

## *Worried you're not kind?*

Would you rather eat an insect than walk up to a stranger and compliment them? Ever seen someone with a "free hugs" t-shirt and thought "No way I'd ever do that!". Ever felt guilty when the grocery store cashier asks you to round up for a worthy charity at checkout and you say no?

Reacting in these ways may have you thinking that you **don't like** to be kind to strangers (in the huggy way) or you have no idea **how** to be kind without feeling awkward or embarrassing yourself.

These scenarios are much more common than you think. But kindness is good, right? Then why do I feel so bad about it? The good news is that you can do something about that! For a concept so widely considered positive, it can actually be hard to be kind. It can even generate feelings of shame or doubt if you aren't aware of your "Kindness Voice".

Simply put, your **Kindness Voice (KV)** is an assessment that reveals how **you** specifically will be most comfortable expressing your kindness to others. It explains how you instinctually respond or act in situations where you are inspired or feel compelled to be kind. Awkward Be Gone! Kindness On!

The idea for Kindness Voices was born after witnessing participants on Kindness Quests having a difficult time because they were either trying to offer kindness in ways that didn't feel comfortable for them or were offering kindness in a way that was not well received. What was supposed to be a fun activity, for some, turned out not to be. Nina almost had a panic attack when people didn't want the flowers she was trying to give them. Steve broke out in a sweat when trying to pen inspirational notes to be left anonymously. They were sure they were doing something "wrong" when they encountered this discomfort. Through this reflection we came to realize that everyone has a Kindness Voice that allows them to express kindness in a manner that is authentic and within their comfort zone. Understanding the KVs can help you better match your Kindness giving style (voice) with someone else's receiving style.

There are 6 Kindness Voices (KVs) that have been identified: **tactile, verbal, written, material, creative and helpful**. Being the complex humans we are, no one speaks with only one Voice. It is important, though, to know which KVs are more dominant for you. Knowing this helps you unlock that potential and share your own unique voice with those you encounter every day.



## *Tactile*

Your instinct is to express your kindness through physical contact—hugs, hand holding, touching the shoulder, offering your arm to somebody needing help, or even comfortable extended eye contact. Your desire is to physically connect with others, even briefly. There can also be an element of wanting to physically shield or protect someone.



## *Verbal*

Your instinct is to express kindness out loud by speaking and interacting with others through compliments, gratitude, or any kind spoken sentiment. Your desire is to express your positive thoughts or feelings and connect with the recipient in real time through conversation.



## *Written*

Your instinct is to express kindness through writing - notes, letters, emails, texts, cards, positive reviews online. Your desire is to express yourself in a way that goes beyond the current moment. This can be accomplished both anonymously or with the recipient knowing the giver. Things that are written can be kept and savored.



## *Material*

Your instinct is to share resources that you have—it is not limited to giving money. Donating “things” clothes, food, frequent flyer miles, even time is a resource that can be shared. Your desire is to express kindness through generously sharing what you have in order to meet a need for another.



## *Helpful*

Your instinct is to give assistance to others based on a current or anticipated need—offering to return a grocery cart, helping somebody struggling with heavy bags, getting up to give somebody your seat on public transit. Your desire is to express kindness by offering assistance that will help make someone's immediate or future situation easier.



## *Creative*

Your instinct is to express kindness through creation—this could take a physical form: drawing, painting, arts and crafts, or something to be experienced like a dance or song. Your desire is to express kindness in a way that often, but not always, transcends words and seeks to create a connection through some expression of artistry.