

25 Ways to Help a Fellow Human Being Today

“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.” - Dalai Lama

Too often the trend in our society is for people to be separated from either other, to be cut off from the great mass of humanity, and in doing so to be dehumanized a little bit more with each step.

Cars have taken us off the streets, where we used to greet each other and stop to chat. Cubicles have taken away a bit of the humanity in working, as have factories and even computers to some extent. Television has planted us firmly in our living rooms, instead of out with other people. Even movie theaters, where many people get together, cut us off from true conversation because we're staring at a big screen.

And while I'm not railing against any of these inventions (except perhaps the cubicle), what we must guard against is the tendency of that individuality to have us focused on ourselves to the exclusion of our fellow human beings. The tendency towards selfishness rather than giving, on helping ourselves rather than helping our brothers and sisters in humanity.

I'm not saying we're all like that, but it can happen, if we're not careful.

So strike back against the selfishness and greed of our modern world, and help out a fellow human being today. Not next month, but today.

Helping a fellow human being, while it can be inconvenient, has a few humble advantages:

1. It makes you feel better about yourself;
2. It connects you with another person, at least for a moment, if not for life;
3. It improves the life of another, at least a little;
4. It makes the world a better place, one little step at a time;
5. And if that kindness is passed on, it can multiply, and multiply.

So take just a few minutes today, and do a kindness for another person. It can be something small or the start of something big. Ask them to pay it forward. Put a smile on someone's face.

Don't know where to start? Here's an extremely incomplete list, just to get you thinking — I'm sure you can come up with thousands more if you think about it.

1. **Smile and be friendly.** Sometimes a simple little thing like this can put a smile and warm feeling in someone else's heart, and make their day a little better. They might then do the same for others.
2. **Call a charity to volunteer.** You don't have to go to a soup kitchen today. Just look up the number, make the call, and make an appointment to volunteer sometime in the next month. It can be whatever charity you like. Volunteering is one of the most amazing things you can do.
3. **Donate something you don't use.** Or a whole box of something. Drop them off at a charity — others can put your clutter to good use.
4. **Make a donation.** There are lots of ways to donate to charities online, or in your local community. Instead of buying yourself a new gadget or outfit, spend that money in a more positive way.
5. **Redirect gifts.** Instead of having people give you birthday or Christmas gifts, ask them to donate gifts or money to a certain charity.
6. **Stop to help.** The next time you see someone pulled over with a flat tire, or somehow in need of help, stop and ask how you can help. Sometimes all they need is a push, or the use of your cell phone.
7. **Teach.** Take the time to teach someone a skill you know. This could be teaching your grandma to use email, teaching your child to ride a bike, teaching your co-worker a valuable computer skill, teaching your spouse how to clean the darn toilet. OK, that last one doesn't count.
8. **Comfort someone in grief.** Often a hug, a helpful hand, a kind word, a listening ear, will go a long way when someone has lost a loved one or suffered some similar loss or tragedy.
9. **Help them take action.** If someone in grief seems to be lost and doesn't know what to do, help them do something. It could be making funeral arrangements, it could be making a doctor's appointment, and it could be making phone calls. Don't do it all yourself — let them take action too, because it helps in the healing process.

10. **Buy food for a homeless person.** Cash is often a bad idea if it's going to be used for drugs, but buying a sandwich and chips or something like that is a good gesture. Be respectful and friendly.
11. **Lend your ear.** Often someone who is sad, depressed, angry, or frustrated just needs someone who will listen. Venting and talking through an issue is a huge help.
12. **Help someone on the edge.** If someone is suicidal, urge them to get help. If they don't, call a suicide hotline or doctor yourself to get advice.
13. **Help someone get active.** A person in your life who wants to get healthy might need a helping hand — offer to go walking or running together, to join a gym together. Once they get started, it can have profound effects.
14. **Do a chore.** Something small or big, like cleaning up or washing a car or doing the dishes or cutting a lawn.
15. **Give a massage.** Only when appropriate of course. But a massage can go a long way to making someone feel better.
16. **Send a nice email.** Just a quick note telling someone how much you appreciate them, or how proud you are of them, or just saying thank you for something they did.
17. **Show appreciation, publicly.** Praising someone on a blog, in front of coworkers, in front of family, or in some other public way, is a great way to make them feel better about themselves.
18. **Donate food.** Clean out your cupboard of canned goods, or buy a couple bags of groceries, and donate them to a homeless shelter.
19. **Just be there.** When someone you know is in need, sometimes it's just good to be there. Sit with them. Talk. Help out if you can.
20. **Be patient.** Sometimes people can have difficulty understanding things, or learning to do something right. Learn to be patient with them.
21. **Tutor a child.** This might be difficult to do today, but often parents can't afford to hire a tutor for their child in need of help. Call a school and volunteer your tutoring services.

22. **Create a care package.** Soup, reading material, tea, chocolate ... anything you think the person might need or enjoy. Good for someone who is sick or otherwise in need of a pick-me-up.
23. **Lend your voice.** Often the powerless, the homeless, the neglected in our world need someone to speak up for them. You don't have to take on that cause by yourself, but join others in signing a petition, speaking up a council meeting, writing letters, and otherwise making a need heard.
24. **Offer to babysit.** Sometimes parents need a break. If a friend or other loved one in your life doesn't get that chance very often, call them and offer to babysit sometime. Set up an appointment. It can make a big difference.
25. **Love.** Simply finding ways to express your love to others, whether it be your partner, child, other family member, friend, co-worker, or a complete stranger ... just express your love. A hug, a kind word, spending time, showing little kindnesses, being friendly ... it all matters more than you know.

*“How far that little candle throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a weary world.”*
- William Shakespeare

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