



Kindness, Plain and Simple, by David Copperfield

I believe in kindness. But it's hard to be kind. We're not trained for it. Kindness is for sissies; we learn that early. "Nice guys finish last." If they even get invited to the race. Kindness is taken for weakness, rube-ishness, stupidity. No one seems to respect the kind. They respect the killer. We're taught to value competitiveness, strength, cunning, Darwin. I work in the entertainment business, where kindness just never seems to be "in." It's not macho. It doesn't sell tickets. In the movies, the hero never kills the bad guy with kindness. But I believe Economics 101 is right. The value of a thing is determined by its scarcity. Which makes kindness spiritual gold. I am writing these words a few weeks after my father's death. [â€œ] For my father, being kind was natural. He had a gift for it. I have to really work at it. I love competing and winning, conquest -- not words you usually associate with kindness. As I became successful -- famous, even -- my father wasn't jealous. He basked in it. He and my mom came with me everywhere I toured. I'd always stop and introduce him to the audience, and he'd stand and bow. Afterwards, he'd sign autographs. I knew he loved getting the attention. Only recently did I understand that he loved giving attention as well. He loved the chance to be kind to the thousands of people who came up to him. He drew strength and vitality from that chance to be nice. The chance to learn that gift was, more than anything, his legacy to me. He showed me that kindness doesn't have to be dramatic. It can be very small. It's something that's not expected and that's offered absolutely gratis, no strings -- like an act of friendship. Now, the memories that hold the most peace for me are of kindness, of my dad offering it to strangers. With my dad's passing, I've resolved to make life more about those moments. My dad taught me that what you do counts. For me, that has to be about being kind, despite the odds. I believe in kindness, plain and simple.

-- David Copperfield