

Do Good Deeds do us any Good?

Good deeds – do they benefit the benefactor?

How things have changed since my adolescent years in the late 60's.

It was the time of the baby-boomers. Elvis Presley, Woodstock, Bob Dylan and the Beatles. We smoked pot, went to discos, wore long hair, saw the first landing on the moon, jived and twisted and made love not war.

It was a great time to be alive. Life was simple, crime was less and a friend was someone you spoke to face to face.

Technology has changed it all. It's made the world smaller and faster and more convenient, but we now surf the net, text messages, take selfies and have friends come over to stare at their phones.

Our more convenient lifestyle has distanced us from family and friends. Remember the good old Sunday lunches and family get-togethers.

We have created a false mind-set of live and let live, *but just don't invade my space*. Research has shown that in the last 10 years our empathy levels have spiraled drastically downwards while narcissism has radically increased (*Personality and Social Psychology Review August 2010*). Good deeds are strictly for boys scouts and girl guides.

Ours is not a time to be in need of sufferance or charity, because quite frankly, but for a few, nobody cares. Everything is about money and material possessions and a great intolerance towards those who don't have, be it health or wealth.

Looking at the world around us it's often very hard to make sense of it all. It would be so much easier to simply surrender to all the depravity and misery, but thankfully there is still a lot of good out there. No matter how insignificant or futile it might appear, if every day each one of us spread just a little kindness and did a few good deeds, we can make the empathy graph turn back in favor of humanity.

Latest research shows that doing good can significantly boost your health. Psychologists call it '*helper's high*', after the pleasant

feeling experienced when doing an act of charity.

Turns out these warm-and-fuzzy feelings releases a hormone called **oxytocin**. Often referred to as the love hormone, cuddle chemical or moral molecule, **oxytocin** creates feelings of closeness or bliss, like when snuggling up to a significant other. These feel good moments is what's good for the heart, fights harmful free radicals and reduces inflammation.

The great thing is that random acts of kindness are not all about **big deeds and lots of money**. A kind word, a simple compliment or a get well card to lift someone's spirit. You don't have to change the world. The smallest thing can brighten someone's day *and bring you your daily dose of health and joy at the same time*.

Here's some wise words from Mother Teresa: *'If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one'*.

It was her philosophy. It was how she wrought great change in the world, **one step at a time**.

Here's to good deeds, good feelings and good health!

'till next time, but until then your comments are welcomed.

Steve

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