



THE KINDNESS CIRCLE

Ancient Practices of Beautiful People

24 GEMS TO REVIVE

Small, timeless habits — each one easy to begin today, profound enough to change a life.



PRINCIPLE ONE

Self Kindness

1

Your soul has rights — rest is not laziness

A companion was so devoted to others that he neglected his own body and rest entirely. A wise elder corrected him firmly: your body has a right over you. Your soul has a right over you. Your family has a right over you. Give everyone their due. Self-depletion is not virtue — the person who runs empty serves no one well.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Your body has a right over you, your soul has a right over you." — Bukhari

2

The one-third rule — eating as self-respect

One of the most precise and ahead-of-its-time teachings on wellbeing: fill one third with food, one third with water, leave one third for breath. Not a diet — a relationship with the body built on respect. Modern nutritionists have arrived at this exact wisdom 1,400 years later.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"One third for food, one third for drink, one third for air." — Tirmidhi

3

Look at yourself and wish yourself well

There is a practice of looking at your own reflection and saying a quiet wish: "May my character be as beautiful as my form." Not vanity — a moment of conscious inner aspiration. In a world where the mirror triggers criticism, turning it into a moment of gentle self-encouragement is quietly radical.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"O Allah, as You made my appearance good, make my

4

Seize five windows before they close

One of the most piercing teachings on living fully: use your youth before old age; your health before illness; your wealth before poverty; your free time before life fills it; and your life before death takes it. Not morbid — a passionate invitation to live now, while you still can.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Take advantage of five before five: youth, health,



PRINCIPLE TWO

Kindness in Words

1

Never complain about what is given to you

He never — not once — complained about food. If he liked it, he ate. If he didn't, he simply left it in silence. No grimace. No comment. No making the person who cooked feel small. In a world where complaints about food and daily life fill our conversations like background noise, this chosen silence is perhaps the most countercultural kindness of all.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"He never complained about food. If he liked it he ate; if not, he left it." — Bukhari & Muslim

2

Thank people aloud — it is the root of all gratitude

A striking teaching: whoever does not thank people has not truly been grateful at all. Gratitude that stays inside is incomplete. The habit of saying thank you — out loud, specifically, to the actual person — is not just politeness. It is described as the foundation of a grateful life, and it is astonishingly easy to revive.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Whoever does not thank people has not truly been grateful." — Abu Dawud

4

3

Speak good — or let silence be your gift

Before you speak — especially in a tense moment — ask: will this add light, or heat? If the answer is heat, silence is the kinder choice. This filter, practised by thoughtful people across centuries, transforms reactive words into intentional ones. In an age of instant reactions and hot takes, the pause before speech is a lost art worth reclaiming.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

Suppress unnecessary sounds in shared spaces

An almost comically specific teaching — and yet quietly beautiful. When you sneeze, cover your mouth and suppress the sound. The logic: the comfort of those around you matters enough to absorb a little of your own involuntary noise. In open-plan spaces and shared homes, this small habit is the very essence of consideration.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"When he sneezed, he covered his mouth and suppressed the sound." — Abu Dawud & Tirmidhi



PRINCIPLE THREE

Kindness in Thoughts

1

Seek seventy reasons before settling on one bad one

Before your mind settles on a negative interpretation of someone's behaviour, deliberately seek a charitable explanation. The tradition says: find seventy excuses for your fellow human being. Most people are not being unkind — they are distracted, exhausted, or carrying something invisible. Suspicion manufactures enemies from friends. Charitable thought is always a door.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Beware of suspicion — for suspicion is the most false of speech." — Bukhari & Muslim

2

Wish well for others when they are not there

Silently wishing good for someone in their absence transforms you as much as it serves them. You simply cannot hold ill feeling toward a person you are truly wishing well. A genuine hope in your heart for a friend, a difficult person, a stranger — this secret act of inner generosity is among the most quietly powerful habits a person can cultivate.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"The supplication of a person for their fellow in their absence is answered." — Muslim

3

4

Be truly glad when others receive good

Among the more demanding teachings: when someone near you receives good fortune or recognition — be happy for them. Not merely tolerant of their happiness. Genuinely glad. This is the inner work of kindness — training your heart to celebrate what goes to others rather than quietly resenting it. In a culture built on comparison, this is a revolution of the mind.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Do not envy one another." — Bukhari & Muslim

Guard against the three thoughts that quietly corrode

Ancient wisdom identifies three inner states that destroy relationships without us noticing: suspicion of others, obsessively scanning for people's faults, and envy of what others have. They travel together and reinforce each other. Noticing when any of the three arises — and consciously choosing otherwise — is one of the most sophisticated forms of inner kindness.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Do not spy on each other. Do not seek out each other's faults. Do not envy one another." — Bukhari & Muslim



PRINCIPLE FOUR

Kindness in Action

1

The smile as a conscious act of giving

A genuine smile offered to another person is a complete act of charity — freely given, costing nothing, impossible to fake without it becoming real. We smile at screens far more than at faces now. To offer a warm, unhurried smile to the cashier, the stranger, the colleague in the corridor, is to give something genuinely real and irreplaceable.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Your smile at your fellow person is charity." — Tirmidhi

2

Give a small unexpected gift — it plants love

There is a direct teaching: exchanging gifts generates love between people. Not grand gestures for occasions — a piece of fruit, a small thing noticed and given on an ordinary Tuesday. The act says: I was thinking of you when you weren't there. Few things generate warmth between people as reliably as the spontaneous, unrequested small gift.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Give each other gifts and you will love each other." — Al-Adab Al-Mufrad (Bukhari)

3

Show up in person when someone is unwell

Among the most powerful and most forgotten of human obligations: when someone is sick, go to them. Not a text. Not a heart emoji on their post. Go. Sit with them. The tradition places visiting the ill among the highest duties one person owes another — regardless of background or belief. Physical presence when someone is vulnerable is irreplaceable.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Visit the sick." — Bukhari. He visited his neighbour's sick child, regardless of faith. — Bukhari

4

Remove harm from the shared path

Picking up something harmful from a road — sharp glass, a branch, a piece of litter — is counted as a complete and beautiful moral act. You benefit people you will never meet. You ask nothing in return. You leave the shared world slightly better than you found it. In an age when we walk past harm because it "isn't ours," this is quietly revolutionary.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Removing harm from the road is charity." — Bukhari & Muslim



PRINCIPLE FIVE

Kindness to Strangers

1

The two qualities of truly beautiful people

When asked what the best human qualities are, the answer was disarmingly simple: feed people, and greet those you know and those you do not know. Not grand scholarship or achievement. Feed others. Greet strangers. These two acts are offered as the summit of what it means to live well. It is almost an affront to how complicated we have made goodness.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Feed people, and greet those you know and those you do not know." — Bukhari

2

Cook more — and share with whoever is near

A beautifully practical instruction: when you make a stew, add more water to the broth and share some with your neighbours. The logic is simple — you are already cooking, they are already near. The only thing required is a slight expansion of the pot and an intention that stretches beyond your own table. No charity needed. Just a bigger pot.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"When you cook a stew, add more water and share it with your neighbours." — Muslim

3

4

Your neighbour extends further than you think

When scholars asked how far a neighbour extends, the answer was striking: forty houses in front, behind, left, and right. A neighbour is not just the person next door — it is the entire fabric of people woven around your daily life. The obligation of neighbourliness was so earnestly repeated that the teacher felt he would be told to make neighbours heirs.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Jibril kept urging kindness to neighbours until I thought they would be made heirs." — Bukhari & Muslim

Honour the guest as though they are a gift

Genuine welcome means: phone face down, full attention given, something warm offered. The guest should leave feeling truly received — not tolerated between your other tasks. Even a glass of water given with full presence is hospitality in the deepest sense. The visitor is not an interruption — they are an opportunity for generosity.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Whoever believes in goodness, let him honour his guest." — Bukhari & Muslim



PRINCIPLE SIX

Kindness to Nature

1

Plant something — a gift to those you'll never meet

If you plant a tree and a bird, an animal, or a person eats from it — even long after you are gone — that act continues to be counted as goodness on your behalf. The ultimate long game of kindness: shade and fruit for strangers not yet born. Even a pot of herbs on a windowsill carries this beautiful spirit of giving forward.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"If a Muslim plants a tree and any creature eats from it, it is charity for him." — Bukhari & Muslim

2

Treat water as precious — even beside a river

Do not waste water, even if you are standing beside a flowing river. In an age of taps left running, this principle feels almost subversive. But it holds a profound truth: water is not ours, it is borrowed. And how we treat what is borrowed says everything about who we are and what we believe about the world we share.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Do not waste water, even if you are at a flowing river." — Ibn Majah

Give water to a thirsty creature — even when it costs you

A man, exhausted and thirsty himself, climbs back down into a well and carries water in his sock — held in his teeth — for a dying dog he has never seen before. For this act, witnessed by no one but the sky, he was forgiven everything. The companions were stunned: "Are we rewarded for animals too?" "In every living creature there is a reward."

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"Allah forgave him for giving water to the dog. In every living creature there is a reward." — Bukhari & Muslim

Never destroy what has not harmed you

A prophet once burned a colony of ants because a single ant had bitten him. He was immediately rebuked: one ant bit you — so you destroy an entire community? The lesson is precise and timeless. Before we damage, destroy, or discard any living thing — the question is always: has this actually harmed me, or am I simply irritated? Nature is not ours to punish.

THE ANCIENT TEACHING

"One ant bit you — so you destroy a whole nation that glorifies its Creator?" — Bukhari & Muslim



THE KINDNESS CIRCLE

"The best of deeds are those done consistently, even if they are small."