get home and start on all the “honey do's” waiting for you.

Dinner, homework, reading, work, dishes, changing the cat litter, scooping the poop, and maybe, (just maybe), grab a bit of sleep before it starts all over again.

You race into the store to pick up the milk for dinner and tap your foot impatiently while the slower-than-molasses-in-January clerk rings up the 70 blue million people in front of you.

You're frustrated, you wonder why “nobody” gets how busy you are.

Tap, tap, tap goes the foot.

The mind races onward to what is next.

The frustration builds, “doesn't this person get it? I have lots to do!”

Then, finally, it is your turn.

You look at the tattooed youngster, with piercings, and horrible lipstick, foot-long fingernails painted a garish color and wonder what has happened to “kids these days.”

Your mind is whirling with thoughts that, maybe, aren't as kind as they could be.

Then you stop.

You remember your commitment to raising the world's positive energy.

And you consciously look for something, anything, to compliment about this complete stranger who looks so weird to you.

You dig deep. You're suddenly grateful for the long line of customers because it gave you a minute to find something to like.

Ah, you found it!

With all the sincerity you can muster (and it is important to give a sincere compliment), you say to the youngster...

“Wow, what amazing colors in your tattoos.”

Or “that is a really neat butterfly on your hand”

Or “congratulations for having a job...it can be tough in this day and age, can't it?”

Or “I love the color red.”

Or any number of other things your creative mind can come up with when you let go of the judgments.

There, you've done it.

Look at that beautiful smile. And when that smile reaches from ear to ear, you realize that it wasn't so hard after all.

You can do this. You truly can.

Then you notice something else.

You feel better.

You feel calmer. You take a deep breath in.

You actually enjoyed finding something to like.

And in that moment, however brief it might be, you have brought peace and joy to the world.

And that peace and joy is zinging through the world at an amazing speed— possibly, just possibly, to land on someone else in desperate need of a bit of joy.

Congratulations! You rock socks!



Words of Wisdom

“Realize that true happiness lies within you. Waste no time and effort searching for peace and contentment and joy in the world outside.

Remember that there is no happiness in having or in getting, but only in giving. Reach out. Share. Smile. Hug.

Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself.”

~ Og Mandino

Ripple 14 – Ask what someone needs

It seems simple and easy, right?

Ask, simply ask. And if it is so darned simple why do I find it so darned hard to do (at least some of the time!)? Ask question, get response, decide if you can respond. Done

Easy peasy, right?

For years I would remind myself how easy it is.

Ask. Yup, that's what I'll do.

I'll open my mouth and say “how can I help today?.” No biggy. No bother. No muss, no fuss. Done.

See, I would say to myself, you did it!

And for years, I wouldn't ask. I had all sort of reasons (also known as excellent excuses!) as to why I couldn't ask.

The monkey-mind chatter went something like “you can't ask...

- ...they might ask something of that you can't give...like wads of money, or your right kidney, or something.”
- ...you might embarrass them...or yourself more likely.”
- ...who do you think you are anyway. Pollyanna? Ms. Save-the-World-in-a-Word?”
- ...what if you don't know how to do what they want you to do (they want you to do open heart surgery, or fly to the moon, or babysit their kids!)
- ...what if they need lots of your time? What if they need hours and hours, maybe years! You know, you're busy right now with all that important stuff!”

By the time the mental chatter was done, I hadn't asked and the opportunity was gone.

I had no way of knowing what would have been asked of me 'cuz, well, I didn't ask!

What is interesting is that reality is so different from what I made it out to be, when I finally got over my bad self and followed the Nike ad “just do it!”

That isn't to say the chatter doesn't start or I don't break out in a sweat. I still do, sometimes. Those times are getting fewer and further between.

Why?

Because I've learned something very important—a majority of the people I ask don't want anything. Can't think of anything.

And are thrilled someone asked.

That is what they needed most. Someone to ask the question “What do you need?”

And those do need something seem to know, without being told, what I'm capable of!

How amazing is that?

And I've learned I can say “I can't do X, would Y work?”

So look for a chance to ask. Maybe you'll be asked to do something you can't do.

It's my bet you won't be asked to do more than you can do.

Or you'll know how to get the additional help you need to honor the request.

So try it. Start small.

And do what you can do. You've done it perfectly.

I know you'll be glad you did!



Words of Wisdom

“Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.”

~ Joseph Addison

Ripple 15 – Give away some of your books

I consider books a great treasure...one of the greatest treasures outside my personal relationships.

I love to read and always have.

I love learning about the worlds within worlds, escaping into a world of make-believe or learning about some great leader or another (ummmm, LOVE biographies).

And, for some reason, I seem to associate the number of books on my shelf as evidence of something...my intelligence? My brilliance? My ability to spend money “wisely”? Or my inability to share?

A combination of all the above?

So getting rid of a book, for any reason, seemed like some form of blasphemy.

Then someone reminded me of all those who didn't have that pleasure...for whatever reason.

So I took a serious look at the books on my bookshelf and started thinking about how they might help another person somewhere.

I gave away a few (a very few, you could hardly see an empty spot on the bookshelves).

Then came the time when a 3,000 book personal library needed a serious weeding out.

Many of the books were my former spouses' on topics I wasn't necessarily interested in.

Others had been moved and reshelfed so many times it was ridiculous.

So I weeded and transported, weeded and transported. Making choices one book at a time.

Asking myself would I really read this again? How long had I had the book?

Was it truly worth paying the movers to take it to my new home?

And the more I weeded, the more joy I had in thinking of someone else opening the covers of that reference book, or juicy novel, or great biography.

I got rid of more and more books, trucking them to my son's school library to be cataloged and put to good use.

The joy on the school librarian's face was so uplifting.

So take a look at your bookshelf. Or nightstand. Or coffee table. Or wherever your books are taking up residence and ask yourself whether you could live without those books.

Could they bring joy to someone else?

Would you want to deal with them if you were paying by the pound to move them?

Donate them to a library. Leave them on a bus seat or at the train stop. Gift them to a friend.

Take them to the hospital and leave them for a someone to scan while they're waiting for news of their loved one.

Or anywhere you can think of...books are an amazing gift, no matter how much information is available on the Internet.

There is something so different about holding a book in your hands and reading the words the author is sharing.

And one more request?

Why not send along a little blessing with the book such as...

"Many blessings. May you enjoy this book as much as I did."



Words of Wisdom

“When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free.”

~ Catherine Ponder

Ripple 16 – Forgive someone

I've heard about forgiveness all my life and had a really skewed definition of what it meant...so I didn't forgive often. Yup, I'm **really** embarrassed to tell you that.

I thought “forgiving” meant letting someone off the hook for something they had done “to me”...something, of course, horrible.

Even though it often wasn't horrible.

I didn't realize till a few years ago that my definition was totally, way totally, off base.

Forgiveness isn't about saying “Hey, it's OK for you to have hurt me and I forgive you because I'm a bigger person than you.”

And forgiveness isn't about saying “what you did was OK” either.

Forgiveness is about you, not the other person.

Forgiveness is about you letting go of what has happened and walking in the Light that shines within each person and within you.

It doesn't mean the act done to you was right...in fact, the act may never be “right” or “kind” or any of those things.

As I've learned the hard way (I seem to do that a lot!), it means allowing yourself to move on in joy and passion so you can be all you came here to be.

It means finding the lesson in the action or event and not replaying the event until it is so real it could be happening to you in the current moment.

If you're new to this definition of forgiveness, start with something small, such as...

- The person who cut you off in traffic.
- The person who cut in front of you at the store.
- The boss who forgot to say “thank you” for all your hard work.

Who knows? Maybe that person who cut you off was on the way to visit a sick relative in the hospital.

Or the person who cut in front of you at the store desperately needed to get a prescription filled for their very sick mother.

Or the boss who forgot to say “thank you” doesn't know how much it means to hear that because he hasn't heard it often in his own life.

When you put a new twist on the action, it eases the hardness in your heart and helps you find a way to recognize the Light in the other person.

The more you recognize the Light in another person, the more you step into the Light yourself.

The more you are a person of joy.

A friend of mine shared this mantra with me one time and, when I remember to use it, it helps a bunch.

“Thank you.
I'm sorry.
Forgive me.
I love you.”

Maybe it will help you too!

Once you start forgiving small stuff, it becomes a lot easier to get to the big stuff!

(For the record? It took me a whole summer of this to get to the point where I didn't say “yeah right” after every repetition. Oh the peace when I finally meant it.)

**And who knows, maybe you can start forgiving yourself too
and live the joyous life you so richly deserve!**



Words of Wisdom

“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.”

~ Pericles

Ripple 17 – Pay attention to kindness

Is it easy to notice a kindness done for you?

Or one done by you for someone else?

Or do you find it easier to notice the stuff that **didn't** go well?

The person who cut you off in traffic.

The kid who conveniently forgot to do that big project for school.

The dishes undone.

The war in a far off land.

The tanking economy.

I was talking to the participants at a training session day about kindness. No one could think of a story or moment without some prompting.

This was a group of women whom I consider to be kindness personified—every last one of them!

And none of them could think of anything.

Graciously, they said they would get back with me. And momentarily I sat in stunned silence as the impact of that sunk in.

It wasn't until I started describing what I consider kindness that they were able to get one of those light bulb moments and started mentioning things they could think of.

After that, the moments and stories started rolling much more easily from their crowded brains.

And even though I have decided to consciously focus my attention on kindness (looking for it, living it, finding it, doing it) it seems it is still **much** easier to remember the negative crap.

Wassup wid dat!

As I've looked at my own life, I believe it is partly training and partly pure out emotional intensity.

Why?

First, we're used to hearing and seeing the negative so much of the time from so many sources. It is like the person who lives in a sad household...they get used to it. It seems like the norm, until they go to a friend's house to visit and get to see a different model of how the world works.

Second, negativity packs a real emotional wallup. Generates the fear hormones. Gets the cortisol racing through the system. You know, the old fight or flight stuff we learned about in school?

So what's a person to do?

Simply start.

And here are some things you can try...

- Define what kindness means to you.
- Take a break from the negative stuff (maybe watch the news less or stay away from that doom-and-gloom website for the morning).
- Decide you are going to do kindnesses whenever and wherever you can.
- Pay attention to the kindnesses and let the negative stuff roll off your back (a really kewl trick when a negative thing happens is to say "cancel, cancel, cancel" immediately after it happens. Sounds silly and it helps).
- Keep a notepad with you and make notes when you see, hear, or do something kind (no matter how tiny you think it is).
- Write in a *KindnessJournal* daily...maybe at lunch, after dinner, before bed?
- Find a *KindnessBuddy* and check in with them to see what is going on in the kindness department.

Every step counts. Every kind moment counts. You can do it!



Words of Wisdom

“Watch your words, they become actions.

Watch your actions, they become habits.

Watch your habits, they become character.

Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.”

~ Anonymous

Ripple 18 – Change your tone, shift your attitude

When I was growing up, and especially when I got into my teens, my parents would get that totally disgusted parent look and out of their mouths would come the phrase

“Don't take that tone with me young lady.
I'm your parent!”

My knee jerk response was, always, “I'm not taking a tone with you, I hate you. You're horrible.”

I truly didn't understand what they meant and they didn't seem able to explain it to my satisfaction, so then would come my pouty face...I was the poor misunderstood teenager.

And things would roll downhill from there, getting nastier and nastier by the moment.

I didn't understand they were hearing that elusive something in my voice that was, basically, telling them they were dumber than rocks, older than dirt and couldn't possibly understand me.

Simply by my tone and physical stance, not just my words.

It didn't occur to me that they were decently intelligent human beings (go figure, eh?) who really did hear my underlying disgust with everything “parent.”

Now that I'm older, and a parent, I understand more about it.

And it is something that doesn't just happen between parents and teens.

It is between our loved ones and ourselves, our workmates and ourselves, the world and ourselves.

And changing that attitude, with the tone that goes with it, makes a world of difference in how our day goes.

That tiny adjustment can take your day from one that slides downhill to one that soars on wings of joy and peace.

When you think someone around you isn't getting "it," look inside.

Maybe they're feeling what you're feeling at that moment because the majority of what is said to others comes not from the words...it comes from the often-subtle physical cues from our body and our tone of voice.

Maybe your listener is actually hearing how you really feel, even if you're not aware of it at that exact moment or it doesn't have a thing to do with them.

What would happen if you stopped for a moment, took a deep breath, maybe even said "hum, let me give that some thought" or even asked for a moment away from the situation.

Maybe you even need a few more deep breaths to compose yourself and ask yourself the question "How can I be kind at this moment?"

When you take those deep breaths, you've reset your body and mind to respond to the question. Now you can shift your response, shift your tone and try again.

Who knows, within a brief moment, you could turn things around simply by your determination to act with kindness in the moment.

Even if that act of kindness seems subtle and possibly challenging, you've turned the world around.

You've brought a moment of kindness into being and sent it out into the world to be combined with a million other moments of kindness and raised the world's positive energy.

Give it a try! You have nothing to lose, eh?



Words of Wisdom

~ *“There is nothing ugly; I never saw an ugly thing in my life.*

~ *For let the form of an object be what it may—light, shade, and perspective will always make it beautiful.”*

~ *John Constable*

Ripple 19 – Stop and look for beauty

Wherever you are you can find something beautiful to look at...whether you're in a concrete jungle or the Amazon jungle, the home you're visiting or your own home, no matter how modest.

For, you see, there is beauty everywhere, and in everything, when you stop to recognize it.

Take a moment to notice it...you lift your spirits and when you lift your spirits, you also lift the spirits of those around you.

And that is a kindness, no?

So many times we roll out of bed in the morning, grumbling that it is too hot, too cold, too early, too late.

We grumble as we make our breakfast, or don't make breakfast at all because we're in a big hurry. Late, as usual.

We hurry past all the things in our home, our housemates, charging for the door, racing to meet the clock, never noticing the beauty around us, beauty both immediate and hidden, that surrounds our being.

We charge out the door, focused on what must be done to get through the day.

We “get through” the day, and trudge home at the end of it, feeling worn and tattered, like a kids' blanket that has been used beyond its normal life.

We fall into bed, dreading the thought of the next day and the next and the next, “knowing” it is the same ‘ole, same ‘ole.

Where is the beauty, where is the serenity, where is the love and the joy?

It is there, really it is. It only needs your eyes to recognize it is there.

So give this a try...

1. Stop for 60 seconds (and yes, it seems like forever the first time you try it)
2. Close your eyes
3. Tell yourself “when I open my eyes, the first thing I see is beauty”
4. Open your eyes
5. No matter what your eyes land on, it is beautiful (remember, you already told yourself it would be)
6. Spend the remaining portion of the 60 seconds seeing the beauty in whatever your eyes behold

Beauty is everywhere. And focusing on it helps you see more beauty in more things in more ways.

It may sound like a simple exercise. It is.

So whatcha got to lose?

Sixty seconds looking for beauty may very well be the exact recipe for uplifting your entire day.

And isn't that worth it?



Words of Wisdom

“People never forget that helping hand, especially when times are tough.”

~ Catherine Pulsifer

Ripple 20 – Do someone's chores

ICK...do someone else's chores?

Geez, MamaRed, I don't even get mine done!

And besides, that sounds like way too much work.

I know, I know and I also remember how much easier I find it to do someone else's chores than my own (now what does that say about me).

And yet, it may be the kindest thing you can do for someone today.

Do you know someone in your life who has trouble getting chores done... whether due to time constraints, health issues, or some other reason?

Then this one “ask” could be exactly what is needed at this moment.

Don't be surprised if your efforts are, at least initially, refused. That is one of the holdovers from the independent spirit who believes they **MUST** do it all themselves.

A lot of us are taught that it isn't OK to ask for help, or even accept an offer of help.

Believe me, I'm the queen of “I can do it myself mommy!” people.

Several years ago I was really sick and needed groceries and I most certainly didn't want to ask anyone to do something as mundane as go to the grocery store.

At the time I was involved in a training course in which we were buddied up in pairs, small groups, and then there was the entire group.

As is true with most groups, there are folks we get along with and those we don't or don't care to get to know as well as others.

The day I needed groceries, my coach said “OK, so who are you going to ask for help?”

Stunned doesn't begin to cover it.

It never occurred to me to ask someone for help...I mean I could, if I tried hard enough, get out to the grocery...I mean, like really, my legs weren't broken.

I only had the flu for Pete's sake!

My coach continued pushing me to ask, insisting I ask someone in the group I wouldn't normally approach.

So, because I had to (sigh) because I was being a “good girl”, I asked one of the ladies in the group.

She immediately said “sure” and I started to backpedal...telling her I didn't really need anything.

I could eat what I had in the house, blah, blah, blah.

She came right back with “I would be happy to help...please let me.”

So I did. And she took care of getting the groceries for me, no complaints, no nothing.

Done!

As we chatted, she assumed I asked her because she was a stay-at-home mom and I assumed she would say “no.”

Assumptions sure get us in trouble, eh?

So, what if you asked someone if you could help them with their chores—whether it be a trip to the grocery, picking up a sick child or cleaning the toilet because they can't do it themselves?

**I guarantee this is an eye-opening experience for both of you.
Kindness always is!**



Words of Wisdom

“After the verb ‘To Love,’ ‘Help’ is the most beautiful verb in the world.”

~ Bertha Von Suttner

Ripple 21 – Read to someone

There is immense power in words.

Ever notice how they can uplift or tear down, empower, or disempower?

And the ability to read a book is such a gift to the world...so many authors, so little time!

Many of us who take reading for granted forget that others can't read because they didn't have that training, or have a learning disability that makes it hard for them to read without mixing up words.

Or maybe someone doesn't have the gift of sight.

Or maybe they were made to feel stupid when they couldn't read well when they were in school.

There are so many reasons why someone may not be able, or willing, to read.

And if you love to read, what a gift of kindness you can share with someone by sharing your love of reading and sharing the words compiled into a book, or poem or an article.

Maybe it's that email that came in from their grandchild or from their beloved who is overseas.

Think about some of these ideas...

- Carve out some reading time with your child...sharing laughter or tears (or both) together over a good book is a great way to have together time.
- Help out your elderly neighbor who is feeling alone and unloved and grew up in an era when the written word was all we had (yes, there was a time before the internet and books on tape).
- Pick up the phone and read to a long distance family member or friend (ain't technology grand!).

- Record a favorite story using a recorder or your computer or smart phone and put it on a player or CD for a friend...what a gift for them to hear your voice reading a favorite story.
- Trot over to the local library and offer your voice for the next story hour.
- Check in the phone book for a senior citizen's home (lordy, how I dislike that term...ugggg), hospital or hospice and share your love of words with someone who might never have a chance to enjoy stories.
- Maybe a story time at your place of worship is more your style. I bet the regular reader could use a break.
- What about your local school. Whether it be a kindergarten or a higher grade, the kids could learn something amazing from your gift of kindness and the words shared.

So, give it a shot. Find someone – anyone – to read to and see what you think. And don't forget to let the world know what it was like for you!



Words of Wisdom

“Hatred paralyzes life; love releases it.

Hatred confuses life; love harmonizes it.

Hatred darkens life; love illuminates it.”

~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Ripple 22 – Search for kindness in the midst of tragedy

Oh goodness, where do I start with this one?

It is soooooo easy to hear of something sad or tragic or painful and fall into recounting all the reasons something is awful, horrible, nasty or unworthy.

And we do it, we all do.

No matter how dedicated we are to staying in the positive, it happens.

And with so much scary stuff going on in the world right now, who isn't prone to bouts of melancholy or sadness or outright terror?!

I'm right there with you...and I'm **supposed** to be focusing on kindness, right? Yup, I am and I forget soooooo easily.

So what are you to do? Feel what you feel, respond how you respond and honor that because if you try to shove it aside, ignore it, act like it didn't happen, it **will** rear its ugly head another time in another way.

So, feel what you feel. Grieve if you need to. Rail and scream if you need to.

Then, when you're done—when you're **clear** you're done—look at the incident again. What can you find that could be a kindness (however you define that).

- Did someone do something out of the ordinary?
- Did the event eventually have a happy ending?
- Did someone pray for someone else? Did you say a prayer?
- Did someone place someone in meditation and give the situation up to their Higher Power?
- Did people forget their differences, even if for a moment, and band together to achieve something more powerful?
- Did someone forget their prejudices for a moment and realize the commonalities they have with someone else?

- Did someone take a stand when they would have normally stood back and watched from the sidelines?
- Did you overcome your reticence and jump into the fray?
- Did you stop for a moment to think about kindness and what it is?

All these things and a gazillion more I haven't even thought of are ways to get more kindness in the world, even in the midst of a tragedy.

Know that all is perfect, no matter the timing, no matter the original thoughts. I love what my spiritual leader says (gives me a great grace period!)...

"The first 15 seconds don't count...and sometimes those 15 seconds stretch to a whole week, or maybe even more!!!"

**Walk in kindness, love, and joy,
knowing there is someone out there who loves you,
even if you don't know it at this moment.**

Walk knowing you count, your life makes a difference. You matter.



Words of Wisdom

“Correction does much.

Encouragement does more.”

~ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Ripple 23 – Share a word of encouragement

Ever notice how a simple word or statement can make such a difference in how you feel and how your whole day goes?

The act of noticing something about someone can lighten the load and help them feel someone cares.

Simple statements like...

- You look great.
- Wow, love those earrings, where did you get them?
- Hot car...is it new?
- Your smile is as bright as the morning sun.
- You're a great human being, how did I get so lucky?
- I'm soooooo proud of you!
- You're the best (friend, hubby, child, person) ever!
- Thanks for the call, how did you know I needed to hear a kind word right now? You must be psychic.

They don't take long to say and don't cost a penny out of your pocket...a great thing when you're trying to conserve funds for the mortgage or rent payment or grocery bill, eh?

**So take a second or two to let those in your world
know they're special and loved
and you'll be taking a bite out of the anger and sadness
plastered all over the news!**



Words of Wisdom

“To dance is to be out of yourself. Larger, more beautiful, more powerful.

This is power, it is glory on earth and it is yours for the taking.”

~ Agnes De Mille

Ripple 24 – Dance around your home!

When you really let yourself go and just dance, the movement becomes who you are at the moment...free, carefree, in the moment, filled with love and life.

Have you ever noticed that when you're dancing you're not stewing or fretting or freaking out about how something else needs doing?

Well, that is if you're not worried about looking silly or not knowing the steps!

Years and years ago (my son used to say “before dirt was invented!”), disco was the dance craze of the moment.

For some reason, I really got into dancing at that time.

And it was a blast!

I didn't much care for the specific dances, like line dances, where you were supposed to coordinate your movements with those of other people.

I wasn't particularly coordinated and seemed to always be looking at what I **should** be doing.

A whole lot of no fun.

When I let loose and let the music move me however and wherever I wanted to go, based on my own rhythm and feeling for the music, it was pure joy and abandon.

I learned how to let the music move me wherever it wanted to and lost track of the “shoulds” and “oughtas” that so often surrounded me.

What an awesome way to be!

When you're filled with love and joy and feel the music, you can lift the spirits of many around you...and how kewl is that?

So, let's say you're one of those who has two left feet and feels that everyone is looking at you and noting how little you know about dancing.

Is there hope for you?

Absotively!

Dance at home...turn on whatever music you love, that stirs your soul and gets your feet tapping, your body moving.

Try it.

You'll be amazed at how quickly even 1-2 minutes of dancing brings you to a happy place.

Dance away and enjoy the feeling of being free to move however you like.

With no one to criticize or comment or tell you how you're doing it "wrong."

And when ya think about it, how much kindness does that bring?

Because, you see, there is no wrong way...only your way.

To love and joy and freedom!



Words of Wisdom

“A good character is the best tombstone. Those who loved you and were helped by you will remember you when forget-me-nots have withered.

Carve your name on hearts, not on marble.”

~ Charles H. Spurgeon

Ripple 25 – Give of your heart

It is there, your love and kindness, joy and passion.

It is already there, right inside of you.

It may be tucked away in a deep dark corner of your being...carefully protected from harm or hurts of your own.

You may have given of yourself, your wide-open heart, at one time and been rebuffed or hurt for your efforts.

And I know it hurts, I truly do!

We've all been there at one time or another.

And the gift of your heart, whether given to an individual, a favorite pet, a charitable organization, the environment or your workplace, is the greatest gift of all.

The cost of not giving your love and joy to the world is immense.

Why?

Because it is the “closedness” that causes pain, hurt, wars, and all sorts of other things we don't want.

And yet we do close ourselves off, don't we?

I've played the game of life both ways...with my heart neatly tucked away in a box, protected from the pain of the world and wide open to accept all the love and joy the world has to offer.

I thought I was in much better shape when the box was locked down tight as a drum.

And boy, was I wrong!

It was protected, I'll grant you that.

However, when I shut down the pain and suffering, I couldn't feel, *really feel*, the love and joy in the world either. I was, simply, numb.

It was a conundrum, I tell you, a real conundrum.

A few years ago I began a journey of awakening...to all that is in the world.

I won't kid you, sometimes opening to the pain in the world is tough. It can hurt.

You know what, though? I feel so many other things now that I didn't before, when I was “faking” having an open heart.

When you're shut down, it is darn near impossible to make the choice to see the beauty and love and joy in the world.

And it becomes a vicious cycle...the more you see the negative and the pain, the more of it you see!

And 'round and 'round it goes.

So, if what you really want is a peaceful world full of joy and love and kindness, **be the person** taking a stand for those traits.

You may not stop all the wars in the world...and you **DO** stop the one in your heart, which soothes the hearts of every person you touch.

And they, in turn, carry your love and kindness to the next person they meet.

Start small, don't try to take on everything at once if that is too much.

Open your heart to feeling something positive and let it become what you focus on.

Now, if there is going to be a vicious cycle of something, why not have it be a “vicious” cycle of love.

Whatcha think?



Words of Wisdom

"I find hope in the darkest of days, and focus in the brightest. I do not judge the universe."

~ Dalai Lama

Ripple 26 – Take charge of what you focus on

It seems we have an abundance of negative news these days.

Everywhere you look, listen, read there is some news that drags our hearts and souls into the mud.

And it seems even harder to look around and find something kind, compassionate, uplifting or loving.

In many ways, however, there is even more positive news than ever before as people band together to help each other through the hard times they're experiencing.

People are looking for ways to return to the fundamentals of being human, connecting with other humans, and letting go of some of the material things we've come to rely on to bolster ourselves in times of need.

So if we're surrounded by the "Negative Nellies" and "Negative Neds" of the world, what are we to do?

It is simple, although rarely easy.

Now isn't that a royal kick in the butt?

You chose to...

...CHANGE YOUR FOCUS!

What you focus on is what your reality is. And there is another reality out there, honest, there really is.

And I forget it daily!

So try this...

1. Pick a day to spend looking for the positive
2. Rate your mood when you get up in the morning on a scale of 1-10 (1 = being in the dumper, 10 = flying high with joy)
3. Commit to noticing everything you see as loving, kind, joyful, considerate, positive (no matter how big or small)
4. Grab a notebook, piece of paper, or even that napkin the kind waitstaff put out for you
5. Write down the number you chose in step 2 at the top of the paper
6. Write down ALL the positive things that you experience, or see or do (yes, the things you do add to the positive energy and it isn't being self centered to notice them)
7. Read the list out loud when you call a halt to the busy-ness in your day
8. Rate your mood using the same scale you used in step 2
9. Write the number on your paper
10. Is the number closer to 10? Yes?
11. Rinse and repeat

Every time I do this exercise, I have a higher number at the end of the day.

I may not get from a 1 to a 10 that day AND the number is always higher at the end of the day.

Now really, how would you rather feel?

Positive and upbeat or down in the dumps?

It is your choice...you're the author of your story!

What story do you want to tell?



Words of Wisdom

*“Stranger, if you in passing
meet me and desire to speak to
me, why should you not speak
to me?”*

*And why should I not speak
to you?”*

~ Walt Whitman

Ripple 27 – Say “hi,” “hello,” “how are you”

There are gazillions of kindnesses all around us...we simply aren't used to focusing on them.

And how do we shift that focus?

By focusing on the kindnesses we bring to the world –making kindness a top priority, in what we do and what we see.

And a simple way to bring a kindness into the world is to say “hi” to someone.

Or “hello” or whatever greeting is used by your culture to acknowledge that another human is near you.

I personally believe this is even more important than it has been in the past...and it has been important!

Why now? Why refocus on the human touch now?

Because we race through our days, attached to all sorts of technology.

We're so focused on what is being said or happening on “the other end”, we forget to look at the people who are right next to us, in a line, on a bus, at store...right next to us.

There are many craving the acknowledgement that they exist, they belong to the human race too, they count.

Blast it all, they **DO** count! And because they have become invisible, they believe they don't count.

And my heart hurts when I think of that, think of those we throw away.

Would you reach out and give the kindness of a simple human contact to someone if you knew, could read their mind, that they **NEEDED** to hear from someone?

I'm sure you would, because I know your heart is filled with light and kindness.

So look around you...

- Look for the person sitting on the bench, waiting for a ride...who knows if she just lost her best friend or partner and feels she is all alone in the world?
- Look for the person stumbling along the street, head down, struggling with their own fears or addictions or losses.
- Look for the folks staring into the distance, crumbling inside because it has been forever and a day since they heard someone say their name in a kind and loving way.
- Look for the person who is riding the train or the bus and feels as if they don't matter.
- And look into their eyes and say a simple “hi” or “hello” or even “how ya doing?”

It only takes a couple of seconds. They may not acknowledge you or may look at you as if you've gone mad.

That's OK...it is about the giving of the kindness, not the acknowledgement of it.

You **will** make a difference!

Why is this so big?

Why now?

Because I believe we need to reconnect to the gift of being human and honor each one of us, knowing we are walking our own path the best we can.



Words of Wisdom

“Constant kindness can accomplish much.

As the sun makes ice melt, kindness causes misunderstanding, mistrust and hostility to evaporate.”

~ Albert Schweitzer

Ripple 28 – Scrape the ice and snow off a car

Well, you can tell this one is written about winter from a person who lives in an area of the world that gets snow, eh? (Smile).

If you happen to live in one of those extraordinarily moderate climates where there is no snow, maybe you could do something similar for an aggravation in your climate.

Yes?

If you work, go shopping, get outside in any way shape or form in the snowy winter months, that snow and ice can build up in a heartbeat.

And sometimes, you're worn out from all that has been on your plate.

All you want to do is get home and off your tired tootsies and into something comfy.

You wearily trudge through the ice and snow, slipping and sliding your way to your car, knowing you'll “get” to spend a bunch of time scraping the crud off the car.

As you trudge along you realize you left your fancy schmancy, extra cool snow scraper at home, so now your credit card or fingernails will have to do.

GRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR.

You can feel the stress building in you as you, for the millionth time, come close to falling on your tucus.

Your heart is racing, your mind a whirl.

You get to your car, knowing it is going to be tough...then suddenly you look.

Blink.

Look again. Blink some more.

Then you realize **you're looking at a miracle...**your car has no snow or ice anywhere!

You can't believe it.

You're stunned and something isn't quite clicking.

To your joy, some angel of mercy has done all that hard work for you and the car is perfectly free of snow and perfect), down to the headlights and taillights.

Wow, your JoyFactor soars through the roof, life is wonderful and now you can drive home and really see the road.

Now how great would that be, eh?

Sounds beyond awesome to me.

And you can return the favor (now or later, either is perfect), passing that joy of a gift of kindness on to the next person who needs it.

Maybe you can be the Snowscaper Angel for your neighbor or a stranger at the shopping center or at the grocery store or coffee shop or at work.

How kind would that be? Pretty darned kind!

Now don't try to tell me this doesn't rock socks, especially when you're the one who usually has to do the scraping!



Words of Wisdom

"Love is patient, love is kind."

~ 1 Corinthians 13:4

Ripple 29 – Express your love... to someone!

Hearing "you are loved" is one of the most amazing, powerful gifts of kindness possible, have you ever noticed that?

And what rocks is how good it feels to the "teller" too.

...I mean really, talk about the win-win situation!

We race through our days, moving from task to task to task, heads down walking through our mental "to-do" list, thinking that is all there is.

What task is next?

What needs done now...and now...and now?

The dishes. The grocery shopping. The homework. The dusting. The sweeping. The haircut.

Battling the traffic to and fro.

Bemoaning the state of our world, wondering how it got to be so bad.

And when you really get down to it, is that what is important? I don't think so...I really don't.

Yes, I feel better when my hair isn't hanging in my face. Or when the dishes aren't piled sky-high. Or when I mark one more thing off my to-do list.

And when do I really feel great, fabulous, on top of the world?

It isn't when those things happen.

Although they feel good, they don't touch my heart.

When is my heart touched?

- It is when my sweet BizPartner gives me a hug and says “you’re the best” even when I just lost my temper over some ever-so-trivial thing.
- It is when a friend calls, out of the blue, to say “I’m thinking of you...are you OK? I love ya a lot.”
- It is when my grown son gives says “mom, why won’t you move to Baltimore. You’ll be closer and I can help more.”
- Or my son’s beloved says “hey, why don’t you move in with us? That would be kewl!”
- It is when I see a parent reach out to touch their little ones face with tenderness and love while I'm busy running my errands.
- It is when my technologically-challenged mother takes the time to send a quick email with a note saying “I’m proud of you and love you so much.”

My heart sings with delight.

And I'm sure yours will too...whether the person on the receiving end says anything or not, I guarantee you'll give them a lift.

So why not pick up the phone or jot a note or send an email to someone, **right now?**

It doesn't have to be fancy or complex or difficult.

A simple “I love you. I'm glad you're in my life.” is all that is needed.

There, that wasn't so hard, was it?



Words of Wisdom

"This is my wish for you.

*Comfort on difficult days,
smiles when sadness intrudes,
rainbows to follow the clouds,
laughter to kiss your lips.
Sunsets to warm your heart,
hugs when spirits sag, beauty
for your eyes to see, friendships
to brighten your being.*

*Faith so that you can believe,
confidence for when you doubt,
courage to know yourself,
patience to accept the truth.*

Love to complete your life."

~ Unknown

Ripple 30 – Leave a note for a challenging co-worker

Leave an anonymous note.

What?

Anonymous?

You mean like not writing my name on the note or disguising my handwriting?

Whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaatttt? Whyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy?

Yup, that's what I'm saying. This is one of those times you get to hide behind a curtain and watch what happens.

Now, you may not like this one either...do this for the co-worker who is driving you looney tunes, is the most difficult, has the nastiest breath ever, comes in late every day or something equally irritating.

OK, now y'all probably think I've gone nuts, don't you?

Why do this and why do it for someone you really don't like?

Because it is usually easy to compliment, or encourage, those we like.

Giving them compliments, words of encouragement, noticing when their day is tough on them and finding a way to lift them up.

It is so much harder to find something to like, or compliment, in someone who drives you up a wall.

My experience is the more you look for something to admire in someone, the easier it becomes to find something in everyone you meet, wherever you may meet them.

Not sure what to say?

Maybe these ideas will get you started...

- “I know things are tough and wanted you to know someone noticed.”
- “Maybe a break will make things easier for you.”
- “Enjoy your laughter break...laughter eases the load.”
- “I admire your stamina...how do you make that long drive through traffic every day?”
- “You ROCK!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!”

Maybe you could sign it with something like...

- “From someone who noticed”
- “From someone who cares”
- “From another traveler on life's journey”
- “From a fellow human being”
- “From your best friend in outer space”

Use your creativity, your imagination. I know its there!

How do I know? Because you're human and we humans were **all** given the gift of creativity.

(And if your imagination fails you, you could always use the quotation at the beginning of this Ripple or any of the quotes actually!)

Enjoy, and be sure to look for ways to add to the deposits in the Universal Bank of Kindness™ (U B OK). The whole world benefits when you do!



Words of Wisdom

“...there is nothing in the world so irresistibly contagious as laughter and good humor.”

~ Charles Dickens

Ripple 31 – Laugh on purpose

I had the great good fortune to interview Lynn Shaw, a dear friend and teacher of something she called “therapeutic laughter.”

Therapeutic laughter?

Say whaaaaaat?

Ya either laugh, or don't, right? You hear something that tickles your funny bone and you laugh, even if a little.

You hear a joke, feel uncomfortable, something.

And the laughter comes out.

It may trickle out or pour out and it isn't in your control.

Right?

OOPS, I was wrong on that one!

Therapeutic laughter is a whole 'nother animal, so I learned.

And laughter is such a great gift, a great kindness, to so many in this world.

Especially when we're in turmoil or sadness is the ruling emotion.

Did you know that laughter brought on by a joke or uncomfortable situation is in “your head”, so to speak?

The brain must process the situation, the words, and then **you** decide whether it is funny. Or not.

How about some more fun facts...

- Did you know that laughing exercises all 80 muscles in your face?
- Did you know “tee heeing” for 20 seconds is equal to the cardio workout you get when you **row a boat for 3 minutes?** (How's that for an exercise program?)

- Did you know laughing doesn't have to involve the brain? You don't have to have a funny joke or situation to get the physical benefits of laughter.
- Did you know laughter is a form of internal massage for all your organs?
- Did you know laughter stretches and exercises your laughing muscles?
- Did you know laughter is contagious, kinda like a yawn? Other people will start laughing even if they don't know what you're laughing about.
- Did you know there is laughing meditation? Seriously!

So, like other choices we can make, you can choose to laugh on purpose.

There are some trigger words that you can use to laugh on purpose...

- Tee Hee (which comes from the throat area).
- Ha Ha (which comes from the upper abdominal area, the “belly laugh” if you will).
- Ho Ho (which comes from the lower abdominal, the belly, area).

Try each one of these for yourself.

One of them, or maybe even another word or event, will help you laugh **on purpose** and help you start invoking the gazillion benefits to your emotional and physical wellbeing.

Start out with a minute or 2 and see how you feel.

Ya never know what will happen!



Words of Wisdom

"You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ripple 32 – Pick up the trash

I don't know about you AND I've been known to walk past trash on the ground at a store or shopping mall and have this conversation with myself:

"Geez, why in the world would someone throw trash on the ground. I mean really, there is a trash container right there.

"Good grief, how lazy can ya get? Why doesn't someone do something about that?

"Where are the store employees anyway?

"Dang, this place is a mess!"

Yup, embarrassing as it is, this is the first conversation that often pops into my head.

Then I remind myself that, years ago, I decided to stand responsible for those things I can change or do something about.

Ah, then the conversation shifts to something like:

"Now really Mama, how hard is it to bend over and pick up a couple pieces of trash? Nope, not hard at all. Really, the bending might even give you a tiny bit of exercise. Yeah, that's the ticket.

"Pick up a couple of pieces, drop them in the trash container by the entry and be grateful you can bend over to pick them up.

"What if they were dropped, unintentionally, by someone who couldn't bend over?

"Wow, I guess that could be a possibility. And no, Mama, you don't have to pick up **all** of the pieces.

"Now, don't you feel better?"

And the truth is, it does feel a whole lot better to simply pick up the trash than to waste untold energy on having this unfruitful discussion with myself for what can seem like an eternity.

So, the next time you see a tidbit on the ground, pick it up, celebrate it...and who knows, you may inspire someone else to do the same and pretty soon, the parking lot is completely free of debris!

And while you're at it, how about a smile or even a little skip in your step on your way to the trash can?

Now you're getting how truly easy it can be to put kindness to work for you...and the rest of the world.



Words of Wisdom

“Praise is like sunlight to the human spirit: we cannot flower and grow without it.”

~ Jess Lair

Ripple 33 – Acknowledge an author, teacher, or speaker

Ever read a super duper awesome book and wondered how that author was able to touch you so deeply or pick the perfect word to describe a situation?

Why not let the author know their work touched you?

Check the inside cover or back jacket for the contact information. It may be the publisher's information or you might even get the author's direct information.

Write them a physical note or send them an email message and let them know how much their efforts to share their gift with you meant.

It takes a lot of courage, work and faith to share a message with the world and it is, often, a thankless task.

Many authors wonder if what they wrote is really being read.

Or maybe you attended a training class and learned so much or were reminded of something important you had forgotten.

Yes, there are often what trainers call “happy sheets” to complete at the end of the class, places for nice neat little rankings from 1-5.

And many also have a place to write a note.

Those aren't the most personalized way of letting the teacher know what their words meant to you.

And it seems as if there is a propensity for the **naysayers** to write something more frequently than the **yaysayers**.

As someone who has trained on technical and non-technical topics for over 25 years, I can tell you it is rare that you get to hear the good stuff.

It seems like the Negative Nelly stuff is what gets shared with you most often (or even reported to someone in charge).

Maybe you attended a presentation at a local service club or heard someone on a recording or paid to learn something more for your business.

Maybe 1 line or even a single word shifted your thinking to a whole new track.

I'm sure the presenter would love to hear from you. Like trainers, they often hear what didn't go well and relish the gift of a positive word from an attendee.

You needn't slave over the wording or worry that your words won't be as elegant or well chosen or, heaven forbid, as "perfect" as those of the person whose work you admire.

It is the sentiment, the fact that you took the time to share, that counts.

That's it.

And oh, by the way, it doesn't matter how close to the event either.

I once had a former student tell me **several years** later how much my teachings meant to her and how she continued to use what I had taught her so many years ago.

Believe me, I didn't care one whit about the timing.

I was touched to tears to know something I said made a difference.

So go on, hop to it! I know you can do it!



Words of Wisdom

“Today, more than ever before, life must be characterized by a sense of Universal responsibility, not only nation to nation and human to human, but also human to other forms of life.”

~ Dalai Lama

Ripple 34 – Create giveaways to keep with you

OK, before you get upset with me, this one **could** cost something. Then again, it might not if you set your amazing creativity into action.

Yes, it is awesome to tell someone “lookin' great” or “nice smile” or ask “may I help you with that package.”

Awesome, awesome awesome stuff and I'm so proud you're doing those things.

Keep up the good work!

And what about another way to spread the joy and make deposits to the Universal Bank of Kindness™ (U B OK), like creating some of your own personal calling cards or notes of encouragement?

There are a lot of preprinted cards available with fancy schmancy designs or business card stock you can purchase at an office supply or craft store.

I'm thinking it would be exceptionally cool if you created some cards out of things like leftover Christmas cards or the back side of paper with a pretty design or even got the kiddos involved and had them draw their own special designs.

How fun would that be?

Get out the crayons or pencils or pens and let them go to town!

You could even use rocks or chunks of wood or cloth or anything else you can find in your neck of the woods.

When I had a big event, I wrote a word on river rocks and the guests loved them. I think the cost was about \$6.00 for the rocks and a pen.

You could...

- Write a single word that encourages
- Write a quote that uplifts

- Create a phrase unique to you that tells the world you care
- Write a word or two that brings laughter
- ...do any number of other things I bet you'll come up with before your head hits the pillow tonight

Keep a supply of these with you (and why not give the kiddos some too?) and...

- Hand one to the person standing in front or back of you in a line
- Leave one at the dry cleaners when you pick up your clothes
- Tuck one in the manicurist's station before your nails are polished
- Put them in your partner's briefcase or lunch box
- Hand one to your minister after the sermon
- Take one to the person who is sitting in front of you in the nasty long line of traffic

Have fun thinking of all the things you can say and do!

I have no doubt you'll think of lots of ways you can use these ideas as a jumping off point to something uniquely yours.



Words of Wisdom

"I can think of no better way of redeeming this tragic world today than love and laughter.

Too many of the young have forgotten how to laugh, and too many of the elders have forgotten how to love.

Would not our lives be lightened if only we could all learn to laugh more easily at ourselves and to love one another?"

Theodore Hesburgh

Ripple 35 – Create a connection between youth & elders

We hear from the younger folks that they feel disconnected, unloved, unwanted, and shunted aside.

And we hear from those who have lived long, what I call Silver Sages, almost the same painful words.

How awful is it to feel that you don't matter?

Is there anything worse than being shunned, either on purpose or by sheer neglect?

We can't simply throw away the two ends of the spectrum...the young on one side and those who have amazing wisdom on the other.

Our human capital is more important than that...each person, without exception, has a gift, a *Light* within, no matter how deeply buried.

What if communities created specific ways for the youth who so desperately need someone who cares to connect with those who are sitting and staring out at a world passing them by?

How rockin' awesome could that be?

Can you imagine what could come out of those partnerships?

Oh my goodness, my mind is racing with the joy of that picture.

What if...

- The younger folks became pen pals with a resident of a senior citizen's home (arggggg, I really don't like that term)?
- The younger folks became the keepers of the community history by interviewing the Silver Sages as part of a school assignment?
- The local newspaper profiled the partnership in a special section or on a special day of the month?

- The partnership between these two generations brought healing to a world desperately in need of all the healing we can give it?
- The Silver Sages shared the stories of their youth...not in that “I walked uphill both ways to school every day” way...in a way that intrigued and showed how much both has changed and how much has stayed the same?
- The younger folks created surveys and story models and collected them as audio recordings to be shared with the community?
- There was a special website and set of email addresses where the Silver Sages could share what they've learned during the experience of being recognized?

When you raise the JoyFactor, you add to the balance in the Universal Bank of Kindness™ (U B OK). And that's a good thing, right?



Words of Wisdom

“By working together a few small actions can make an enormous difference to our world.”

~ Stacey Powell

Ripple 36 – Recognize your team's contributions

When I was coming up in the business world, “personal” stuff and “business” stuff were kept separate...never the twain shall meet.

And heaven help the person who had a tough time and brought it into the workplace.

Goodness, you would have thought they were the worst person in the world.

There wasn't much thought given to employee morale, except for a select few.

High achievers were eligible for some really kewl stuff, folks like highest achiever on the sales team or for someone else who brought in paying business in some way.

Not much for the rest of us.

I mean, we were at work right?

We were doing what we were supposed to do.

Times have changed a lot...now you'll find more attention being placed on workplace morale and how to keep the good employees hanging around for a good, long time.

Many companies cut back on the perks, if you will, when times get lean.

And I can understand that.

Your good employees will understand and support you if you've treated them well.

And there are still ways to be kind to your employees even when you don't have the budget to send them on a trip 'round the world.

Why not try...

- Tucking a nice note under the computer keyboard or on the phone? You could even use recycled paper from the copier to enhance your image of being kind and green at the same time.
- Putting a bulletin board in a conspicuous place (maybe you have an employee break area or lunchroom?) and post daily or weekly “Kudos.”
- Getting everyone together for a brown bag lunch and having each person share 1 thing another team member has done for them that week.
- Creating an “I've Got these Skills” list to share with the staff...maybe there is a plumber or writer or closet auto mechanic who could lend a helping hand when it is needed.

Although these activities could cost money, if you put on your thinking cap, I bet you can find a way to do things that don't cost anything, especially if you get your employees in on the brainstorming and planning.

Who knows what they'll come up with?

How do you know what means the most to your staff if you don't ask?

Maybe a possibility? Yes, I thought so.

Go for it, right now!



Words of Wisdom

“Teamwork is the ability to work together toward a common vision. The ability to direct individual accomplishments toward organizational objectives.

It is the fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results.”

Andrew Carnegie

Ripple 37 – Pull your team together in a common cause

Have you ever noticed how much more gets done when people pull together, joined in a common cause?

Think about it for a minute and you'll see how much a beautifully aligned team can accomplish.

If you think about a team of horses yoked together, they won't get far if they aren't moving in the same direction.

They'll either get nowhere at all or pull themselves apart trying to get to that “unknown” somewhere.

When you think about your business, what do you want to achieve?

Where do you want to go? How do you want to get there?

If that isn't clear, your team can't pull together and achieve your vision, your goal.

If you haven't got a clear vision for your business, that is the place to start.

Get that vision written down and share it with your staff...with the world for that matter (visioning exercises are a whole ‘tother topic).

Now, assuming you do have that vision down, why not...

- Create an internal lending library where self improvement, transformational, or skills-based training classes are available.

Who knows, your employees may have a bunch of relevant materials sitting around in a closet or stored in a box that are waiting for a good read or listen.

- Pick a nonprofit to support and then create an office or company-wide project to work on together.

- Have a “Music Monday” where employees who enjoy music bring their instruments or other skills (like a fabulous singing voice you never heard before) and enjoy a lunch break with some “homemade” music or riff off each other's lyrics or notes.
- Get people outside when it is a nice day...round folks up for a bubble blowing contest outside (yes, I realize you may need to have a skeleton crew in the office...be sure to rotate those duties around so everyone gets a chance).

These activities can be done with many people and help people rally together in fun and creative ways.

And when people do things together, you have a much more dedicated team willing to go the extra mile when its needed.

I'm sure there are a lot of ways for you to build a team that serves your company and the world.

Pop on that thinking cap and get your team involved! It's a good thing.

You've got this!



Words of Wisdom

“There are no strangers here.

*Only friends you haven't
yet met.”*

~ William Butler Yeats

Ripple 38 – Create a fun, funky greeting or comeback

No matter our native language, we've been taught a standard, acceptable greeting since we first learned to speak.

We've said it so many times, without even thinking, we could probably paper a small (or large) country with the word and still not see it, hear it or even notice the response of others when we speak it.

It is, if you will, a part of the landscape, the incessant buzz humming around us day in and day out.

It no longer has a lot of meaning or energy or emotion behind it.

Here in the U.S. we say things like “hi”, “hello”, and “good day.”

There are a bunch of slang greetings the younger crowd tend to have (some repeatable here, some not!).

None of which are uniquely your own, right?

If you want to have some fun, shake things up a bit and get people **listening, not nodding politely**, come up with a different greeting to use instead of your language's equivalent of the American English “hi” or “hello.”

Create something that reflects your personality, your own sense of style, your own cultural belief systems.

Make it something that rolls off your tongue and grabs the person who hears it with its joy and even gives them a good chuckle or gets a smile curving at the corners of their lips.

Whether stranger or friend, my greetings include some sort of, oh what do you call them...I can't think of the word, darnit.

How about an example or two?

- “Hi sweetie, so how goes it today?”
- “Dadgum, fantabulous to see you? What's on your plate today?”
- “Oh goodness, it is so garantangly awesome to see a new face.”

We also tend to have some pretty standard phrases we use when someone says “how are you?”

I don't know about your culture and know it is pretty common in the U.S. to say “fine,” “OK,” or something else that doesn't really say too much.

And that’s even if you've just received the worst news ever in your whole life, or you've fallen down a flight of stairs, or, well you get the picture, eh?

Some of the ones I've used are...

- “Grand spanking awesome, and you?”
- “Hunky dorey keeno kewl.”
- “Peachy keeno kewl, you?”
- “I couldn't be better if I had won the lottery.”

I'll grant you, I've gotten some totally weird looks. So? It shakes up their day and gets them thinking differently.

And sometimes the stuff that falls out of my mouth hasn't been planned or ever combined before in one sentence.

What could you say that fits you like a glove?

Who knows, you might even make a new friend in the process!



Words of Wisdom

“When I dare to be powerful, to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid.”

~ Audre Lourde

Ripple 39 – Share that you care, share you

If you read the papers, listen to your neighbors, hang out on a news site or follow along with any sort of media or attend an event somewhere, you can find someone who is need of a caring word, a hug.

A note of encouragement.

A reminder to them that they matter.

Amidst the turmoil of disappointments, financial scares, the loss of a loved one or any of the thousands of challenges humans face each day, a gentle touch or reminder that someone cares is often missing in action.

Sometimes all it takes for someone to get back on the positivity track is to know there is someone who gives a tinker's damn about their lives.

What about these ways to share that you care...

- Pick one or more people to send an email with a short note of encouragement.

It can be something simple like “Stopping by to say 'hi' and let you know I'm thinking of you.”

You could even store some key phrases in a separate document if you're technically inclined and cut-n-paste them into an email when you think of someone.

- Pick up the phone and shock the heck out of the person on the other end by saying “Called to say 'hi, howya doing?”
- Leave a note in the neighbor's door, even anonymously, letting them know you're in the neighborhood and available to help if needed.

Maybe you could write something like “I have some time on my hands if you need an extra pair to get something done this weekend.”

- Get a group of folks together and stop by a local facility for children, the elderly or a prisoners.

Offer your help to do whatever needs done...who knows what kinds of things have gone undone due to cutbacks?

And yes, I know.

Some of these places require special background checks and all that jazz.

AND I've done this...it is amazing what happens when you say..."oh, no problem, I can help out in the kitchen, away from the people who live here."

Or "would you like some help with the yardwork?"

It may not work, and then again, it may.

- Stop by a local shop or cafe and offer to serve or clean up the tables or sweep the floor.

I'll bet the day you stop by is the day someone called in sick and the folks are short a pair of hands to get everything done.

I was once in a transformational coaching program where these kinds of activities were required if we wanted to graduate.

I was stunned at what we were able to accomplish simply by showing up.

I would never have thought to do these things if I hadn't been required to.

Stretttcccchhh!!!!!! It does a body good (in more ways than one).



Words of Wisdom

“To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant, to enact gratitude is generous and noble.

But to live gratitude is to touch Heaven.”

~ Johannes A. Gaertner

Ripple 40 – Foster an “Attitude of Gratitude”

Grumble. Grumble. Grumble.

Gripe. Gripe. Gripe.

We hear it so many places...our homes, our workplaces, the store, the hospital.

People griping and groaning and grumbling about “what isn't right” in their world.

We hear people complaining about the weather (like it is going to change?), the state of the world, the slight by someone in their world.

The aches and pains in their body. (Guilty as charged, blush.)

And it is an oh-so-easy habit to fall into...to find the “what isn't” in our lives.

Not the “what is.” The “what isn't.”

Forgetting all the amazingness and gifts around us, large and small.

Believe me, sometimes I'm scrounging around looking for the smallest of somethings to practice my “Attitude of Gratitude.” Fostering an “Attitude of Gratitude” is a practice I learned relatively late in life. And no matter your age, you can learn to do this.

I promise.

My practice came in the form of an assignment from a coach who took the opportunity to help me find a greater place of peace in my life, which was spiraling out of control and into an abyss of depression and blackness that I thought I would never crawl out of.

(And no, this practice doesn't solve everything...if you need medication or supplements or medical help, please get it, right away.)

Start by finding something, anything, you can be grateful for.

I found it helps to write things down...it seems to embed this new attitude more quickly. (Gratitude Journal anyone?)

- If you're in pain, is there even the tiniest of places that doesn't hurt? Yes? Excellent.

Focus on that. Thank it, give it big kudos for feeling good.

- If your heart is hurting from the loss of a loved one?

Is there someone who is still around? A friend, a spiritual companion, a family member?

Excellent, now that you've found one (and one is all it takes), focus on what good things they bring to your life, to your world.

- Are you wishing you could buy x or y or z? Sad because it is something you really want?

It's OK to want it and envision it. If you focus on what you *do* have, really focus on it, smother it in gratitude, "love it up" as I say, it is amazing how much the "wanting" for the something else begins to subside...maybe it leaves completely.

Or it may show up in your life because of all the gratitude you're pouring into the Universe!

- Maybe you were expecting a bigger check from something and are now disappointed by the amount you have.

What would happen to you if you blessed the amount you had? Created a story of abundance around what has come to you? What if you jumped up and down for joy? Yes, you heard me. Get "physical," move, jump, clap, laugh, get your whole body involved in this *Attitude of Gratitude* thing you're working on.

Once you start, this practice snowballs and helps you create, moment by moment, a much more enticing world for you to live in.



Words of Wisdom

“Krishna insisted on outer cleanliness and inner cleansing.

Clean clothes and clean minds are an ideal combination.”

~ Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Ripple 41 – “Spring clean” your world

When I was growing up, spring was the time for our annual spring cleaning.

There would be a flurry of activity...from the walls to the floors and everything in between, everything got a good scrubbing.

We would go through the drawers and closets and baskets and get rid of what no longer fit or served our current needs.

I never thought of that as “kindness.”

Frankly, I thought it was cutting into my reading time and wasn't real thrilled about the idea. In fact, I'll admit I was a downright pain in the butt about it.

Now that I'm older, I see how amazing that action is...as a metaphor for clearing out the old, starting over and assessing what is most important right now.

And no matter what season it is when you're reading this, a good old fashioned clearing is a good thing...whether it is your home or car, garage or workspace.

And be sure to include the old debris hanging around in your mind, your thoughts and stories of what your life is.

The old saying “one person's junk, is another person's treasure” has a real ring of truth to it, no?

So why not...

- Go through those old magazines (those ones you thought you would read some day) and either pull out the articles you really want to read or donate them to a local library, doctor's office, spiritual home or local facility for those in need.
- Weed through your closet and get rid of the clothes that no longer fit or haven't been worn (maybe they're too small or the wrong color, no matter) and donate them to others who could use them and are looking for just what you have.
- Open up the garage doors and pull out the old tools and gunkus clogging up those shelves...give the excess to someone else who can use it and needs it **right now**.

And this one is **essential** to your health and the world's health...

1. Take a good hard look at the stories of your life...maybe pull out a tablet and start writing them all down.

2. Ask yourself "Do they serve me?"

Are they lifting you up or pulling you down?

If they serve you, put them in a stack and have a celebration.

If they don't serve you, put them in another stack, tell them "thank you" for their service to you (and yes, they *have* served you).

3. Have a burning ceremony where you let them go or mentally attach them to a balloon and release them to be transmuted into something else.

(Do me a favor? Don't let loose a real balloon with paper attached 'cuz that isn't kind to our feathered and four-legged friends.)

You'll feel so much lighter, you might start floating yourself. Have fun floating!



Words of Wisdom

"If you really want the last word in an argument, try saying,

'I guess you're right.'"

~ Unknown

Ripple 42 – Let someone else have the last word

There ya are, groovin' right along, life is grand.

Then "BAM" someone decides to argue with you about something you believe in, strongly (or not so strongly in some cases).

You're convinced you're right about whatever is being discussed or argued about at the moment.

And by gum, you're right, and you know you're right, and **you're gonna win.**

That's it. You're gonna win.

Ever done that?

I sure have, much as it grieves to admit that.

In fact, I've done that a good majority of my life.

And quite frankly, it hasn't done much to raise the Kindness Quotient or keep my blood pressure at normal levels or bring peace to the world.

Blast, it hasn't done one of those things.

So if you hear yourself periodically (or even regularly) saying "What is wrong with this world" or "Why can't we all get along" or "Where's the peace," think twice the next time you're fussing or arguing with someone.

You, **yes you**, can take one more step toward that vision of a kind, peaceful world by stopping an argument in its tracks, letting someone else have the last word.

So how about this the next time an argument comes up...

1. Take three deep breaths (you might need even more if you're really hot under the collar)
2. Ask yourself "is this topic I'm defending so staunchly a matter of life or death?"

3. Ask yourself “if I 'give in', is it immoral, unethical or illegal”
4. If the answer to either of those questions is “no,” then stop and let the other person have the last word or even say “You're right”

Or, if that is too much, go for “I guess you're right.”

Look around you, realize the world hasn't ended.

Celebrate your step toward a peaceful, kind world, the one you've envisioned for so long.

There, you did it.

Congratulations to you!

You rock, truly you do.

And every step toward peace and kindness, no matter the “size,” raises the world's *KindnessQuotient*.

It also increases the balance in the Universal Bank of Kindness™ (U B OK).

I bow my head in deepest thanks for your contribution...you are a true blessing.



Words of Wisdom

“Love life, engage in it, give it all you've got. love it with a passion, because life truly does give back, many times over, what you put into it.”

~ Maya Angelou

Ripple 43 – Revel in the small pleasures

Goodness, with our busy-as-a-bee lives, we often forget to rejoice in, **revel in**, celebrate, the small pleasures out there, waiting for us.

Our cultures have our big celebrations around special days or events...birthdays, spiritual leaders, special days in history, spiritual events, “Hallmark Holidays” (as they are often called in the U.S.)...things like Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Grandparent's Day and so on.

Now, mind you, I'm not saying these fabulous days aren't worth a celebration.

I'm saying that finding ways to wrap our celebratory arms around the smallest of events moves us forward and gives us a lot more to celebrate.

Yes?

These happen all during the day... scattered like delightful bread crumbs for us to follow to the next and the next and the next small pleasure.

Until, suddenly, you realize your life is filled with so many pleasures gone unrecognized in times past.

Events recognized and celebrated raise our energy and the world's energy. What small pleasure can you recognize, right now?

Jump up and down, revel quietly, light a candle, share with a friend or co-worker.

- Were you 6 feet above ground this morning?
- Were you able to walk or talk or speak?
- Did your computer cooperate?
- Did your car start? Or the bus arrive on time?
- Did your kiddos remember to call when they were going to be late?
- Did someone tell you “I love you”?
- Did you tell someone you love them?

- Did the sun come up? Did the rains give the scorched earth much-needed nourishment? Did the clouds make pretty patterns in the sky?
- Did the birds sing?
- Did someone else do those dishes you were simply too tired to do last night?
- Did someone let you have a space in the long line of traffic?
- Did your favorite purple pen or piece of jewelry or note from a friend suddenly reappear for you to enjoy?
- Did you see a butterfly? Bird? Dragonfly?
- Did someone share an encouraging word with you?
- Did you get a wonderful, comforting hug right when you needed one?
- Did you share an encouraging word with someone else?

When you celebrate the millions of so-called “tiny” moments, your life becomes a stream of them.

Now that sounds like a kick-ass way to live to me!



Words of Wisdom

*“Every decision you make,
every decision, is not a decision
about What To Do.*

*It's a decision about Who You
Are.*

*When you see this, when you
understand it, everything
changes.*

*You begin to see life in a
new way.*

*All events, occurrences, and
situations turn into
opportunities to do what you
came here to do.”*

~ Neale Donald Walsch

Ripple 44 – Be on the lookout for good customer service

OK, I'll admit it. I've been around the block a few days.

OK, years. Decades actually.

Yup, I sure have.

And it seems to me I hear a lot about the great customer service “back in the day.”

Although which day that is, I don't know!

I hear whining about how service is terrible, can't get an answer from anyone, there are no humans anymore, only machines.

“These kids” don't know how to take care of people well.

And on it goes...different refrain, same story.

Customer service no longer exists.

I respectfully disagree.

I know I can't be the only one who has received has good customer service...so I believe it is more about what we focus on.

What kind of attitude we have. I tend to be rather talkative and enjoy engaging those in service industries.

And many of them tell me they feel like they don't exist.

So, what to do?

Will you make a pact with me?

To look, consciously, avidly, rabidly for good customer service?

Maybe even come up with a different definition of what good customer service is based on the NOW, not the PAST?

Excellent, thanks for joining me.

- What if good customer service is hearing “Thank you”? Are you listening for it?
- What if good customer service is having someone look at you? Are you seeing someone or are you distracted by a phone call or talking to someone else while you're being provided a service?

Stop that! And I bet your opinion of service improves. Drastically.

- What if good customer service is someone remembering you've been “there” before and you're treated like an old friend who is coming home?

Did you catch it when it happened? Or was your thinking elsewhere?

- What if good customer service is being asked “May I help you?” even if you don't need help right at that moment?

And remembering you were asked?

Now, what if you help improve customer service by...

- Changing what you focus on
- Single-tasking instead of multi-tasking (maybe you end that cell call **before** you place your order at the drive through window)
- Saying “hi, how is your day” **first** when you go into that restaurant or store

Thanks for joining me in this campaign to recognize the good and the kind—everywhere you look.

I believe this is ever so important. Don't you?

You are so tremendously awesome.



Words of Wisdom

“Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force.

When we really listen to people there is an alternating current, and this recharges us so that we never get tired of each other. We are constantly being re-created.”

~ Brenda Ueland

Ripple 45 – Listen with all your heart

How many of us trudge through our lives feeling as if we're invisible.

We don't matter, we have nothing important to say because, well, “no one is listening anyway?”

Millions, maybe billions, of people feel as if they're stranded somewhere on an island all by themselves, drowning in fear, despair, and loneliness.

Absolutely sure there is not one soul who gives 2 figs about them.

People ask “How ya doin'?” and they don't listen for the answer, racing on to the next task.

Or listen to what you're saying while waiting to jump in with a response or a comment (oh lordy, I'm sooo guilty of this one).

Sometimes all we want is to be heard, truly and honestly heard by someone, anyone, even if a complete stranger.

We don't necessarily expect the other person to “fix things” or “know all the answers” ...although I'm sure it would be nice if that were possible.

And sometimes it is.

I think we sometimes don't listen because we're overwhelmed and sometimes it is because we're frightened the other person will want us to solve the problem or challenge they are sharing and we know we don't have “the answer.”

And what if you, because you so deeply believe kindness is vital to the health of our world, became the person who started the listening craze?

What if you were to suspend all judgment?

All need to respond?

All need to do anything other than be a heart thrust wide open with the honor of being the listener and 2 ears scrambling to hear every single word, every nuance of the speaker's tone and underlying message?

You can do it...I know you can.

It takes a bit of practice and dedication AND you start simply.

The next time you're given the honor of listening...

1. Stop whatever else you're doing
2. Take three deep breaths, really deep breaths (ones that feel as if you're pulling the air up from your toes to the top of your head)
3. Say to yourself "I choose to listen with all my heart and soul"
4. Listen to what is being said
5. Acknowledge the person's right to be where they are
6. Repeat (as closely as possible) what the person said, to make sure you understood
7. Ask if there is something you can do

Often you'll find an ardent listener was all that was needed.

We all need to know we matter, we're lovable, we're important. And your dedication to listening provided that...in spades.

YES!!!!!!



Words of Wisdom

“You must take personal responsibility.

You cannot change the circumstances, the seasons, or the wind.

...but you can change yourself.

That is something you have charge of.”

~ Jim Rohn

Ripple 46 – Choose responsibility, not guilt

Now, before you panic, let me assure you I do mean “**responsibility**” not “**guilt.**”

There is a vast difference between beating yourself to a pulp about something you did, or didn’t, and taking responsibility for your words, actions and deeds.

Guilt is the equivalent of grabbing a big old stick and beating yourself about head and body for something.

It makes you hurt a lot and doesn't do a damned thing about either making amends for a past action or making a different, more responsible choice, when faced with a similar situation again.

Guilt essentially allows you to wallow around in the past without assessing what happened and without doing things differently.

You get to stay right where you were when you made the “mistake.”

And that changes nothing.

As my former attorney said when I was refusing to protect myself during a court case (I was feeling guilty about my previous, unaligned actions)...

“Ah yes, guilt, the gift that keeps on giving!”

Her sharp retort snapped me into complete attention.

I was stunned and suddenly realized the truth of her statement.

Guilt was keeping me from acting now in a way that was responsible and in alignment. In **THIS** moment.

On the other hand, responsibility is accepting that you made a choice to do, or say, something a certain way.

You realize you can't change it and you acknowledge it.

Then, **and this is important**, you decide how you're going to do things differently **in the future.**

You make amends if it is possible.

You make different choices in the future.

You decide to become more aligned with your core values.

Guilt is the stance of a **victim**, of someone who is their power away, voluntarily, to another person or situation.

Responsibility is the stance of a **victor**, 1 who acknowledges the humanness of their errors and chooses differently the next time.

It is freedom.

True freedom.

When you choose to stand responsible for you...no one else...you give yourself an opportunity to truly take action and live with integrity.

And given the amount of finger pointing going on, I'm thinking choosing to stand responsible for our own actions and behaviors is an act of kindness that can change the world.

So next time you err, choose forgiveness and responsibility instead of guilt.

It helps you create the world you dream of.



Words of Wisdom

“High achievers spot rich opportunities swiftly, make big decisions quickly and move into action immediately.

Follow these principles and you can make your dreams come true.”

~ Robert H. Schuller

Ripple 47 – Take action!!!!!!!!!!

Get out there and do something about what you want to do something about.

OK, I know that could be confusing, so let me explain a bit...

How many of us take the phenomenal ideas popped into our heads...by an ad, an offhand comment, a random thought and **DO** something with it?

How many of us recognize the inspiration comes from a source outside ourselves and is a gift to us, if we choose to accept the gift?

How many of us analyze the bejeebers out of an idea until it is transformed from firey brilliance to a pile of ashes?

Questioning it, reducing it to a bunch of numbers, being bombarded with “I can'ts”, “Who am I to dos”, “I don't know hows.”

Listening to the **naysayers** instead of the **yaysayers**. (Can you see me waving my hand in the air?)

Years ago I was in a hotel room on a business trip and when I woke up, I had this complete vision for a keynote speech.

And I mean complete...I could see the props and people and decorations and hear the laughter.

I even had a name “Can You Come Out to Play: Winning with Creativity.”

It was totally amazing.

I was so excited I was bopping up and down and clapping like a child with a new toy.

WOW!

And in the time it took me to get from the bed to the shower (it was a small room, not one of those big suites), I had shredded the idea to bits.

Destroyed the joy I had felt.

What a way to treat a gift from the Universe, eh, although I didn't realize that at the time.

My basic thought was “This a stupid idea, really, what was I thinking?”

Thankfully, I had found enough yaysayers at the time to share my fears with and they encouraged me to take action.

To “just do it.”

One even insisted on scheduling my first event.

The day I stood in front of the room to share my message, the tears flowed, the laughter from the audience touched my heart and people shared with how grateful they were that I quit throwing away gifts of inspiration and “just did it!”

Your dreams, your ideas, your inspirations are a gift to you and the world.

They deserve your attention and they deserve **action**.

The actions may be small at first and then, before you know it, you're rolling toward your vision, your dreams.

And you never know whose life you will touch, inspire, **change** because **you** had the courage to **ACT**.

To acting on your dreams!



Words of Wisdom

“One day our descendants will think it incredible that we paid so much attention to things like the amount of melanin in our skin or the shape of our eyes or our gender instead of the unique identities of each of us as complex human beings.”

~ Franklin Thomas

Ripple 48 – Celebrate diversity, celebrate similarities

Diversity and similarity. Two sides of the same coin, yes?

All of us reading this book have 1 huge similarity...we're human!

Yet it seems that we get caught up in “you're different than me” as a way to make ourselves feel valuable or righteous or better than or able to rid the world of someone or some group simply because of some difference.

And it really pisses me off! OK, I tried for another word. I really did and this is the best I could do.

To be honest, it is one of those “get on the soapbox topics” for me.

Besides, everybody being exactly the same sounds super boring doncha think?

I mean, wouldn't a bunch of us be unnecessary if that were the case?

So what if we created an “AND” conversation?

What if we celebrate our samenesses AND our differences?

The differences seem pretty easy to identify, so how about an exercise to find the similarities?

A neat exercise to do, whether with kids or adults, is 1 I created many years ago when my son came home angry after a fight.

He was so angry and upset that he was ranting and raving, and focusing on the other youngster's color, which I couldn't handle.

Since he is blond and blue-eyed, I told him I really didn't like blond, blue-eyed people, simply for that reason.

His shock was total when he realized that meant him!

Now, before you rail on me, I did it on purpose. I wanted him to realize those things were a part of him and how silly it was to dislike someone else for those traits.

He got the idea and stopped to think about it, seriously think about it.

And when he was done thinking, I gave him an assignment.

He was to identify at least 25 things that were the same between himself and his so-called “enemy.”

His first response was “there aren't any!”

I told him he would find them if he set his mind to it.

And he did.

And the smile on his face was amazing when he realized it was actually very easy.

So, being the mean mom I was, I had him push the target to 50 samenesses.

It changed his thinking, totally.

He was able to quickly see the common things like body parts (eyes, arms, a nose, legs and the like).

What fascinated me was that he also listed things like “is a kid,” “has parents,” “goes to my school,” “his parents are divorced too,” “has the same teacher” and on the list went.

Now that he realized how many things were the same, he was able to focus on the behavior he didn't like rather than lumping this precious soul into a group based on external traits.

I believe, deep in my heart, that when we celebrate our diversity AND our similarities, we can create a much more amazing, peaceful, joy-filled world.

Yes or Yes?



Words of Wisdom

“Live and work but do not forget to play, to have fun in life and really enjoy it.”

~ Charles R. Swindoll

Ripple 49 – Play!!!!!!!!!!!! Have fun!!!!!!!!!!!!

Years ago, my teenager made an offhand comment that really struck deep.

She said, in response to her dad and I saying something ridiculous about the joys of growing up, “Why would I want to grow up?

“Y’all seem to think it is something great...and all I see is seriousness and work, work, work!”

Wow.

Talk about spot on.

What she was seeing really was what makes it so hard, sometimes, to be an adult.

We've forgotten how to play, to have fun, to laugh and giggle and be totally, utterly, silly, without a care in the world.

Because you see, we are adults and are supposed to be grown up, right? And grown up business is serious business, no?

If that is true, then is it any wonder that we have ulcers and massive illness and horrible tears and depression?

EEK!

So what if you scheduled yourself some playtime?

Yes, I know, it may seem odd to schedule it and you may need to...so get out that calendar right now.

Got it? (I’ll wait.)

...

...

...

Got it? Good.

Now pick something playful you like to do and write it on your calendar, just like you would do for a big business meeting or a family reunion!

Give these a try...

- go to the park and swing on a swing or slide down the slide
- blow bubbles
- fly a kite
- read a good novel while sitting out in the beautiful sunshine
- go swimming
- run wild and free as if you had no cares
- make mud pies and “serve” them to your friends, real or imagined
- play ball without all the protections and rules...it's you and the ball
- create a costume out of household stuff and become a knight or a princess
- whisper silly jokes and long held dreams in the corner of the playground with your best-est friend
- crank the music up loud and dance, totally getting into the rhythm and words
- make up totally new games to stretch your imagination
- play with worms
- take a walk around the block and welcome everyone you see

Having fun, playing, is every bit as important as being the ever-so-serious, responsible adult.

Go! Play! Enjoy!

Your lightened mood adds to the world's joy.



Words of Wisdom

“In my garden there is a large place for sentiment. My garden of flowers is also my garden of thoughts and dreams.

The thoughts grow as freely as the flowers, and the dreams are as beautiful.”

~ Abram L. Urban

Ripple 50 – Create a garden

Gardening is one of those multi-purpose acts of kindness, no matter what kind of garden you choose to plant...vegetable, flower or even both if you're feeling energetic.

No matter the size of your garden...from an adorable pot on your apartment patio to small plot of vegetables to a garden large enough to feed a community...the benefits are the same.

In fact, the process of creating and caring for a garden brings all sorts of kindnesses to mind.

- The peace and serenity of being outside.
- The lift you get from grubbing around in the soil.
- The calmness that comes from connecting with Mother Earth in such an intimate and fulfilling way.
- The sense of accomplishment that you followed through on your vision.
- The ideas generated while letting your mind relax and wander through the possibilities as your hands are occupied with their task.
- The clarity that comes as you gently pull the weeds away to make room for new growth.
- The feel of the warm sun on your scalp as you bend to the task at hand.
- The childlike exclamation of joy as you realize the first shoots are poking their heads out of the carefully cultivated soil.
- The amazement that comes from the seedling becoming that beautiful flower you saw on the seed packet.
- The delightful smells wafting into the air to tickle your nose and tell the senses there is something amazing nearby.

- The troubles silently buried as you work through the dirt to find the perfect spot for the seeds you're planting.
- The meditative state that often silently overtakes you while your focus is on the tasks at hand.
- The lifting of your imagination as you visualize those brown clumps of dirt evolving into a space of beauty and abundance.
- The sense of completion that comes from watching the full cycle, from planting to nurturing to picking the mature plant to starting all over again.
- The delight in sharing the fruits of your labors with others who enjoy it with you.

So plant away, knowing your efforts are bringing amazing kindnesses to you and to all with whom you share your bounty.



Words of Wisdom

“You need to be aware of what others are doing, applaud their efforts, acknowledge their successes, and encourage them in their pursuits.”

When we all help one another, everybody wins.”

~ Jim Stovall

Ripple 51 – Encourage yourself and others

What is the deal with feeling like we must scrimp on encouraging people with kind words or gentleness or a simple hug?

I've met so many wonderful, talented people who feel they can't get it right, so they must bash themselves for anything less than perfection.

Like there is such an elusive thing as “perfection?”

And I understand how these folks feel (maybe that is why I've gotten to meet them, eh).

I've spent an insane amount of my life striving, pushing, ranting and raving about doing “better,” doing “more,” doing “more, better, all the time.”

And it has gotten me ulcers, and tears and divorces and sadness and some downright unhealthy habits.

Although never the elusive perfection I thought I must have to be good enough to be part of this world.

Is that really necessary to be good enough?

I no longer think so.

I do believe there was a time when there was a prevailing belief that too much praise would spoil someone, make them lazy, less productive and all that jazz.

And maybe it is possible...and I personally choose to err on the side of too much encouragement these days.

Wanna join me? Oh, yes. That's arrrrsome.

What if you...

- Look for something positive to share with your family instead of finding what they *didn't do*? (You may need to look hard to get beneath the habit of seeing what hasn't been done.)
- Pay attention to the kindnesses you receive from others...looking for them in every nook and cranny, making it a #1 priority to find them?
- Take a five-minute break from focusing on what you haven't done today or in the past, and for that five minutes only give yourself encouragement?
- Create a list of encouraging words and pop them into a jar and then each member of your family took turns pulling a word out of the jar and using it all day long?
- And your friends create a round-robin game of encouraging each other?

Create a list of friends who want to join in the game and switch off at preset intervals, making encouraging phone calls or sending emails.
- Find a way to give at least 15 hugs a day to someone...friend, family stranger? (Maybe even virtual hugs to those who aren't close by?)
- Tuck a note with a simple "I'm thinking of you" under a pillow, in a lunch box, behind a mirror, beside a plate at the dinner table?

Remember, each of us is a gift, a Light, and it may be your simple, encouraging words that brings the Light out for all to see.



Words of Wisdom

“It is not the things you get but the hearts you touch that will determine your success in life.”

~ Unknown

Ripple 52 – Help out at a local prison or detention center

It is ever so easy to stand back and say about those who have been jailed “they got what they deserve,” isn't it?

And I'm not saying they should be out of jail or in jail. I am saying that those folks are people...with families and friends and troubles and fears and anger and frustration and guilt.

The whole gamut.

And I have no doubt many have huge regrets about the actions that landed them where they are.

AND, and this is a big AND, do we want them, and their families to become productive powerful members of society again?

If so, **it is up to us** to start the process.

Some time ago, I was privileged to be part of a team of Passion Test Facilitators who shared the process with the teens at a Chicago juvenile detention facility.

I looked at the faces of these young men (between 13 and 18) and was touched when several of these teenagers identified their number 1 passion as “being a great parent.”

I was really stunned at the number of teen parents in the group of 100. Boy, had I been naive.

And what affected me most was when I had a chance to hug a few of these guys, one-on-one, and share a few words.

They truly want to find something different. They had such soft hearts beneath the tough-as-nails exteriors.

And yet they don't have the skills or knowledge and were going right back out into the situations that got them jailed in the first place.

How do they change without support?

They need the new models to change and take different actions, especially with the rough situations they were in.

So, what if...

- You became a mentor to someone in jail, brought them new knowledge? Gave them a better foundation? A bit of hope? A new way?
- You took your love of reading and a tape recorder to a location near you and recorded a parent reading a story or talking to their children?
- You took the recordings and sent them to the kids to listen to when they're lonely or feeling abandoned by the world?
- You listened to how the person got in prison in the first place?

It may not change the “why” and it may help you find a way to soften your heart or do something to prevent someone else from ending up there.

- You studied why gangs form and what the people in them are looking for and looked at how to take steps to help others?

I know there are specific rules around how you get into a facility and what you can bring or do AND I know you have the heart to do so.

How do I know?

Because you have a heart or you wouldn't be reading this book!

You, too, are looking for ways to make the world a better place for all.



Words of Wisdom

“Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God’s kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile.”

~ Mother Teresa

Let’s connect!

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About the Author



For over 20 years, Marshall (aka, igKnight) has been a top-rated international speaker and trainer on topics ranging from the technical to the inspirational.

She is a business consultant, author, and transformational coach who uses passion, humor, and real life stories in everything she does.

Whether she's speaking to an audience of hundreds, authoring a book, or doing a one-on-one coaching session, MamaRed regales her listeners with her down-to-earth, hysterical way of looking at life's challenges and her step-by-step approach to understanding life and technology.

She helps individuals and organizations turn tragedies into triumphs, dreams into reality, one tale at a time.

She is the founder of A Million Ripples of Kindness™, a world-wide campaign to raise the world's Kindness Quotient by gathering and publishing the acts of kindness taking place every moment of every day.

She is also the creator of Teens Transforming Towns™, a unique program that serves as a fundraiser and character building program while getting students and faculty involved in all aspects of creating a product they are **proud** to share with the community.

Affectionately known as “Mama”, she igKnights the world around her with her passion for helping others live a life full of **conscious selfishness and selective selflessness**, without shoulds, guilt and shame and in contribution to themselves and others.

From an early age, she loved hearing people's stories and even as a youngster, adults often came to her asking for advice in turning their lives around.



As the years flew by, she sank deeper and deeper into a dual life—presenting a happy face to the world yet living in a nowhere land of depression when she was alone. As others reached out to help her step fully back into a life worth living, she realized how desperately the world needs people living a life focused on their unique gifts and contributions.

Fascinated by the power of words to encourage people, or kick them in the butt, she has spent over 25 years studying belief systems, transformational tools and techniques from around the world. She now expertly weaves her own life stories and lessons into a message audiences can put into action immediately.

She is known for crafting her presentations with compassion and humor that leaves her audiences crying one moment and laughing the next. Those in her co-sulting programs, the 1-on-1s and projects and folks who attend her teleseminars and webinars know her as a powerful ally in their quest for living a meaningful, no-holds-barred life based on personal responsibility and powerful passions.

When she isn't rewriting client stories or teaching them how to create a life on fire, MamaRed enjoys geeking out, looking for toys, tools, and techniques to let people do what they love most and do best and being the parent of an amazingly kind, powerful grown son and his loving partner.