



On Kindness

Adam Phillips, Barbara Taylor

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Kindness is the foundation of the world's great religions and most-enduring philosophies. Why, then, does being kind feel so dangerous? If we crave kindness with such intensity, why is it a pleasure we often deny ourselves? And why—despite our longing—are we often suspicious when we are on the receiving end of it?

In this brilliant book, the eminent psychoanalyst Adam Phillips and the historian Barbara Taylor examine the pleasures and perils of kindness. Modern people have been taught to perceive ourselves as fundamentally antagonistic to one another, our motives self-seeking. Drawing on intellectual history, literature, psychoanalysis, and contemporary social theory, this book explains how and why we have chosen loneliness over connection. *On Kindness* argues that a life lived in instinctive, sympathetic identification with others is the one we should allow ourselves to live.

Bursting with often shocking insight, this brief and essential book will return to its readers what Marcus Aurelius declared was mankind's "greatest delight": the intense satisfactions of generosity and compassion.

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