The power of kindness: 
The Unexpected Benefits of Leading a Compassionate Life
by Piero Ferrucci

Piero Ferrucci is an Italian philosopher and practicing psychotherapist. In *the power of kindness*, Ferrucci defines genuine kindness as a “strong, genuine, warm way of being”. It is never calculating and is not motivated by self-interest. Its sole incentive is “the desire to help, the pleasure of being generous and attentive to other people’s lives.” It derives its purpose from itself.

He submits that while we tend to focus on robberies, murders and such like, it is the qualities of care, solidarity and mutual service—kindness in action—which are ever present in our daily lives. Integral to the flow of our moment-by-moment existence, these qualities are so embedded in daily events that we do not even notice them. They form the glue that holds our collective and individual lives together, keeping them running smoothly. Kindness brings to both the giver and receiver of acts of kindness, joy and satisfaction.

This position is supported by scientific studies which show that it is beneficial to receive as well as to give kindness. The recipient of kindness feels he has been heard, seen, understood, and nourished; his life is all the better for the experience. The giver of kindness does not walk away empty-handed either. Kind people are found to be healthier, more productive, better equipped to face life’s unexpected challenges, and live more fulfilling and interesting lives.

Ferrucci argues that “if we are healthier when we are caring, empathetic, and open to others, it means we are born to be kind.” Doing anything other than this is therefore detrimental, not only to our existence, but to that of all others. Listen to Ferrucci as he puts forth a strong argument for taking a closer look at kindness:

“…kindness is a way of making less effort. It is the most economic attitude there is, because it saves us much energy that we might otherwise waste in suspicion, worry, resentment, manipulation, or unnecessary defense. It is an attitude that, by eliminating the inessential, brings us back to the simplicity of being.

Kindness has to do with what is tenderest and most intimate in us. It is an aspect of our nature that we often do not express fully—especially men in our culture, but also women—because we are afraid that if this vulnerable side comes to light, we might suffer, be offended, ridiculed, or exploited. We will find, rather, that we suffer by not expressing it.” pg. 9.

He sees kindness as “…the result of the interplay among several qualities, such as warmth, trust, patience, loyalty, gratitude…” among others. In *the power of kindness*, as he examines these eighteen qualities, he lays bare the richness and depravity of human nature, but always the possibilities if we let go of ourselves and become more concerned about the other.
A personal favorite is the quality of “warmth”. It is found in the sense of touch, as well as in sound—soothing healing hands, and calming, reassuring voices—reassurances that we are seen, known and appreciated. Without each, our lives become more impersonal, less meaningful. At the end of the day we realize that we cannot live without the warmth and closeness of others. It is the place where we come to know not only others, but more importantly come to know ourselves.

Denise L. Peroune is the editor at FIRST READS and a brand and positioning guide at SFI.