

What's in this section of Compassion in Action?

1. Explore the meaning of kindness and compassion
2. Lists of ways to put kindness and compassion into action
3. Power of Love in Action Worksheet

### **What is kindness and compassion and how can we encourage it?**

Kindness is a behavior that stems from an attitude of compassion and empathy for the “other.” It relies on one’s feelings of self-worth and self-love. It is very challenging to be kind to anyone else when you cannot be kind to yourself. Kindness and compassion are similar in that they are both related to having sympathy for something or someone else. Or as a more contemporary phrase puts it;

*To be able to stand in someone else's shoes.*

The word *kindness*, related to *kind*, comes from c. 1300 Old English *kyndnes* and used to mean “courtesy, noble deed” and related to *kind*, meaning “kind deeds: kind feelings: quality or habit of being kind.” The root of *kindness* – *kind* meant “friendly, deliberately doing good to others,” originally “with the feeling of relatives for each other.”

Kindness is behavior that recognizes we are all related. Whether it is the kindness one shows to family, friends or even strangers and nature, they are all ways we recognize and honor that we are all connected. That is the essential story of PIE. When we serve PIE to nourish life we recognize that all things are related, which helps us to recognize who we are.

Beginning on page 7 in the **PIE Workbook** is a section entitled, “Compassion: More Than Just Words.” There is a tool for having conversations between anyone (parent/child) that could nurture the best chance for compassion to emerge. It offers many ways to show encouragement and how to encourage others.

In this resource section we offer different ways to show compassion. From these lists you can select ways you would like to be treated that shows kindness and compassion. Use these lists in the same way we recommend using the “101 Compassionate Ways to Encourage.” Review the lists and ask yourself, “What could people do or say that shows me compassion and kindness?” Do this as a family and share your answers with each other. Then encourage each other to show kindness which leads to more kindness.

At a time when the traditional structures of caring have deteriorated, schools must become places where teachers and students live together, talk with each other, take delight in each other's company. *My guess is that when schools focus on what really matters in life, the cognitive ends we now pursue so painfully and artificially will be achieved somewhat more naturally...* It is obvious that children will work harder and do things -- even odd things like adding fractions -- for people they love and trust.

Nel Noddings

There is a Law that man should love his neighbor as himself. In a few hundred years it should be as natural to mankind as breathing or the upright gait; but if he does not learn it he must perish.

Alfred Adler  
Austrian psychoanalyst (1870-1937)

Children must have at least one person who believes in them. It could be a counselor, a teacher, a preacher, a friend. It could be you. You never know when a little love, a little support, will plant a small seed of hope.

Marian Wright Edelman