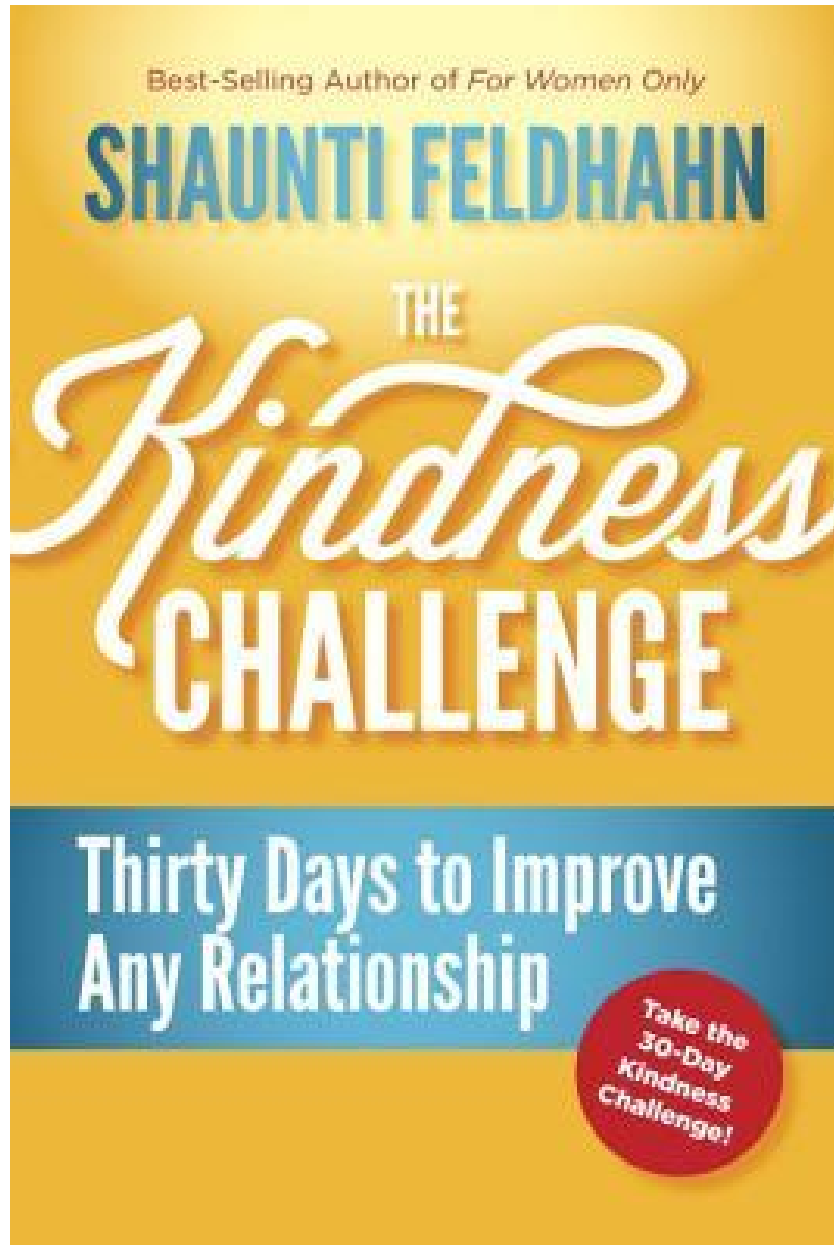


The Kindness Challenge: Thirty Days to Improve Any Relationship Book PDF Download



By:
Shaunti Feldhahn

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What people Say:

Paula Vince

This is just what the title says it is, a 30-Day Kindness Challenge, if you want it to be. And if you don't want to take part in anything quite that formal (I'm not a one-size-fits-all sort of person myself), there are tips, anecdotes, suggestions and stats all through the book which you can pick and choose from. I'll just mention some of the ones which stuck out most to me.

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One of the most common themes of my reading lately is that we have to watch our thought lives. It's what you put into your mind and focus on that will come out of your mouth. This book is no exception.

It seems many of us might live under the delusion that we are kinder people than we actually are. I can buy that. A few interesting stories indicate that we tend to be more reactive and irritable than we think we are. I'm probably guilty of that around my place at times (very rarely, lol), since family members may pick up on my grouchiness quicker than I even acknowledge it to myself.

Feldhahn talks about the argument that we may need to vent our spleen to let off steam. I'm sure we're all familiar with the line of reasoning. What's inside has to come out, or it festers and swells, and the person eventually bursts with all their repressed annoyances and complaints. That always sounded fair enough to me, but it does seem to contradict the idea that we should always make kindness a habit. I wondered how Shaunti Feldhahn would tackle it. Well, she believes that giving the grumbles head space in the first place is the main problem. Anything we choose to just shrug off and refuse to acknowledge doesn't grow bigger, but withers up and dies for lack of being fed. In other words, when it comes to kindness, 'Fake it til you make it' is a more suitable motto than, 'Better out than in.' It's an interesting view that I quite like.

She addresses the subject of sarcasm, and I was pleased that she distinguished between what she calls good-natured trash talk, and truly ill-natured remarks designed to hurt. It was more realistic sounding than advice to avoid sarcasm at all costs would have been, which I have come across before. My family would suffer if we were never allowed to use sarcasm. I've heard it called the lowest form of wit, but it does cheer us up at times, and defuse tense situations.

Now, can you criticise a book about kindness kindly? The thing with book reviewers is that we're open to finding new ways of not coming down too hard, but I did have a couple of gripes. My first is that are bullet points everywhere. I think there are even bullet points within bullet points. I actually like lists, but they get to a point where they lose their effectiveness and stop being memory tools, when we're inundated with them. And you don't necessarily even need them all. Some self-help books slide into condescension, and this had moments of heading in that direction. For example, do we really need a list of possible ways of giving praise to family members? Surely we know our own spouses and kids better than she does, and have enough imagination to come up with our own praise points.

Some of her points about praise were good though. Some people believe we shouldn't bother saying thanks to a person for things they're supposed to do, because it's their job. But I agree with Feldhahn, that when we do, it's like filling a fuel tank, and prevents those people feeling like they're being taken for granted. It's this sort of small consideration which might actually turn out to make an enormous difference. Overall, it's not a bad read which may make us realise we're not as kind as we thought we were, and offer tips to give us an edge in the art of kindness.

Thanks to Waterbrook Press and Blogging for Books for giving me a review copy through NetGalley

Brittany

We could probably all stand to be a little more kind to everyone. Although we might think we have the kindness thing under control, there is a chance we are slowly chipping away at our relationships without realizing what is happening.

In *The Kindness Challenge*, by Shaunti Feldhahn, she gives advice on how to improve any relationship in 30 days. The main premise is simplified in the title. All one needs to do is to be kind. It sounds easy, right? But this is precisely why the title contains the

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In *The Kindness Challenge*, by Shaunti Feldhahn, she gives advice on how to improve any relationship in 30 days. The main premise is simplified in the title. All one needs to do is to be kind. It sounds easy, right? But this is precisely why the title contains the word challenge. It can be a challenge for us to be kind to others for a myriad of reasons. Perhaps we don't think the person deserves our kindness, or maybe we have developed such a habit of negativity that they cannot imagine being positive. Either way, it is the lack of kindness that is detrimentally impacting the

relationship.

This book is not limited to romantic relationships, but offers advice for any relationship whether it be work or family. Feldhahn shares her research and delves deeper into the actions behind kindness. She shows how kindness might be manifested differently based upon a persons gender and age. This book also details the ways in which we might be unkind without realizing the negative impact our actions are having.

Feldhahn has a helpful approach to helping the reader realize their level of kindness and the areas where they can improve. At the end of the book she even gives three different versions of the 30 day challenge: one for husbands, one for wives, and one for general relationships.

I really enjoyed this book and felt as though it brought a lot of good information to light. It helped me realize the areas I need to work on. I would definitely recommend this book to those struggling in relationships.

Disclaimer: I received this book free through the Blogging for Books blogger program in exchange for my honest review.

Dana Kamstra

One of my favorite aspect of any book that Shaunti Feldhahn writes is that I can count on it being informative, applicable, and oh so practical. The Kindness Challenge is no different.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part pretty much focuses on what kindness means and a general overview of what kindness actually looks like. There was a lot of interesting points that were made in this section. Things like the fact that just being nice is not quite the same thing as being kind.

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were made in this section. Things like the fact that just being nice is not quite the same thing as being kind.

The second section of the book starts to move in on the more practical side of things. Shaunti points out seven types of negativity that many of us do without thinkingâ€¦ Some these are things like complaining or just having a negative attitude about something. She takes these ideas and show how they actually work against kindnessâ€¦ then of course there are explanations on why we should stop doing these things and the ways we can benefit from that. She also has chapters on ways we can practice kindnessâ€“one of which focuses solely on giving praise to others. Also, in this section, there is a chapter just for guys in regards to their wives.

Finally, the last section is based around the challenge itself. Thirty days of focusing on showing kindness to someone. There is a particular list of suggestions for each day for who you choose: Husbands doing the challenge for their wife, wives for their husband, or for doing the challenge for someone other than your spouse.

Overall, this book is practical, and even if you already think you are good at practicing kindness, I bet this book will point to areas where you could be doing better. Itâ€™s a fast book to read, with a lot of practical advice and statistics to support it. Iâ€™d highly recommend it.

I received a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review. All opinions expressed are my own.

Nathan Albright

[Note: This book was provided free of charge by Blogging For Books/Waterbrook. All thoughts and opinions are my own.]

I found this book surprising in a number of ways. In reading this book, I expected the sort of book that serves as the centerpiece for a Christan-oriented movie, where someone who happens to be a bit of a curmudgeon reaches a point of crisis where his or her negativity threatens a marriage and job and is challenged to be kind for thirty days and finds it changes their lives. While

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bit of a curmudgeon reaches a point of crisis where his or her negativity threatens a marriage and job and is challenged to be kind for thirty days and finds it changes their lives. While the book's tone and even the way in which the author wanted to lead a revolution of kindness to oppose the strident and ugly sort of public discourse that has become all too common is not surprising [1], what was surprising was the way in which the author opened up about her own struggles with social intelligence as a child and the way in which she sought to ground her advice in statistical data, with a large enough sample size to make the conclusions reasonably sound, although regrettably the author did not include the detailed crosstabs and statistical apparatus in this particular book for those of us who are most interested in data.

For the most part, the contents of this book are straightforward, and extremely ambitious in a good way. After a lot of comments in praise of the book at the beginning, which is usually the sign that the author is saying something provocative and wants the reader to see that a lot of people approve of the message beforehand, the book contains ten chapters and three parts. An introduction as to the importance of kindness leads into the first part of the book, where the author discusses why kindness matters, which contains five chapters on such topics as the surprising importance of a simple challenge, the immense power kindness has in influencing those around us, addressing concerns about kindness based on misunderstanding what it means, what kindness means in practice, and exposing the blindness many people have about their level of kindness. The second part of the book contains the book's remaining chapters, which amount to an altar call for people to take the kindness challenge, encouraging readers to get rid of 7 types of negativity in their treatment of others, overcoming ten tricky traps that prevent us from praising others as we ought, eight types of kindness to try, giving male readers an alternative challenge where the reader is encouraged to pay attention to their wives and really listen for fifteen minutes, and then seek to implement these principles for life. The end of the book consists of three different thirty-day plans, depending on whether the reader wishes to do it for a husband, a wife, or anyone.

In reading this book, I found myself in rather alarming amounts. I suspect many readers will find this to be true in reading this book as well. The author clearly belongs to the school of thought that urges upon those who view themselves as being wronged by the sins of others--whether that means a cheating spouse or someone who has hurt one deeply through abuse and ridicule. This is a writer who takes the biblical injunctions about seeking peace and goodwill for all extremely seriously, and who sees in a lack of kindness and a lack of anyone to accept being wronged as being responsible for the drastic decay in our social fabric at present. I can't say I blame her or disagree with her--I can certainly see myself as having some difficulties being kind to others, like my boss or like people with whom I am in serious and lasting disagreements, and I do not celebrate my own moments of irritation while dealing with people in my way, or the similar irritation and frustration and unkindness I see around me in the wreckage of broken relationships that one finds all around. I am not sure that I will take the kindness challenge myself, although there are certainly people in my life I could stand to be a lot more kind to. At least in the context of my life, the biggest issue I have with the book is the way that it places the burden of being kind on those who have suffered the most unkindness. Why should I have to be gracious to those who are ungracious to me, or kind to those who have been

unkind and abusive? No doubt many people feel the same way, which makes this a book likely to be more appreciated than practiced.

[1] See, for example:

Bonnie Arriola

It was very upbeat and positive; encouraging.