



A KINDER APPROACH TO RETURNING KINDNESS



- As we step into this giving season, our foundation would like to encourage you to extend your gratitude beyond your near and dear and to a land in dire need. :)

Polarized societies and conflicts over dwindling resources highlight the deep instinct for self-preservation that drives human behaviour. In our constant struggle to secure survival, it becomes nearly impossible to notice the silent cries of the cracking land or the clouds that no longer weep but burn as they spiral into darkness..

KINDNESS

Kindness is often considered straightforward—be kind, and kindness will return. Yet, reality is rarely so simple. 86% of us are more likely to repeat prosocial behaviours when we receive immediate positive feedback, to reassure ourselves that we are part of a broader social order, and our contributions have meaning. In human interactions, validation is almost immediate; a smile, a nod, or a word of thanks. These sensory responses are the proof that we hold on to. However, kindness towards nature defies this familiar pattern. The response is slow, subtle, and often beyond our perception. Nonetheless, acts of kindness toward the natural world ripple outward, sustaining ecosystems in ways that aren't immediately visible.

EMPATHY

Empathy, central to human relationships, emerges instinctively in response to emotional expression. Our minds, without much consent, connect sensory cues to our own experiences of joy, sorrow, or pain, sparking recognition. This process of empathy doesn't need to be formally taught; society realized long ago that empathy is necessary to end the 'eye for an eye' way of life. Without it, human civilization may have unravelled long before now. Empathy is, in many ways, a social construct designed to keep us from collapsing into conflict.

A KINDNESS BEYOND HUMANS

We easily anthropomorphize inanimate objects—naming our devices, giving them personalities, and feeling genuine concern when they hit the ground. This emotional attachment stems from our dependency on

them. But what about the solitary tree, quietly sustaining life around it? Do we empathize with nature as we do with people or pets? So what happens when you try to extend empathy beyond people and objects, to nature itself?

Kindness toward nature requires a different kind of empathy. One not triggered by obvious signs of need but by understanding our deeper connection to the environment that sustains us.

The natural world operates on a timeline far removed from our desire for instant gratification. You plant a tree today, and there's no applause. Clear out a polluted river and the water stays murky for days before it settles. Nature's way of "thanking" you is incredibly subtle. So subtle in fact that because of our ignorance and acknowledgment today, the generations to follow will suffer. Tune in and you'll watch a Christopher Nolan movie unfold right in front of you, with 25% of Earth's biodiversity—predicted to be wiped out within the next decade.

Yes, the gratification takes time and we should've been kinder sooner but we were blinded by abundance and overconsumption.

Take ecological succession as a more cohesive example, the gradual rebuilding of ecosystems after disruption. A forest doesn't regenerate overnight. A single tree may take decades to reach maturity. The wildlife and plant life that depend on this ecosystem return slowly, as the intricate balance of nature restores itself. When you plant a sapling, it may seem like a small, isolated act. Yet, you are contributing to an ongoing, larger cycle of life that connects you to the Earth's slow and deliberate rhythms. Look at it this way; we are not a product of the big bang, we are the ongoing process and it will change your perception towards the source of your existence.



Your green thumb may not show its full impact in your lifetime, but it will nurture and grow, absorbing carbon, providing shelter for invertebrates and playing its role in the ecosystem. The effects of that action will extend far beyond the present, impacting generations of invertebrates. It is through these small, incremental acts of kindness that the environment continues to thrive and sustain life

WE ARE SET TO LOOSE 50%

of the planet's oxygen-producing capacity within a century.

The United Nations Environment Programme reports that forests absorb about 2.6 billion tons of CO₂ each year. But this process is slow and requires sustained effort. Reforesting 1.5 billion hectares of degraded land could absorb up to 205 gigatons of carbon over time. These numbers show the enormous potential impact of long-term environmental kindness, even if the results aren't immediate.

Historically, kindness within human communities has served to strengthen social bonds and improve our collective chances of survival. Kindness has long functioned as a social currency—enriching relationships and building trust. When extended to nature, kindness is not transactional. It is generative, part of the ongoing processes that allow life itself to flourish [the use of this word is arguably no longer apt].

It's not going to be easy to override these default setting of instant gratification. But if the otters are able to hold hands and cats can bring you little carcass themed gifts, it wouldn't hurt you to give back, would it?

