

## Speaking and Listening – Discussion

### Random Act of Kindness or Basic Courtesy? 2

A **random act of kindness** is a helpful act which you do because you want to, not because you have to, and which comes at some personal cost to yourself. **Basic courtesy**, on the other hand, means doing something that you know you should do to get along with other people.

Work with a partner or small group. Read each sentence and decide which group it belongs to: random act of kindness or basic courtesy. Discuss your reasons. Why could each act be required?

Which random acts of kindness do you perform? Which will you start doing? Why? Which would you never do? Why not? Do you always behave with basic courtesy towards others? Why? / Why not?

1. Compliment your partner on how good they look – even if you don't mean it.
2. Befriend a new colleague at work and show them the ropes.
3. Buy toys for the patients at a children's ward at Christmas time.
4. Spend quality time chatting and reading with your children.
5. Make somebody laugh out loud.
6. Feed the birds in the park every day.
7. Make your partner breakfast in bed on their birthday.
8. Keep your pet fed, watered, clean, exercised, and happy.
9. Give more effort at work than you need to – because you want to.
10. Develop your patience 'muscle'.
11. Make your partner breakfast in bed when they're not expecting it.
12. Do what you need to do on time and with good humour.
13. Help other people with their homework.
14. Turn off the taps while brushing your teeth.
15. Make a donation to a good cause, then volunteer to help.
16. Compliment five people you meet every day.
17. Don't look down at your phone while walking on the pavement.
18. Be polite. Smile more. Say hello to people you know.
19. Let another driver merge ahead of you in traffic.
20. Wash the dirty mugs in the sink at work – even when it's not your turn.
21. Stop and think before writing that angry reply on social media.
22. Send a handwritten note to your friend or family member instead of an email.
23. Start a savings account for your child or a neighbour's child.
24. Make a conscious effort to stop gossiping.
25. Give an extra 20% effort when you are tired and want to rest.
26. Call your mother or grandma more often.
27. Spend time making a playlist of your favourite music for your partner.
28. Thank the people who help you – the bus driver, the cleaner, the shop assistant, etc.
29. Offer to help your elderly or infirm neighbour with their overgrown garden for free.
30. Don't walk into people in the street – let them pass you.

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*Answers may vary. Sample answers:*

*Random acts of kindness:*

2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 20, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29.

*Basic courtesy:*

1, 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 21, 24, 26, 28, 30.

*Definitions:*

*Random acts of kindness are:*

- *premeditated or spontaneous*
- *single acts or regular acts*
- *designed to help people in need, who you know or perhaps do not know*
- *charitable and altruistic*
- *acts that cost you something, for example: your time, your money, your effort*
- *acts that you do voluntarily – you choose to do them*
- *acts which may not have negative consequences for you if you don't do them*
- *acts from which you derive no benefit apart from the pleasure of helping other people*

*Basic courtesy means:*

- *doing what you know to be the right thing – all the time*
- *doing your duty – what you have previously agreed to do*
- *perhaps doing an unpleasant task which you do not want to do*
- *doing something which has to be done – if it is not done there could be negative consequences for you or somebody else*
- *doing things because it is your turn to do them, even though it may be inconvenient to you*
- *being disciplined, dependable, reliable, responsible, supportive, and empathetic*