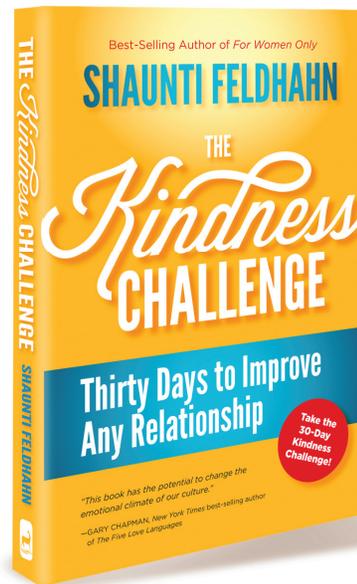
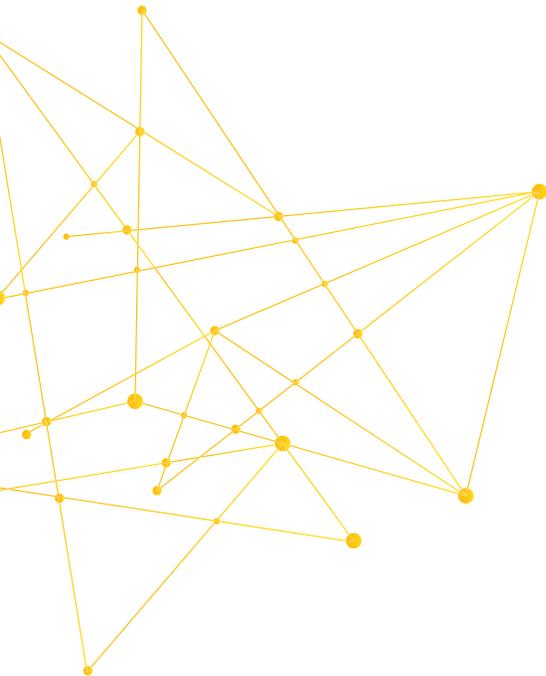


THIRTY DAYS.  
SMALL CHANGES.  
BIG RESULTS.



# *The Kindness Challenge Study*

## 6-SESSION FACILITATOR GUIDE



For use with *The Kindness Challenge* book, by Shaunti Feldhahn.  
Other resources can be found @ [jointhekindnesschallenge.com](http://jointhekindnesschallenge.com)



# Facilitator Guide

Dear Facilitator,

Thank you for joining with us to make the world a kinder place! This brief Introduction shares how the study works and some decisions to make **before your group's first meeting**. Before and during each Session you will also find guidance and a few instructions.

## Most Important: Pick BOTH Of Your Start Dates!

You'll need to decide on two distinct start dates:

1) When your group will start *The Kindness Challenge Study*

-AND -

2) When your group will start the 30-Day Kindness Challenge

This study is designed with the assumption that groups meet weekly, and that everyone starts the 30-Day Kindness Challenge (30DKC) together on the day after the Session 2 meeting. (For example, if Session 1 is on Sunday night, and Session 2 is the next Sunday night, everyone would start the 30-Day Kindness Challenge on the Monday morning after Session 2.)

Following that timing ensures each group member receives the 30-Day Kindness Challenge email reminders on the same days (together receiving Day 1, Day 2, and so on), that group discussions are on the same page, and that participants are watching the correct video for that week of the Challenge. (If you need an alternative schedule, see that section, below.)

## HOW THE STUDY WORKS

There will be many types of groups using the Discussion Guide, from book clubs, groups of friends, church small groups, work groups and more. So there are multiple types of mix-and-match discussion options for each session. You will not be able to cover everything in one session. So choose which to cover and skip based on the

preference and time allotment for your group. We recommend that each week you cover the "Looking Back" session, at least in brief, so that participants have the chance to reflect on the Challenge that week and share what they learned with others.

In general, we recommend at least one hour for your group meeting.

## Six Sessions

The study is arranged around six sessions. As mentioned, these are designed to be weekly, with participants starting the 30-Day Kindness Challenge the day after the Session 2 meeting. We know not every group will be able to meet weekly, and if so, see "Alternative Schedules" below.

The weekly format includes these sections below. This is our recommendation for time distribution, which is flexible according to the needs and interest of your group.

SECTION	DESCRIPTION	SUGGESTED TIME STRUCTURE FOR A ONE HOUR SESSION
Introduction	Administrative directions such as signing up for the challenge, etc. (Not every session includes an introduction.)	5 minutes
LOOKING BACK	Includes discussion around observations related to the last week's principles of kindness or discussion about the experience doing the challenge.	12-15 minutes
Watch the Video	Teaching from Shaunti Feldhahn on the specific topic for this week.	8-10 minutes each week, except Week 1, which is 16 minutes

<b>LOOKING IN</b>	Discussion questions related to the application of the reading assignment for this week. Broken into the two options below: <b>In the News</b> and <b>Faith Focus</b>	<b>20 -25 minutes total. Options:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend all time in either In the News or Faith Focus section</li> <li>• Split the time to cover both sections.</li> </ul>
<b>In the News</b>	Discussion questions around observing and applying the principles of kindness in community, and in current or historical events.	
<b>Faith Focus</b>	Questions that provide deeper insights into the teaching and application of kindness from a biblical perspective.	
<b>LOOKING FORWARD</b>	A look at the week ahead.	5 minutes or less

### Alternative Schedules

If your group cannot meet weekly, the main decisions to make are when your group will start the 30-Day Kindness Challenge, and which discussion questions/sections you will use or customize to fit your time frame.

In the standard five week, six-session schedule, the 30-Day Kindness Challenge runs from the day after the Session 2 meeting, to a few days after the last group meeting (Session 6). If your group meets on other schedules, please adjust in a way that works best for your participants. For example, for a group that meets every two weeks, here are three distinct options for how to handle the 30DKC:

- **Option One:** Start the 30DKC the day after Session 2, knowing that you'll finish the thirty days shortly after Session 4. The videos and topics for Session 3 on will still be relevant, but after

Session 4 you will focus on how everyone is doing at keeping up with kindness now that the 30DKC is over.

- **Option Two:** Start the 30DKC the day after Session 4, and turn the first three sessions into an opportunity for more advance reading and discussion on the principles of kindness laid out in the book. By the time the 30DKC actually starts, many in your group will have already been doing and discussing an "informal" version of the 30DKC with people around them. So the 30DKC itself will be a capstone to formally apply in one relationship everything they have already learned, rather than being the primary tool of learning.

- **Option Three:** Start the 30DKC for one relationship, the day after Session 2, finish it after Session 4, then do the 30DKC again for another relationship, applying everything learned. during the first round. Some groups may elect to continue meeting for another few sessions to finish out the second round, even without a video, using some of the many discussion sections that you didn't get to the first time. (This option formalizes a benefit found in the research: that doing the 30DKC the first time opens your eyes to many things about how you relate to others-- lessons you can then apply with other relationships.)

### LOGISTICS

#### Internet Access for Video

The Study Videos are free online, not on a DVD. Each week you will need Internet access and a device to play the short teaching video for your small group. In advance, get any security code needed to access the Internet at your meeting place.

To access the videos, use the hotlink in the Watch the Video section of this Facilitator's Discussion Guide for each session, or from the "Groups" page at [www.jointhekindnesschallenge.com](http://www.jointhekindnesschallenge.com). (If you are doing the 30DKC through a specific organization or church, you may also be able to access the videos via that website.)

**Suggested Book Reading Assignments** This study and initiative is based on *The Kindness Challenge* book. Reading the book is not required to do the study, but participants will get much more out of it if they do. Each session's video provides a mini- overview, but the book shares everything one needs to know to become a person of kindness. That includes all the types of actions, words and even thoughts that will work best for them – or most trip them up.

Some avid readers will want to read the book ahead of time – which is great! Otherwise, we suggest certain reading assignments as the study progresses. Let your group know that the suggested reading is not always in chapter order. There is also a bit more reading during the first two weeks to kick off the 30DKC well, and allow maximum learning in the shortest amount of time.

### Personal journal and Gift journal.

Whether they choose to use a manual notebook or a digital device, encourage each participant to record what they did every day during the 30DKC (or did not do, or wish they had done) and the response received (if any). These observations provide both encouragement and clues to tweak their kindness efforts for their person.

We recommend that participants also consider creating a gift journal, if that is appropriate for their relationship. They can capture their daily words of affirmation about their person, then present it as a very special gift at some point after the challenge.

### Encouraging a sense that “we’re all in this together”

Each participant will have a different weekly experience doing the Challenge. Some will have seen some great things that week; others will have had a frustrating or challenging time. Encourage participants to encourage, share ideas, and support one another to keep going. That’s living out kindness!

In our research, we found that a key reason people gave up when the 30DKC got tough was because there was no one going through the same thing, cheering them on. By sharing your own failures and successes, and encouraging others when they feel like quitting, you will model that same behavior for others.

### Encourage Diverse Participation

In every group, there is likely to be at least one participant who will want to share too long and too often, while another may have wisdom to share, but isn’t as likely to speak up. For the Chatty Cathys, as awkward as it may feel, you can interject as soon as Cathy takes a breath. (Or you may have to interrupt, for the sake of everyone else in the group.) Say, “That’s a great point, Cathy.” Then immediately look at Silent Sally: “Sally, did you have anything you wanted to share from this week?” Gently encourage (but not pressure) everyone to share something each week.

### Important Reminders for You

As you get started, here are a few key reminders:

### 1) Set Your Start Date For Your Group’s Study Meetings

OUR GROUP START DATE

2) Decide (perhaps with your group) on what date your group will start doing the 30-Day Kindness Challenge. (As noted, we recommend setting your Challenge start date as the day after your second group meeting to maximize the learning.)

OUR 30DKC START DATE

3) Before the 30 Day Kindness Challenge start date, remind everyone in your group to sign up for the daily email reminders (either with the organization through whom you are doing this study, or at [www.jointhekindnesschallenge.com](http://www.jointhekindnesschallenge.com).) Each member must sign up individually and should designate the Challenge start date that the group picked. (Those who do not want to sign up for reminder emails can use the 30 days of reminders in the back of the book.)

4) Make video arrangements. Have access to wifi, any necessary password, and a tablet or other device (preferably something bigger than a phone) for showing the video to your group.

5) Maximize results – read the book. You will get much better results – both as a facilitator and a participant in the 30-Day Kindness Challenge -- by reading the book.

I hope that *The Kindness Challenge* study and the 30 Day Kindness Challenge are a blessing for YOU, not just your group members. We are looking forward to hearing what you and your group learn and experience! You can share about it on social media – and see what others are learning—using #JoinKindness.

Thanks for joining this adventure, and for being a leader of kindness.

Sincerely,

**Shaunti Feldhahn**



# Why Kindness

Kindness makes the world go 'round!

**Welcome to The Kindness Challenge!** For the next six sessions, you will learn about and experience the transformational power of kindness. We hope you gain great insight into your personal relationships --and yourself.

## GETTING STARTED

Awareness and Action are the first steps to transformation. In The Kindness Challenge book research, we found that true awareness arrives only after you take action. Which is why this study involves not just group discussion, but actually doing the 30-Day Kindness Challenge together. (Pick the same start date; this study assumes that groups meet weekly and start the 30-Day Kindness Challenge the day after the Session 2 meeting. If you prefer a different time frame, see the "HOW THE STUDY WORKS / Alternative Schedules" section of this Facilitator Guide and adjust accordingly.)

**FACILITATOR:** *If you have not already done so, finalize your group's start date for the 30-Day Kindness Challenge. See the Facilitator's letter for more about the significance of the start date.*

Since this study offers short teaching videos, *The Kindness Challenge* book is not mandatory but it is highly recommended (your personal learning will be somewhat limited without it). You can either read the book ahead of time or follow the suggested reading order as you go (there is more reading early on than in later weeks).

Also, in each Session you will see more discussion options than you can cover in any one week for a one-hour meeting time; pick and choose what works best for your group.

**WATCH VIDEO for Session 1**  
[jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources](http://jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources)

## LOOKING IN

It's often said that any journey begins with just one step. And if it is a journey to change, we often need to understand "the why."

1. What motivated you to join The Kindness Challenge?

2. As you look back on your life, is there anyone that comes to mind as a model of kindness? (Friends, family members, acquaintances, public figures?) What specifically do they do and/or say that makes your model stand out to you?

## IN THE NEWS

In 1988, President George W. Bush said, "I want a kinder, gentler nation." In 2016, President Barack Obama declared, "Qualities like kindness and compassion, honesty, hard work -- they often matter more than technical skills or know-how."

Yet as *The Kindness Challenge* states: "People have always had a remarkable capacity for both graciousness and harshness, but today it seems harshness is more easily let loose." It often seems the more negative a story is, the more it gets aired. And aired. And aired again. People routinely post inflammatory comments on social media just to incite reactions. And we all know that one person who complains about everything. Our souls can be fed with so much negativity, grumbling, and frustration, that we simply become numb to it.

1. What specifically do you think has caused the shift toward our culture becoming less and less kind?
2. Do you think this cultural shift has affected you, personally?
3. Are there ways you contribute to the unkind culture? If you could change just one thing, what would it be?

## FAITH FOCUS

In Luke 10: 25-37, an unidentified Jewish expert in biblical law has a discussion with Jesus. The expert understands that we are instructed to love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. "But," he asks Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus answers with the parable of the Good Samaritan. A Jewish man is robbed, beaten, and left for dead. Several "good" men, fellow Jews, pass by but do not stop to help. Then a Samaritan passes by. Although Jews and Samaritans viewed each other as unworthy and as sworn enemies,

the Samaritan bandaged the injured man, took him to a nearby inn and paid for his room. Jesus asks which person was a neighbor to the injured man; the lawyer acknowledges that it was the Samaritan, “the one who had mercy on him.” Christ responded, “Go and do likewise.” The person who was the “enemy” becomes the hero: and the “good neighbor” the expert was told to be like – even though he was originally asking who he had to be kind to!

1. How were the “good” men unkind to the injured man? More important: Do you think that they considered themselves to be unkind?

**FACILITATOR:** *We all need to grasp that we can be unkind, ungrateful, and so on without ever considering ourselves to be so. In the end, what matters most in relationships with others is not intent, but impact.*

2. How might we similarly justify unkind words, actions and attitudes in our daily lives?

a. *If you are willing, give an example of a time when you might not have been a “good neighbor” to someone.*

b. *Give an example of a time when you were a “good neighbor” – even if it was difficult.*

3. Who could be considered modern day “Samaritans?” (Someone who lives a lifestyle you don’t approve? That rude family member? Beggars on a street corner? Aggressive drivers? Those of opposing political views?) While you may not encounter them being physically beaten, robbed, and left for dead each day, you probably do encounter those who feel that way spiritually or emotionally.

a. *How can you show the kindness of the good neighbor to them?*

b. *When you show such kindness who do you think is most affected?*

4. One definition of true love is to give someone what they need, not necessarily what they want. Regardless, we are instructed to: Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification **according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.**” (Ephesians 4:29, NASB) What are ways that you can put this instruction into practice?

## LOOKING FORWARD

### Prepare to embark on the 30-Day Kindness Challenge!

**FACILITATOR:** *Please be sure to review the following list with your group. You may also want to remind everyone that much of the homework is front-loaded into these first 2 weeks in order to prepare for doing the Challenge.*

- **Decide:** Are you doing the 30-Day Kindness Challenge as a group, starting the day after your next meeting?
- **Sign up for the Challenge** – either at [www.jointhekindnesschallenge.com](http://www.jointhekindnesschallenge.com) or via the organization through whom you learned about the Challenge. When prompted, pick the start date that your group has selected.

- **Identify your kindness target** – the person for whom you’re doing the 30-Day Kindness Challenge. Consider: Will you tell them you’re doing the Challenge for them? (Most people do not.)

- **Consider:** Would you like to create a gift journal for your person? If so, buy a gift journal, then secretly record your daily words of affirmation and present it as a special gift once the 30 days are done.

**FACILITATOR:** *Please remind your members that these notebooks and journals do not need to be expensive. Encourage your members to be creative!*

- **Decide** how you will record your actions, observations, and any tips along the way. A notebook? On a mobile device? Ensure that your recording method is easily accessible *during the course of your everyday activities.*

**FACILITATOR:** *Encourage participants also to share about their journey on social media, using #JoinKindness (as long as doing so won’t spill the beans to their target and compromise their ability to do the Challenge well!).*

- **(Optional) Complete the [Pre-Challenge Kindness Quotient Assessment](http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/kindness_quotient) ([http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/kindness\\_quotient](http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/kindness_quotient)).**

### Read Chapter 6, Nix the Negativity, of *The Kindness Challenge* and (optional) Chapter 5, Think You Know How To Be Kind? Think Again

*And the second (greatest commandment) is  
...Love your neighbor as yourself  
-Matthew 22:39 (NIV)*

*Kindness requires heroic self-sacrifice, not self-protection.  
-Shaunti Feldhahn, *The Kindness Challenge**



## Nix the *Negativity*

Say nothing negative, either to your person or about them to someone else.

### AND WE'RE OFF! The 30-Day Kindness Challenge Begins Tomorrow!

If you have not already done so, identify who you are going to do the Challenge for, and sign up at [www.JoinTheKindnessChallenge.com](http://www.JoinTheKindnessChallenge.com), or the website provided through your organization. You'll receive a daily reminder email with tips for the journey.

### LOOKING BACK

In our last group session and reading, we discovered that kindness transformation requires intentionally focusing on words, actions and attitude.

1. Once you began thinking about it, did you notice times when you were or were not kind – in words, actions or attitude – that you might have missed before?
2. Did you begin to notice acts of kindness (or unkindness) by others that you may have missed in the past?

**WATCH VIDEO for Session 2**  
[jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources](http://jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources)

### LOOKING IN

You had extra homework this week while gearing up for the 30-Day Kindness Challenge: Signing up for the Challenge, arranging a notebook/device to record observations, buying your optional gift journal, and reading Chapter 6 of *The Kindness Challenge* and (if possible) Chapter 5.

1. We all have kindness blind spots, and the research found two types of Kindness Blindness were common. How might one or both of these blind spots be affecting you?

2. There are seven different types of negativity. If you are willing, please share which specific types or subtypes that you need to work on? Were you surprised to realize some ways that you are not kind?

**FACILITATOR:** *If you are willing, please be prepared to share an example from your life. This transparency will allow others to see that each of us struggle in this area (some struggle with many or all types) and may help facilitate the group sharing.*

3. What specifically will you do to nix those types of negativity?

### IN THE NEWS

There are many examples of public figures making negative comments, catastrophizing, grumbling, and spreading suspicion. Then there are examples such as Martin Luther King, Jr. He led a cultural revolution for civil rights through peaceful protests and said, "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

1. What are some current, meaningful, newsworthy examples of kindness? As a group try to identify at least three or four. (This is good training to cut through our brain's tendency to focus on the negative and overlook the positive.)

**FACILITATOR:** *Consider a quick Internet search prior to the meeting to get a few examples. Think about "feel good" stories of local heroes helping someone unexpectedly, or stories of children donating their own toys to those in need. But if possible, let the group think it through on their own, as the value comes through wracking their brains for examples!*

2. Have you noticed any impact of the negativity in the news or media, in your own life? How can you minimize its impact on you?

### FAITH FOCUS

Discuss one or both of the following scripture sections:

#### *Why No Negativity?*

*Do everything without complaining and arguing, so that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people.*

- Philippians 2:14-15 (NLT)

1. This scripture presents one of the most important reasons why we are commanded to not be negative. What is it, and why does that matter?

2. Of all the types of negativity (see Chapter 6 of The Kindness Challenge), why do you think God specifically singles out 'complaining and arguing' in this passage?

3. No-one thinks of themselves as a complainer or arguer, but we all do it. Share some examples, how to confront it, and the benefits when we do not complain.

### Consequences of Negativity

Consider this scenario where negativity influenced actions and destinies of God's chosen people. After God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt (doing many miracles in the process), they were too afraid to battle the Canaanites, even though God has told them he would give them the land:

After God delivered the Israelites out of Egypt (doing many miracles in the process), they are too afraid to battle the Canaanites, even though God has told them he would give them the land:

*13<sup>1</sup> The Lord now said to Moses, "Send out men to explore the land of Canaan, the land I am giving to the Israelites..."*

*25 After exploring the land for forty days, the men returned... [Saying,] "We entered the land you sent us to explore, and it is indeed a bountiful country...."*

*28 But the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified.... 31 We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!" 32 So they spread this bad report about the land among the Israelites.... Numbers 13:1; 25-32 (NLT)*

*14<sup>1</sup> Then the whole community began weeping aloud, and they cried all night... [Saying], 3 "Why is the Lord taking us to this country only to have us die in battle?... Let's choose a new leader and go back to Egypt!"...*

*7 [Joshua and Caleb] said to all the people of Israel, "The land we traveled through and explored is a wonderful land! 8 And if the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey... 9 don't be afraid of the people of the land.... the Lord is with us!..." 10 But the whole community began to talk about stoning Joshua and Caleb. - Numbers 13:1, 25-32; 14: 1-10 (NLT)*

1. In this story, why didn't the positive words of Joshua and Caleb have any impact? What is ultimately behind the negative viewpoint of the people? How can you confront that in your own life?

**FACILITATOR:** *It is likely that "fear" will be one of the responses but be sure to probe deeper and consider the cause of the fear. Fear is a symptom of a lack of faith.*

2. Hundreds of thousands (or millions) of Israelites had waited years to go into the Promised Land – and then suddenly gave up based on the viewpoint of a few. What does that say about the power of a negative narrative and our responsibility to confront it? Have you seen any examples in your own life?

3. In this story, how does negativity lead to actual *unkindness*?

**FACILITATOR:** *In this story, it is the negativity of the few doubting spies, and their determination to spread it, that led to the corruption of nearly everyone else. By spreading this negativity, they were also undermining their faith, and ultimately keeping millions of people from the Promised Land. Consider discussing how the few impacted the many – which demonstrates how our "little bit of negativity" may have a ripple effect that spreads further than we realize in the moment.*

4. Thankfully, kindness has power, too. How might increasing kindness and stopping negativity actually increase faith (yours or others)?

## LOOKING FORWARD

**The 30-Day Kindness Challenge for your group starts tomorrow!** Don't forget to sign up today for your group's start date [www.jointhekindnesschallenge.com](http://www.jointhekindnesschallenge.com).

### FACILITATOR: A few reminders:

*The 30-Day Kindness Challenge could be tough if someone is doing it for a contentious relationship. People should view this as a commitment to do this for 30 days, even if it is hard.*

*Participants will receive e-mail reminders each day that track together but note that there are slightly different versions (anybody, wives, husbands, parents, or the workplace). Participants must avoid the temptation to view the daily email tip as "the" Challenge. The Challenge is doing all three elements (nixing negativity, practicing praise, and doing acts of kindness), regardless of whether someone follows the optional e-mail hints.*

**Remind them:** *We all will mess up. And when we make mistakes (and realize them!), we begin to change. Saying "I'm sorry" when needed is often the first step to healing a relationship. If participants can share about their Challenge on social media without*

*alerting their person to what they are doing, encourage participants to share, seek advice, and read what others have learned, using #JoinKindness.com*

- Read Chapter 7**, Practice Praise/Overcoming Ten Tricky Traps, of *The Kindness Challenge*.
- Take the online Negativity Profile**-[http://app.jointhekindness-challenge.com/assessments/negativity\\_profile](http://app.jointhekindness-challenge.com/assessments/negativity_profile)
- Begin journaling.** As you begin the 30-Day Kindness Challenge, jot notes daily about what you did and any observations (bring each week for reference). Also, begin working on your gift journal.

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.*

- Ephesians 4:29 (NASB)



*When we nix the negative, we get greater peace  
and more purpose.  
-- Shaunti Feldhahn, The Kindness Challenge*



# Practicing Praise

Every day, find one positive thing that you can sincerely praise or affirm about your person and tell them, and tell someone else.

## LOOKING BACK

### 30-Day Kindness Challenge Check-In

Congratulations on completing your first week of the 30-Day Kindness Challenge! The Challenge this week was likely a roller coaster – sometimes it probably felt easy and fun, other times quite impossible!

**FACILITATOR:** *As your group shares about their experience, remember that some people will have had a great time while others will be angry and/or want to quit. Encourage everyone to stick with their commitment. Immediately encourage participants to help each other by empathizing (one type of kindness!) and by sharing ideas as they go. (“Has anyone faced a situation like Natalie described? Any advice?”) Set that expectation early, for the whole study.*

1. Have your eyes been opened to any blind spots? For example, ways you were more negative than you realized – or not nearly as positive? Share one, and how you plan to address it.

**FACILITATOR:** *Note that throughout this study, asking participants, “Can you share an example?” will create one of THE most important tools of learning. Examples create “aha moments” that move someone from theory into seeing how something works in practice.*

2. Did you identify any specific negativity patterns that you see in yourself? (Did you complete the online Negativity Assessment that came in one of the daily emails this week?) If so, what specific actions are you taking to turn that negative pattern into a positive one?

3. Have you remembered to log your observations in your personal notebook or device? What patterns do you see about what works well for you – and what doesn't?

## LOOKING IN

In Chapter 7 we learned that we do not praise as often as we think we do. We also learned that praise has maximum impact when shared with the person and others.

1. Which of the ten tricky praise traps do you encounter most? Have you been able to identify some ways to overcome it?

2. Why is sharing praise about your person to someone else so important?

**FACILITATOR:** *Participants need to become aware that every time they say positive or negative words they reinforce that thought in their own mind. That's one main reason why Proverbs 18:21 says “The tongue has the power of life or death.”*

3. There's an old saying (author unknown) that says, “How you make others feel about themselves, says a lot about you.” Why do you think that is true?

## IN THE NEWS

Despite the negativity in today's media there are still plenty of stories praising others.

1. Think of a recent news or community story that affirmed someone who deserved it. What specifically were they being praised for? Their generosity? Perseverance? Winning? Is there something similar about your target that you can praise?

**FACILITATOR:** *You may choose to do a quick Internet search for some examples prior to your meeting.*

2. If you were to write an affirming news headline about your kindness target, what would it be?

3. If you've had a difficult relationship with your person, does giving praise feel like “letting them off the hook?” How can you overcome that concern to give praise anyway – and what might happen when you do?

WATCH VIDEO for Session 3  
[jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources](http://jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources)

## FAITH FOCUS

An attitude of praise flows out of a grateful heart. And sometimes we're not grateful because we were expecting one thing – but got something else. Sometimes, we don't have a right view of others, God or even ourselves. But when we better align our expectations, we can be more grateful. When we are more grateful, we can more readily see what can be praised. Consider these scriptures:

*Kind words are like honey- sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.*  
-Proverbs 16:24 (NLT)

*"... Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?"  
In all this Job did not sin with his lips."* -Job 2:10 (NASB)

*As Jesus continued on toward Jerusalem, he reached the border between Galilee and Samaria. As he entered a village there, ten men with leprosy stood at a distance, crying out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" He looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed of their leprosy. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, came back to Jesus, shouting, "Praise God!" He fell to the ground at Jesus' feet, thanking him for what he had done. This man was a Samaritan. Jesus asked, "Didn't I heal ten men? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" And Jesus said to the man, "Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you."* -Luke 17:11-19 (NLT)

1. Do you think we subconsciously expect only good from God in this life, and not adversity? Why is that? Is that an expectation we should adjust?

2. In the account of the ten lepers, note that only the Samaritan (who was often looked down on by others) came back with gratitude. The writer of this gospel appears to be emphasizing that the Samaritan probably felt the most unworthy of being healed by the Messiah.

a) Do you think the other nine didn't come back because they felt they deserved the healing? Or for some other reason?

**FACILITATOR:** Help your group look for those other reasons. (e.g. Maybe it isn't "I deserve this" but "I am so excited, and look how my life will change!"...Which means I'm immediately thinking about myself, and forgetting gratitude.

b) Have you ever fallen into that same trap?

**FACILITATOR:** We often discount what someone does for us because we don't know what it costs them, feel that it is our due, or feel that what they do is 'just their job.' Once we realize just how much we

*deserve judgment from God and get grace instead – and how much that grace cost Him -- we develop humility and gratitude. And we bring that to our relationships with others.*

3. Who specifically does the Samaritan praise? Do you think he shared the same praise when he told others of his healing? What might this say about what God wants from us when He answers our prayers?

4. Among the Israelites, honey was not only a sweetener but a medicine. What can you find to praise in your person that would act as a medicine, with healing properties to them, and why?

5. Psychologists say we need at least five affirmations for every one corrective comment. How can you include praise even when you need to communicate a correction – even when you're legitimately upset?

## LOOKING FORWARD

- Keep up the 30-Day Kindness Challenge:** Don't forget to focus on the three elements of kindness, not just the daily tips!
- Read Chapter 4** (Kindness in Practice), of *The Kindness Challenge*.
- Take your online Praise Profile assessment-** [http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/praise\\_profile](http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/praise_profile)
- Journal and record your observations.** If you are compiling a gift journal, be sure to write your daily notes of praise. Also, continue to log actions and observations in your personal notebook to help you identify what is most meaningful to your person.

**FACILITATOR:** *If anyone is struggling with the challenge, be sure to encourage them. Also, if they haven't been recording their observations, remind them that doing so and reviewing what they saw will be very helpful for learning. Cheer them on!*

*The practice of praise is very satisfying.*

*It is also the catalyst of kindness.*

*-- Shaunti Feldhahn, The Kindness Challenge*

*People will rarely work at their maximum potential under criticism, but honest appreciation brings out their best.*

*-- Dale Carnegie*



# Carry Out Kindness (Generosity)

Every day, do a small act of kindness or generosity for your person.

## LOOKING BACK

### 30-Day Kindness Challenge Check-In

Congratulations on completing your second week of the 30-Day Kindness Challenge! You are at the half-way mark!

1. How was your week and what did you learn through the Challenge? Last week, we learned about the obstacles to praise. Which obstacles did you find yourself needing to overcome this week? Did you notice any patterns for when praise was either easier or more difficult?
2. What is an example of how you either succeeded at practicing praise when you might not have otherwise, or how you missed the mark, and what did you learn as a result?
3. Have you noticed any trends yet? (These will be easiest to identify if you are using a personal notebook to log your observations.) If not, it's still early.
4. If you completed the Praise Profile Assessment, what was the most meaningful or surprising discovery about yourself from the results?

## LOOKING IN

This week's reading assignment, **Chapter 8: Carry Out Kindness**, tells us about the 8 types of generosity.

1. Of the 8 types of generosity, which comes more naturally to you or do you find yourself doing most often? Which are most challenging?

**FACILITATOR:** *This is an important question, because it also reminds participants that "generosity" means many things beyond money.*

2. Looking forward to this upcoming week, what are some new ways to show generosity that will be most meaningful and impactful to your person?

3. What are some steps that you can take this week to be more successful/intentional in these challenging areas?

4. Giving others our undivided attention can be one of our most meaningful acts of generosity. How specifically can you make someone feel worthy of your undivided attention -- even if they are interrupting you?

## IN THE NEWS

There are many examples of incredible generosity through the ages. Life-changing acts such as Oskar Schindler and Corrie Ten Boom risking their lives to help to save Jewish families during World War II. Or families who have forgiven those who perpetrated terrible crimes against their loved ones. Or even touching moments like competing 2016 Olympic 5000 meter runners, Nikki Hamblin of New Zealand and Abbey D'Agostino of the United States, who stopped to help each other finish their qualifying race after falling.

1. Can you think of any recent news story - local, national, or global -- about someone who demonstrated the power of generosity?

**FACILITATOR:** *You may wish to do some quick research on this question prior to your meeting.*

2. What do you think was their motivation -- and what was the impact (not just on others, but on them)?

3. What specifically can we learn about the power of generosity from that example? What might you do differently as a result?

## FAITH FOCUS

Meaningful generosity is not “just” the giving of something. True generosity is the act of giving up something precious to us without expectation of anything in return.

*<sup>41</sup> Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. <sup>42</sup> But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. <sup>43</sup> Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. <sup>44</sup> They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”*

*- Mark 12:41-44 (NIV)*

Can't you just picture this widow as she places her meager coins in the box? While we do not know for certain, she likely did so with her head low, eyes downcast, and her ragged clothing drawn as close to her as possible, trying her best to not draw attention to herself. And then who notices? Can't you just hear the joy and pleasure in his voice as Jesus says, “this poor widow has given more than anyone else!”

1. Why is the act of someone who has almost nothing giving a little more impactful than someone who has abundance giving a lot?

What does that mean for US as we engage in acts of generosity or kindness each day?

**FACILITATOR:** *Be sure that your group understands that sacrificial giving signals that you care a lot for the recipient. In the widow's case, she cares for God.*

2. Can you remember a time when someone was generous towards you in a way that you knew was a great sacrifice on their part? Or maybe they gave something that might have been a *little* thing for them, but it was important for you? Or perhaps they withheld a just penalty or consequence that you deserved? How did that event affect you at the time?

a) *How did that event affect you at the time?*

b) *Looking back, can you trace any longer-term impact that resulted from that generous action?*

**FACILITATOR:** *You may want to have an example from your life to share, to stimulate others' thinking about this question.*

## LOOKING FORWARD

### Keep up the 30-Day Kindness Challenge

Don't forget the three components: nix the negativity, practice praise, and this week's emphasis to carry out kindness through generosity.

### Read Chapter 4, Kindness In Practice, of *The Kindness Challenge*

### Take the online assessment to identify your [Generosity Profile](http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/generosity_profile)- [http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/generosity\\_profile](http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/generosity_profile).

### Continue journaling. Jot notes daily in your personal notebook about what you did and any observations. Bring it each week to refer to when needed.

**FACILITATOR:** *Encourage participants to review their personal observations notebook and think through what they can learn from them. If they haven't journaled, encourage them to begin now.*

### Don't forget to work on your gift journal - it's a gift of time, and thoughtfulness.

*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things? Romans 8:32*

*As we do these little acts of kindness, we not only make an impact on that person in the moment, but we also send the vital message that someone cares.*

*-- Shaunti Feldhahn*



# Kindness in Practice

Put it to work! Kindness must be a habit to become a lifestyle.

You are close to the home stretch!

## LOOKING BACK

1. How was your week, and what did you learn through the Challenge?
2. Last week, we learned about the importance of generosity. What did you find most challenging to give sacrificially? Your time? Money? Favorite snack? When you did so, did you notice anything different in you?
3. Which of the eight types of generosity comes naturally to you? Which did you try to apply this week?
4. If you completed the online Generosity Profile assessment what did you discover about yourself?

**WATCH VIDEO for Session 5**  
[jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources](http://jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources)

## LOOKING IN

Chapter 4 of *The Kindness Challenge* (Kindness in Practice), explores the eight principals of how kindness works in practice. For example: Kindness doesn't happen naturally and if you aren't purposeful, it's likely that your default when irritated may not be kindness! Another example is "What you think in your mind is going to come out of your mouth!"

1. Share an example of how you've seen a specific principle in action so far. What did you learn from that?

2. Do you think that using or applying the kindness principles is a skill just like any other skill? Thinking back to where you were when you started, which area do you think you have most improved?

3. Which principle(s) are still most difficult for you to apply? Why? What would help you improve?

## IN THE NEWS

### *A Pause in Politics?*

**FACILITATOR:** *Before you begin, set expectations so everyone knows this discussion is on the topic of kindness, not politics. Ask everyone to reserve discussions about their political opinions for after the session is over. Keep your group focused on the elements of kindness and un-kindness.*

2016 was a challenging presidential election year with unprecedented personally-negative rhetoric by many candidates and voters. Yet during the October 9, 2016 presidential debate, an undecided voter asked each candidate to name one positive thing that they respect in one another. For a moment, those attacks turned to a seemingly sincere exchange.

1. Did that short exchange change anything, in any way? If so, what does that say about any ability (or responsibility) we have to bring change and combat unkindness?

**FACILITATOR:** *The candidates had to pause all the negativity and find something positive- because one person asked them to do so. Help your group see that kindness sometimes means intervening to help yourself and others find the good in the other person.*

2. After the answers were given, one candidate seemed suspicious that a compliment was actually a compliment. And some observers were suspicious of the motives of whichever candidate they didn't support. How does consistent negativity about someone change our view of that person's motives? And does consistent non-negativity work in reverse?

**FACILITATOR:** *Remind participants that suspicion is one of the seven types of negativity. And if a participant says something like, "Well, of course, that candidate didn't really mean the nice thing they said," that participant has just demonstrated a sneaky but classic type of suspicion. We often make assumptions and interpret what someone has said based on our opinion of them. If we think positively about someone, we tend to accept what they say and believe they are sincere. If not, we often don't. Further, if someone is consistently negative toward us, we may (under-*

*standably) be suspicious even when they say or do something truly kind. And they do the same towards us. But a purposeful effort to see what is praiseworthy will help us see them and their words and actions more clearly.*

3. In your own life, does your view of someone's intentions ever change how you respond to them? Is there any way to correctly discern someone's intentions? How can we avoid incorrectly assuming negative motives and instead respond in a productive way?

### A Polite Parking Lot?

In surveys, fast-food chain Chick-fil-a is credited with creating a "culture of kindness" in their customer service. Yet that culture has also been observed among customers. Observers have noticed instances in which multiple cars in long drive-through lines backed up and scooted over to avoid blocking the path or parking of other cars. Customers often ask other customers, "Were you in front of me? Go ahead."

1. Does the Chick-fil-A "culture of kindness" spill over to customers? Or are people attracted to that chain already more likely to be kind? Or something else?
2. When have you observed kindness being contagious, causing others to be kinder, too?
3. Within your sphere of influence, where would applying intentional kindness most likely be contagious and spread to others you don't know?

### FAITH FOCUS

In Ephesians 4:32 (NASB), Paul instructs us to "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."

1. Has your sense of what "being kind to one another" means changed during the past few weeks? If so, how?

**FACILITATOR:** *The hope is that people no longer think of kindness as just actions, but words and thoughts as well.*

2. Why do you think Paul included the need to forgive each other in his instruction to be kind ?

3. Is there someone that you need to forgive of something? Take a moment and privately reflect on this question. Then, make a plan to

express that forgiveness to whomever needs to hear it. Share with the group if appropriate.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us an even more challenging command:

*Do to others as you would like them to do to you. "If you love only those who love you, why should you get credit for that?...And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you get credit? Even sinners do that much! And if you lend money only to those who can repay you, why should you get credit? Even sinners will lend to other sinners for a full return. "Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. Then your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will truly be acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate.*

-Luke 6:31-36 (NLT)

It is difficult to be kind consistently. It is even more difficult to be kind to a difficult person who is not kind to you.

1. When you deal with a challenging person, what specifically can you do to extend the same mercy, grace, kindness and forgiveness that God extends to us?

2. Are there any times you shouldn't be kind to your "enemies?"

3. If possible, share one example of a time when you either were or were not able to "love your enemies" in this way. What did you learn from that?

**FACILITATOR:** *Forgiveness and kindness are interrelated. If you need to forgive someone but find it hard, targeted kindness is the way to get there. It softens your heart so you can feel more empathy and appreciation for that person, which then improves your ability to like and care about them. And that then makes it easier to forgive! That said, some people can say or do all the right things, but if they purposefully hold on to unforgiveness in their thoughts and emotions (for example, by mentally rehearsing how the other person wronged them), their "kind" words or actions may not have the impact they want. For true relationship reconciliation, we must learn to forgive. One doesn't need to feel kind to act kind...but one does need to be sincerely willing - or at least be willing to be willing!*

## LOOKING FORWARD

- This is your final week of the 30-Day Kindness Challenge!**  
Finish strong as you continue to nix the negativity, practice praise, and carry out acts of generosity.
- Read Chapter 2, Kindness Is A Superpower, of *The Kindness Challenge*.**
- Continue journaling and begin planning how you will present your gift journal.**

Use #joinkindness to spread *The Kindness Challenge*, document your journey, and share advice with others!

*Do not let kindness and truth leave you; Bind them around your neck,  
Write them on the tablet of your heart.*  
-Proverbs 3:3 (NASB)

*Kindness - It has to be a habit. Otherwise it doesn't happen.*  
-Shaunti Feldhahn, *The Kindness Challenge*



# Kindness is a Superpower

A Little Kindness Goes A Long Way

**Congratulations! You are at the finish line for your 30-Day Kindness Challenge.** As you wrap up your final few days of the Challenge, finish strong. And celebrate!

## LOOKING BACK

During the past six weeks, you've become a student of kindness and learned that kindness is more than an occasional anonymous random act of generosity. You've learned about the components of kindness: nixing the negatives, practicing praise, and carrying out acts of generosity.

1. Who do you feel has changed more during this process: your person, or you? How?

2. If possible, give an example of a recent challenging situation (with your person or someone else) that you handled differently than you might have one month ago.

**FACILITATOR:** *Try to pull the answer to Question 2 and 3 out of every group member, even if it takes a longer time than normal. It is a crucial tool of encouragement. And it will subconsciously make everyone feel it is worth it to keep up with kindness once the 30 days are over.*

3. What have been some unexpected benefits that you have experienced through intentionally focusing on the three kindness components?

**WATCH VIDEO for Session 6**  
[jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources](http://jointhekindnesschallenge.com/resources)

## LOOKING IN

In Chapter 2, kindness is described as being a superpower. Its power to transform is unparalleled in social science. When we choose to employ the superpowers of kindness we can (among other things) melt through walls of contention, allow emotional "bullets" to bounce off of us, and have x-ray vision to see and understand what is going on inside

the other person.

1. Which superpower(s) have you experienced most directly as you have practiced kindness during the challenge? Give at least one specific example of that superpower in action.

2. All superheroes have an alter ego name and a superhero name. Now that you know which superpower(s) you are armed with, what should your superhero name be? (Trust us: you'll also learn something about yourself from trying to figure this out!)

3. Will kindness superpowers fade if they are not used? If so, how can you prevent that once the Challenge is over?

**FACILITATOR:** *It is crucial for participants to move from thinking about the 30 days to thinking about how to make purposeful kindness a lifestyle and a habit after the initiative is over.*

## IN THE NEWS

After the Challenge is over, both negative and positive news, social media, talk shows, memes and commentary will continue to be out there for your consumption.

1. Do you think it will be easy to slip back into more easily seeing the negative, and missing those things that are worthy of praise? How can you avoid that?

**FACILITATOR:** *Chapter 10 offers three Success Strategies you may want to review and suggest at this point.*

2. What is one specific thing you can and will continue to do to share kindness with others in your circle? Let us know your decision and share your success stories with us at #JoinKindness!

## FAITH FOCUS

*Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps*

*no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.*

- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (NLT)

The very first comparison in these cherished verses is that love equals kindness. When you show others kindness, you show them love. And when you show them true kindness, you are demonstrating Christ's love and showing what Christ truly wanted us to be: a light to the world. Not a people who judge, are mean, keep score of wrongs, or selfish, but a light to others.

1. Over these past weeks, have you experienced any "a-ha" moments and realized how you were actually showing love? Please consider sharing an example.

2. In what ways do you see kindness differently today than you did before?

3. Those cherished words in 1 Corinthians are actually words of rebuke to those who were not showing love in the way all of us should. Looking back, do you see ways you used to be unloving, that you feel now have fundamentally changed? How can you avoid going back to old patterns?

**FACILITATOR:** *Again, Chapter 10 of The Kindness Challenge offers three Success Strategies. As your group gives various ideas for how to avoid old patterns, please ensure that those three strategies are all touched upon. And if not, review them from Chapter 10.*

Now, read the last sentence of the passage above. If love is kind and love never gives up, then neither does kindness. During the 30-Day Kindness Challenge, most of us are creating new patterns to replace old habits years in the making - which may have included some very challenging situations. Healing broken marriages, transforming contentious relationships, eliminating tension, or reaching the heart of someone who has become withdrawn doesn't always change in two weeks, or even thirty days. When you encounter those hard moments, perseverance will be needed. Chapter 10 (Ready, Set, Change: Kindness For Life) provides ideas on how to keep going when the going gets tough.

**FACILITATOR:** *Jesus commanded us to love and be kind to everyone (even difficult people!). Encourage your members to stop and pray (asking God to enable them to love the difficult person like He does) when they face a challenge with a difficult person.*

4. After the official Challenge is over, what is one specific thing that you will commit to do to continue to demonstrate God's unconditional kindness and love to others?

5. When it gets tough, which strategy do you think will most help you to persevere? (Gratitude? Encouraging signals? Celebrating responses?)

## LOOKING FORWARD

- Be sure to finish strong during your last few remaining days and begin implementing your plan to make kindness a lifelong habit. If you need help, check out Chapter 10 of The Kindness Challenge for success strategy suggestions.
- Complete your online [Post-Challenge Kindness Quotient assessment](http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/kindness-quotient) - <http://app.jointhekindnesschallenge.com/assessments/kindness-quotient> to identify your kindness progress!
- Make your final entries and add your finishing touches to your gift journal. Present the journal and enjoy. Share a pic
- Celebrate! And be sure to share your success stories and even pictures of your gift journal and recipient using #JoinKindness!

*"...whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."*

- Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

*Remember: Nothing changes if nothing changes.  
Kindness not only has the power to change the other person*

*- It has the power to change you.*

*- Shaunti Feldhahn*

*In the end, it just feels better to be kind.  
-A 30-Day Kindness Challenge Participant*