

Random Acts of Kindness

by Dete Meserve and Rachel Greco



1. In *Random Acts of Kindness*, the Layaway Angel Cathy O’Grady says about her acts of kindness: “I get back more out of it than they do. I come to life.” Think back about something you’ve done for others. How did you feel? Did you get back more than you gave?
2. Writer Peter Reynolds says, “There’s more good than bad in this world. More light than darkness and you can make more light.” Do you think this is true in your own life? How can you find ways to make this be true for you?
3. In *Random Acts of Kindness*, teen Max Loughan says he “wants to make the world a better place” through his inventions. Do you think it takes big inventions or big acts of kindness to make the world a better place? If not, what are small, everyday things you can do to make change?
4. Research shows that we may be “hardwired for good,” which explains why some people feel “joy” or “lit up” when they help others. Have you seen this to be true in yourself? In others?
5. According to the Jewish philosopher and scholar Maimonides, the second highest form of charity is anonymously giving to another person so that you don’t know his identity and he does not know yours. Why is anonymity important in helping others? Are there times when it’s valuable for the recipient to know the identity of his benefactor?
6. In the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), both the Priest and a Levite saw a beaten man at the side of the road and “passed on the other side.” Only the Samaritan stopped and bandaged the man’s wounds and took care of him. What are times in our own lives where we have been more like the Priest or Levite and why? What are times in our lives when we’ve been more like the Samaritan? What prevents us from being more like the Good Samaritan and how can we overcome those challenges?

7. When we think about helping others through *Random Acts of Kindness*, who are the people who need help? Beyond the homeless and the poor, who else should we and can we help?
8. A man on the street asked a father and his son to give him money so he could buy medicine for his kids. The son thought the man was lying and would surely buy alcohol with the money instead. But the father decided to give the man the money, saying, “whether he was lying or not says something about his character but hearing someone in need and choosing not to help when I have the means says something about mine.” What do you think about the father’s choice? Is it our responsibility to verify that our gifts of kindness are used according to our values? If so, then does this extend to other purchases and transactions in our lives?
9. In *Random Acts of Kindness*, the people behind Fill My Basket anonymously pay for groceries for people. Because they don’t know the people, they may sometimes pay for groceries for those who are not poor or needy. Yet they’ve discovered that even those who are financially okay also have worries, troubles, pain or suffering that are often unseen by others. What do you think of their approach of providing truly Random Acts of Kindness to strangers?