

The Well



PRACTICING KINDNESS

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Kindness is more than just our actions, it's a quality we can cultivate in our spirit. And it's deeply connected to our wellbeing. Psychology Today provides ways we can practice being kind to others, and to ourselves:

Kindness for ourselves

- **Reflect on how you treat and talk to yourself.** Are you gentle and understanding? Are you positive and supportive? Do you have compassion for yourself as you go through life's challenges?
- **Use kinder language:** See if you can give yourself the same kind of support and encouragement you'd give to a friend, loved one, or even your younger self if you had the chance. If you notice a negative thought or story you have about yourself, practice reframing your thinking to build self-worth, instead of beating yourself up about it.
- **Give yourself permission to rest:** There are times for effort, and there are times for rest. Both are important in our lives. Watch for signs that you need a break and take the rest you need to replenish your body and emotional reserves.
- **Get back to basics:** In addition to rest, take care of your body with nutritious food and regular movement. Notice how you feel when you've provided for your most basic needs.
- **Practice mindfulness and gratitude:** Noticing our thoughts and feelings without judging them is a way to practice mindfulness and kindness. It helps us be present in the moment, and helps us appreciate details we might otherwise miss. Gratitude increases our empathy and compassion when we practice it, in turn making us more likely to act with kindness.

BENEFITS OF KINDNESS



Research shows kindness is good for our health and the health of our communities. Practicing it:

- Boosts happiness and production of feel-good hormones (serotonin, dopamine and oxytocin) that bring us satisfaction.
- Fosters feelings of belonging and strengthens our social ties.
- Increases self-esteem, empathy and compassion.
- Impacts our nervous system in a positive way, reducing our blood pressure and cortisol levels.
- Inspires others to practice kindness too.

For more information and resources, visit psychologytoday.com/us/blog/everyday-resilience and psychologytoday.com

Kindness for others

- **Practice the basics:** The things we learned in kindergarten still apply. Mind your manners, take turns, and offer comfort to others who are hurting. Small things can make a big difference.
- **Show gratitude:** Express your gratitude for the people and things that uplift you. Send a thank you note to a coworker, friend, or business owner who helps or inspires you. Call, text or even send a letter to a loved one to tell them how much you value them and the difference they've made in your life.
- **Listen to understand:** Being present is one of the most impactful forms of kindness we can show each other. When we listen to understand, instead of to respond or problem-solve, the other person feels cared for and heard.

CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATIONS



When we disagree on issues, it can be hard to have constructive discussions. But oftentimes, it's the only way we can find solutions. That's why civil discourse is so important.

Civics for Life says civil discourse is a constructive dialogue in which people share the goal of getting clarity on each other's point of view. But what does it look like in action? They advise to:

- Start with the facts and base your interpretations on that.
- Speak in a calm and respectful tone of voice.
- Be clear and concise stating your views and avoid being aggressive. If you get interrupted, kindly ask to be able to finish sharing your thoughts.
- Ask your conversational partner for their thoughts when you're done speaking to show you're interested in their views.
- Listen to understand when your conversational partner is speaking. This means to listen quietly, openly, and attentively, and really think about the points that person is making.
- When it's your turn to speak again, react to and acknowledge your partner's points and offer new points that build on the conversation.
- Remember that we also communicate through facial expressions and body language.

For more information and resources, visit civicsforlife.org/what-is-civil-discourse



COPING WITH ELECTION ANXIETY

Our mental health and wellbeing should always be a priority. This is especially true in election years. If you find yourself getting overwhelmed with the constant stream of news and discussions, Lyra offers these tips to maintain a sense of balance:

- **Accept your feelings.** Practice being with your feelings and do your best to avoid judging them as good or bad. Instead, turn your attention to the thoughts and sensations that are present for you in the moment. See if you can feel where the tension is in your body and relax those parts.
- **Focus on what's in your control.** Turn your attention toward the things you can control, like your goals, self-care, and how you spend your time and energy.
- **Take meaningful action.** If disagreements or differing values from colleagues are a source of stress, volunteering for causes you care about or taking other meaningful action outside of work can help.
- **Take care of yourself, physically and mentally.** In stressful times, it's especially important to prioritize your wellbeing. Try to get enough physical activity and sleep, fuel yourself with nutritious food, and make time for the things that sustain you, like spending time with loved ones. Practice the self-care strategies that work for you and reach out for support from mental health professionals when needed.
- **Be aware of negative thought patterns.** Try to recognize when your thoughts are based in fear, and challenge these thought patterns. Take a minute to notice what you're feeling and name it. Remind yourself that you're resilient and you have handled challenges before.
- **Take a break from news & social media.** You might even consider a full digital detox for a day or part of a day.

For more information, visit lyrahealth.com/blog/political-anxiety

CURRIED BUTTERNUT SQUASH DIP



A healthy and delicious alternative to hummus that also works well for winter squash, pumpkin or sweet potatoes. **Makes 14 servings.**

Ingredients:

- 1 2-pound butternut squash
- 1 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 ¼ cups "lite" coconut milk
- 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh ginger
- 1 cup pepitas, toasted, plus more for garnish
- Zest of 1 lime
- ¼ cup lime juice
- 1 ½ tsp salt
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh cilantro

Directions:

Before you begin: Wash your hands.

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. Cut squash in half and remove seeds. Brush with oil and place cut-side down in a baking pan. Roast until tender, about 45 minutes. Let stand until cool enough to handle, then scoop out the squash.
3. Meanwhile, place curry powder and cumin in a small saucepan over medium-low heat; stir until fragrant, 2 to 4 minutes. Add coconut milk and ginger; bring to a boil over high heat. Adjust heat to maintain a simmer and simmer, stirring frequently, until reduced to about 3/4 cup, 13 to 15 minutes.
4. Process pepitas in a food processor until finely ground. Add the squash, the coconut milk mixture, lime zest, lime juice and salt; process, scraping down the sides once or twice, until smooth. Refrigerate until cold, about 2 hours. Serve sprinkled with cilantro and pepitas, if desired.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Serving Size: 1/4 cup per serving

Calories	58
Fat	3g
Saturated Fat	1g
Carbohydrates	8g
Fiber	2g
Protein	2g
Sodium	257mg
Sugar	1g
Calcium	21mg
Vitamin A	4104IU
Vitamin C	8mg
Folate	8mcg
Magnesium	24mg
Potassium	156mg