

Kindness is like a muscle: something that we control and can grow.

“When you work the muscle, it gets stronger,” Gabriella van Rij shared during her talk at the Quad-Cities Campus on Aug. 30, 2018.

Her topic was Creating a Kindness Culture and the speech was part of the Club/Organization Fair that had a theme of Kindness Rocks!

Van Rij challenged attendees to exercise kindness at every opportunity, explored barriers we face that stop kindness, and offered advice.

Shyness and a hope that someone else will take the initiative to be kind are two things that can cause us to pause. Everyone thinking someone else will help leads to no one helping.



Gabriella van Rij, founder of the #DaretobeKind movement, spoke at the Black Hawk College Quad-Cities Campus on Aug. 30, 2018.

She also noted that there is a myth that kindness is weakness, but kindness actually takes strength.

If kindness was easy, everyone would just do it. Van Rij’s movement is called #DaretobeKind - A Global Movement.

This movement has a mission to reveal how kindness can be used in practical ways to build safer communities and healthier relationships.

Being patient with ourselves and others is one element of kindness. Sometimes, people do not consider being kind to themselves.

Van Rij said she had to learn how to be kind to herself. As a child, she thought, “If I was kind to myself, I am an egotistical maniac.”

Now she realizes the value of taking care of yourself, and said being kind to yourself is an important piece in the puzzle of being able to help others.

Listening is a simple but incredibly important way to be kind. Van Rij said we all want to be listened to, and when you listen to someone, do not interrupt them.



The theme of the Club & Organization Fair was Kindness Rocks! with attendees painting rocks. Keep an eye for these #BHCrocks around campus.

You also do not have to respond to a problem with a \$1 million answer. In fact, she said it is the biggest kindness to listen to someone without trying to fix anything.

Taking the time to really hear someone can make a huge impact.

Listening is just one way to master the kindness habit. Van Rij said really seeing people in your surroundings and acknowledging them are also key ways to practice kindness.

Walk into a room with your phone put away and notice the people there. Acknowledge others with eye contact, a smile or a nod and by using their names.

Using their name is a good way to show people they matter and to make them feel special.

It is also important to take that one moment to act. It takes courage to be the one to help someone, but if you do not stop to help there is a good chance no one else will, either.

Make time to say "Hi" to someone. Help someone pick up their books they dropped. Read someone's name tag, or ask for their name, and use it.

Taking action can make a big difference in someone else's day, and making it routine will help you master the kindness habit.

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