

Good Deeds

When is the last time you did something nice for someone for no reason at all? Performing [random acts of kindness](#) has been shown to have immense benefits for the one performing them and of course for the person you are helping. In the movie *Pay It Forward*, a middle school boy has a class assignment where the teacher challenges the students to come up with something that will change the world. The young boy decides to randomly do good deeds for complete strangers and then they would do the same. In these troubled times this is an incredibly refreshing idea.

In the book *The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others*, the author [Allan Luks](#), shares some significant findings of his research:

1. Helping others contributes to the maintenance of good health and can diminish the effect of minor and serious psychological and physical diseases and disorders.
2. The rush of [euphoria](#) often referred to as a “helper’s high” after performing a kind act involves physical sensations and the release of the body’s natural painkillers, the [endorphins](#). The initial rush is followed by a longer period of calm and improved emotional well-being.
3. The health benefits and sense of well-being return for hours or days whenever the helping act is remembered.
4. Stress related health problems improve after performing kind acts. Helping others:
 - Reverses feelings of depression.
 - Supplies social contact.
 - Reduces feelings of hostility and isolation that can cause stress, overeating, ulcers, etc.
 - Decreases the constriction in the lungs that leads to asthma attacks.
5. Helping can enhance feelings of [joyfulness](#), emotional resilience, and vigor, and can reduce the unhealthy sense of isolation.
6. The awareness and intensity of physical pain can decrease.
7. Attitudes such as chronic hostility that negatively arouse and damage the body are reduced.
8. A sense of self-worth, greater happiness, and [optimism](#) is increased, and feelings of helplessness and depression are decreased.
9. When we establish an “affiliative connection” with someone (a relationship of friendship, love, or some sort of positive bonding), we feel emotions that can strengthen the immune system.
10. Caring for strangers leads to immense immune and healing benefits.
11. Regular club attendance, volunteering, entertaining, or faith group attendance is the [happiness](#) equivalent of getting a college degree, or more than doubling your income.

Refreshing indeed. Hopefully this brightens your day.