THE EMBER BOOKS

Book One of Six

KINDNESS

Kindness. Multiplies. Magic.

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HOW TO ENJOY THIS BOOK

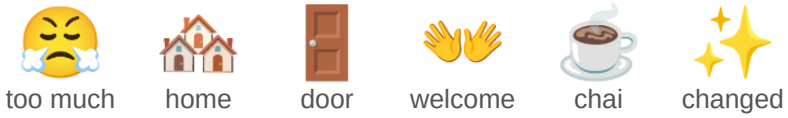
If you're little:
Look at the pictures. Colour them in with the special pen. Wipe them clean. Do it again. Point at the emojis. Say the words underneath them.

If you're bigger:
Read the words on the right out loud. Make them bounce. Rap them. Sing them. Try all three.

If you're a grown-up:
Read everything. Especially the bit at the bottom. That part is for you.

The pictures:
Each picture page is a see-through sheet. Colour it in with a dry-wipe marker, then hold it up to the window. Wipe it clean whenever you like and start again.

A street. A door. A boy who is Too Much.
A warm light inside. A silver tray with cups.



YOU CAN BE A LOT.

You were noisy and messy and hard to ignore,

You were too much for most people, most of the day.

Then a door opened wide and a voice said "Come in!"

And the world got a little bit kinder that way.

She made chai. She sat down. She just asked how you were.

Nothing big, nothing fancy, no lesson, no fuss.

Just a moment of warmth where there needn't have been —

The most quietly powerful thing. Just. Because.

You can be a lot. You were, back then — loud, fast, always slightly wrong-timed in a world that expected you to be quiet and neat. Most adults let you know. With their eyes, if not their words. Or a toot every now and again.

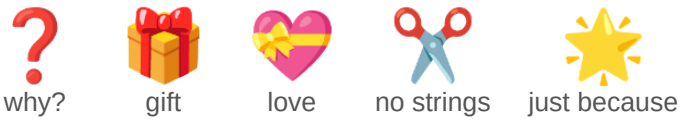
But she didn't.

There were three of you — you, your mate, and her son. She opened the door anyway. Brought everything out on a silver tray. Chai with boiled milk and pistachios. She asked questions and listened like your answer actually mattered.

That day you learned something it took years to put into words: *kindness doesn't wait for you to deserve it.* It just arrives. Like a door opening. Like chai you didn't ask for.

You've been that door for other people ever since. Even on the days you didn't realise it. And even when sometimes the door felt completely stuck.

A gift floating in the air.
No price tag. No strings. Just floating.



NO REASON. NO SCORE.

She didn't do it because you'd been good,

Or because you'd been quiet or done what you should.

She didn't do it to get something back —

She did it because that's just how she was brought up.

There's no star chart for kindness,

No score on the wall.

The best kind of kindness

Needs no reason at all.

Here's something that takes a while to learn: kindness isn't a reward.

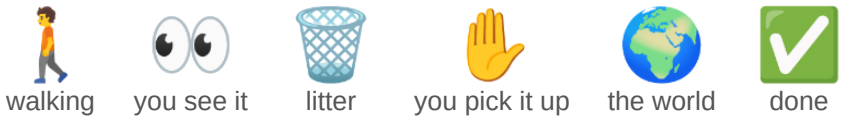
You can't earn it by behaving. You can't lose it by messing up. The people who raised her told her: *see someone, help someone.* That's it. That's the whole rule. Not: help the deserving ones. Not: help people who'll remember. Just: see someone.

She wasn't keeping score. She wasn't waiting to see if you deserved it first.

Most of us spend our whole lives trying to earn kindness from other people. Being good enough, quiet enough, useful enough. But kindness was never meant to be earned.

It was meant to be given. Freely. Just because.

A child bending down, picking up a wrapper.
The world watching. A tiny glow spreading out.



ONE SMALL THING.

There's a wrapper. Right there.

On the ground. In your way.

You could walk straight past,

like you've done every other day.

Or you pick it up.

Just you. Just this.

One small thing.

And the world gets better by one.

You didn't save anyone. You didn't make the news. Nobody saw.

But here's what nobody tells you about that moment: it's not about the litter.

In that moment — bending down, picking it up, putting it in the bin when nobody was watching — you had the chance to share something. A tiny bit of power. The power to make something better, right now, for everyone who walks past next.

That's what a superhero does. Not the cape. Not the laser eyes. Just: *I saw something that needed doing. I had the power to do it. So I did.*

In that moment, you were a superhero. Because you had the chance to share power with someone who didn't have any. And you took it.

You don't have to be a hero. You just have to pick up the wrapper.

A car letting another car in at a junction.
One driver waving. Both getting somewhere.

LET THEM GO FIRST.

The car that cuts in — you could beep and you could groan,

You could speed up to block them and send them away.

Or you breathe, and you wave them on through,

You'll get there. So will they. And they'll remember that day.

Hold the door. Let them past.

Wave the car in.

These are tiny, tiny things.

And they're also everything.

Nobody's going to give you a medal for letting someone in at the roundabout. Nobody's going to thank you for holding a door when your hands are full.

But they'll remember it. Maybe not consciously. Maybe just as a feeling — *that was kind.* And somewhere in their day, they'll pass it on without even knowing why.

That's the invisible thread. Every act of kindness ties someone to the next one. You don't see the chain. You just add a link.

And on the days when someone lets you in, when someone holds the door — you'll feel it. A tiny warmth. *Someone was kind to me today.*

That's the chain working. You're part of it already.

A stranger on a street, eyes down.
One person smiles. A small wave of warmth moving outward.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE CARRYING.

A stranger walks past with their eyes on the floor.

You don't know their name. You don't know their score.

You don't know if they're lonely,

you don't know if they're scared.

But a smile says: I see you.

And that says: somebody cared.

It costs nothing.

It weighs nothing at all.

But a smile at the right time

can stop someone from falling.

You don't know what someone's carrying. You can't see it.

The person who nearly knocked you over in the shop might have just heard the worst news of their life. The quiet kid in the corner might be drowning inside. The driver who cut you up might be rushing to a hospital.

You'll never know.

So give the smile anyway. Not because they deserve it. Not because you're in a brilliant mood. Because *you don't know*, and because it costs you nothing, and because on the day you were drowning — someone smiled at you and you still remember it now.

A smile says: *I see you. You're here. You matter.* That's a lot for something that takes half a second.

A chain of hands reaching back through time.
Four generations. The last hand reaching toward you.

KINDNESS IS PASSED ON.

Someone taught her.

Before that, someone taught them.

Before that, and before that,

all the way back to the start.

A chain of people choosing

to pass the good thing on —

now it's in your hands.

What do you do with it?

She didn't invent kindness. She was taught it. By her parents. By her community. By a way of seeing the world that said: *no one goes hungry if we can help it. No one suffers alone if we can help it.*

That teaching got passed to her. And the day she opened the door and made the chai, she passed it to someone else — a loud, messy, too-much kid who didn't know he needed it.

And now you're reading this. Which means the chain reaches you.

What you do with it — whether you practise it, whether you pass it on, whether you let it stop here or keep it going — that's your choice. Nobody can make it for you.

But now you know you're part of something that started long before you and will carry on long after. That's not a small thing.

A hundred tiny figures on a page,
each one doing one small thing.
The whole page beginning to glow.

EVERYONE. ONE THING. TODAY.

If everyone smiled at just one person today,

that's a lot of smiles.

If everyone picked up one piece of litter,

that's a lot of clean streets for miles.

If everyone let just one car go first,

that's a lot of less-angry days.

One percent.

Every day.

By everyone.

Adds up to everything, always.

Here's the maths. Improve by one percent every day — not in a gym, not in an exam, but in how you treat the world — and in a year you're not one percent better. You're thirty-seven times better. That's how compounding works.

Now imagine if everyone did it.

Not all at once. Not dramatically. Just — one small act, every day, that makes someone else's life one percent better. The person whose day you improve improves someone else's. The ripples go out and out and you never see where they end.

You don't have to change the world. You just have to change today. One thing. One percent. The world changes around you while you're not even looking.

A wall of spiky words flying toward a figure.
The figure standing still. Choosing not to throw them back.

WHEN THEY'RE NOT KIND TO YOU.

What about when someone's mean?

What about when they push?

What about when they don't care at all

and they hurt you? What then? What's enough?

You don't have to pretend it's fine.

You don't have to smile.

But you get to choose what you do next.

That's always, always yours.

This is the hard one. Nobody said it wasn't.

When someone is unkind to you — genuinely, deliberately unkind — you don't have to respond with kindness. You're not a doormat. You're allowed to feel hurt, angry, let down.

But here's the thing you get to decide: *what do you do next?*

Cruelty wants company. It wants you to pass it on — to take what it gave you and give it to the next person. And sometimes that's exactly what happens, without anyone choosing it, just a chain of small hurts moving through the world.

You can break the chain. Not by being a saint. Just by pausing. Just by not passing it on. That pause is one of the bravest things a person can do. Nobody will see it. But you'll know.

A garden. Some plants growing wild.
A hand planting something new, carefully.
A blank pot in the corner — what will you plant?

WHAT WERE YOU TAUGHT?

Some people were taught to share.

Some people were taught to fight.

Some people were taught to hold the door.

Some people were taught: just get yours. That's right.

But here's the good news —

and it's very good news:

You can always learn new things.

Any time you choose.

You didn't choose what you were taught when you were small. Nobody does.

And sometimes — especially if your brain works in ways nobody quite explained when you were little, if you were always too loud or too restless or too much — you might have grown up thinking there was something wrong with you.

There wasn't anything wrong with you. You just needed a different map. And nobody gave you one.

But here's what they don't always tell you: the garden doesn't stop there. You can plant new things. You can watch the people who leave a room feeling slightly better than when they walked in, and decide: *I want to be more like that.*

You are what you were taught. And you are also what you choose to learn next.

A mirror. A child looking in.
Seeing themselves — properly — for the first time.
(Simple features — any child should see themselves here.)

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

You've smiled at strangers.

You've held the door.

You've let the car in.

You've picked up the litter off the floor.

But when did you last

do something kind

for the person

looking back at you?

Here's the one most people skip.

You'll be generous with strangers. You'll go out of your way for friends. You'll hold the door for someone you've never met. And that's all real kindness.

But when's the last time you let yourself off the hook? When's the last time you spoke to yourself the way you'd speak to someone you love?

Most people are harder on themselves than they'd ever dare to be with anyone else. They call themselves stupid, hopeless, embarrassing — words they'd never say out loud to another person.

The kindness chain starts with you. If you run out of it for yourself, you've got nothing left to give anyone else. You deserve a door opened for you too. Especially by you.

Someone walking out of a front door, dressed exactly as they want, smiling.
The street carries on. The world doesn't end. The sun is out.

★ The outfit is completely blank. The child designs it. That IS the exercise. ★

YOU. RIGHT NOW. AS YOU ARE.

You don't have to be better.

You don't have to be different.

You don't have to be ready

or fixed or explained.

Walk out the door

exactly as you are —

and that can be

the kindest thing you've done today.

There was a day — there might still be days — when you wanted to wear something, say something, be something, and you didn't. Because you thought: *not yet. Not until I'm ready. Not until I'm sure they'll accept it.*

But here's what the door-opening, chai-making, no-reason-needed kind of kindness taught you: *you don't have to deserve it first.*

You are allowed to take up space as you are. To dress as you feel. To show up wearing exactly what makes you feel like yourself.

The day you walk out the door as yourself — fully, without apology — you will make the world better. Not because of what you're wearing. Because of the energy of someone who has finally stopped being unkind to themselves. That's contagious. That's just trying to be useful. One smile at a time. Starting with your own.

A clock. The hands pointing to NOW.
A small figure stepping forward.
One foot already out the door.
The world outside — any colour the child chooses.

ONE THING. TODAY. NOW.

You don't need a plan.

You don't need a sign.

You don't need permission.

You don't need the right time.

Pick up the wrapper.

Hold the door.

Smile at the stranger.

Just that. Nothing more.

And tomorrow, do it again.

And the day after that.

And watch what happens

to the world around you.

That's it. That's the whole book.

Not because kindness is simple — it isn't always. Not because it's easy — sometimes it's the hardest thing. But because the entry point is so low that literally anyone, any age, any day, can do one small thing.

Right now. Before you've even put the book down.

The world got a little worse, then a little better, then a little worse again — in a loop, forever — because of choices made by people like you. Not world leaders. Not heroes. Just people who decided, quietly, on an ordinary day, to be one percent kinder.

You're one of those people. You always have been. Welcome to the chain.

From a man who spent 30 years teaching people to see through each other's eyes — a book that does exactly that. No stage required.

For the child who needs to know they can.
For the adult who needs to remember they already do.

Believe in your dreams, it's important to try,
Be kind to yourself and others, don't be shy.
Helping people brings happiness and cheer,
We all face struggles, so lend an ear.

Find common ground, where love can grow,
Start with loving yourself and let your heart show.
Remember a hug is where friendship starts,
With love and kindness, you'll fill your heart.

The Ember Books — Book 1 of 6

1. Kindness · 2. Self-Belief · 3. Courage
4. Empathy · 5. Honesty · 6. Critical Thinking