

# Soulful Songs and Stories

With a song and your stories, we co-create a soft place for hard conversations and a brave space for personal and spiritual growth. Then **Magic** Happens.



#21: “K” is for kindness

Hi Soulful Song Lovers and Story Tellers,

“K is for Kindness,” Chris Jackson [https://youtu.be/Ne5u5O4nP\\_s?t=6](https://youtu.be/Ne5u5O4nP_s?t=6) I:51

“Everyday Heroes,” Aloe Blacc <https://youtu.be/BODaog7pU5M> I:48

“Kindness,” Naomi Shihab Nye

Before you know what kindness really is  
you must lose things,  
feel the future dissolve in a moment  
like salt in a weakened broth.  
What you held in your hand,  
what you counted and carefully saved,  
all this must go so you know  
how desolate the landscape can be  
between the regions of kindness.  
How you ride and ride  
thinking the bus will never stop,  
the passengers eating maize and chicken  
will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of  
kindness,  
you must travel where the Indian in a  
white poncho  
lies dead by the side of the road.  
You must see how this could be you,  
how he too was someone  
who journeyed through the night with plans

and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest  
thing inside,  
you must know sorrow as the other deepest  
thing.

You must wake up with sorrow.  
You must speak to it till your voice  
catches the thread of all sorrows  
and you see the size of the cloth.  
Then it is only kindness that makes sense  
anymore,  
only kindness that ties your shoes  
and sends you out into the day to gaze at  
bread,

only kindness that raises its head  
from the crowd of the world to say  
It is I you have been looking for,  
and then goes with you everywhere  
like a shadow or a friend.

<https://youtu.be/8UF3NolGSHg?t=5>  
<https://poets.org/poem/kindness>

**“I’m Gonna Walk It With You,” Brian Claflin & Ellie Grace/  
Jamet Pittman & Mo Glazman** <https://youtu.be/9L7LyzuNc1C?t=17> 3:31

**“Small Kindnesses,” Danusha Laméris** (excerpt)

We have so little of each other, now. So far  
from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange.  
What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these  
fleeting temples we make together when we say, “Here,  
have my seat,” “Go ahead—you first,” “I like your hat.”  
—from *Healing the Divide: Poems of Kindness and Connection*, 2019

**Kindness in a supermarket checkout line.**

About 1:30 in the morning on January 20, 2022 I woke up from a sound sleep with a horrendous pain in my right leg. The only position in which the pain was lessened was sitting. Ibuprofen helped. When I went to the doctor, anything life-threatening, like a blood clot, was ruled out; I was prescribed a pain killer (no better than the ibuprofen) and a muscle relaxer. It slowly got a little better. A few days later I went shopping, and as I got on a long checkout line, the pain came back with a vengeance. I couldn’t stand. I was next to a refrigerated case of cheeses, and the front of the bottom shelf was about a foot and a half high. I sat down on the edge. As the line started to move, I struggled to get up, and the woman in front of me, apparently seeing my pain-wracked face, said “No, just sit there; I’ll pull your cart, and when we get to the checkout you can go ahead of me.” I said, no, that’s okay, I’ll go after you.” Her cart was rather full, and she said, “No I have three orders here, and it will take a long time to get through. You go ahead.” I thanked her profusely, said something like, “I’m not used to this much kindness from strangers.” —**Steve Marston**

**“Gymnopédie No.1, Lent et douloureux,” Erik Satie/**

**Khatia Buniatishvili** <https://youtu.be/TLoxzp4zzBE> 3:24

**Daniel Varsano** <https://youtu.be/aUaFH2h6IJo> 3:36

**Guard well within yourself that treasure, kindness.** Know how to give without hesitation, how to lose without regret, how to acquire without meanness.  
—**George Sand**, pen name of Amantine Lucile Aurore Dupin

Saruman believes it is only great power that can hold evil in check, but that is not what I have found. **I found it is the small everyday deeds of ordinary folk that keep the darkness at bay.** Small acts of kindness and love.

—Gandalf, in *The Hobbit* by **J. R. R. Tolkien**

When I was young, I admired clever people. **Now that I am old, I admire kind people.** —**Abraham Joshua Heschel**

## **“The Garden of Eden: II. The Eternal Feminine”**

**William Bolcom/Spencer Myer** <https://youtu.be/iJohd5P2QoA> 5:16

**Chesed in Hebrew stands for a cluster of ideas—love, mercy, grace, and kindness.** It is many times translated as lovingkindness, or loyal love, or love without the expectation of getting something in return.

**I have learned kindness from the unkind,** silence from the talkative, and toleration from the intolerant; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers.  
—**Khalil Gibran**

## **“Just a Closer Walk with Thee,” Traditional**

**Arthur Blythe** <https://youtu.be/A5YacBWkTiw> 5:28

**Doreen Ketchens** <https://youtu.be/EbH3HJvh2No?t=19> 5:26

**poetry is my scripture,  
music is my gospel,  
empathy and kindness are my witness,  
creativity and love are my worship**

—*ButterfliesRising.com*

**I have always depended on the kindness of strangers.**

—Blanche DuBois, in **Tennessee Williams’** *A Streetcar Named Desire* described as **“a form of self-deception”** by FreeDictionary.com

**My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness.**

—**The Dalai Lama**

## **“When I Grow Too Old To Dream,” Sigmund Romberg, Oscar Hammerstein II/Nicki Parrott & Rossano Sportiello**

<https://youtu.be/HB2-3Ii6Qo> 7:17

We believe that our non-conscious racial biases will lessen if we just listen to enough podcasts about race. We believe that reading books about global inequality will absolve us of our responsibility as privileged Westerners. We believe that world peace will come if we just do lovingkindness meditation at the local sangha surrounded by people who are racially and economically similar to us. Though helpful, **these spiritual practices ultimately require very little of us and fall quite short of mutual indwelling.** —**Christena Cleveland**, *On Being*, Jun 2, 2017

## **The essence of lovingkindness is being able to offer happiness.**

You can be the sunshine for another person. You can't offer happiness until you have it for yourself. So build a home inside by accepting yourself and learning to love and heal yourself. Learn how to practice mindfulness in such a way that you can create moments of happiness and joy for your own nourishment. Then you have something to offer the other person. **–Thich Nhat Hanh**, *How to Love*, 2014

## **“Zenergy,” Victor Wooten and Carter Beauford**

<https://youtu.be/czu8TUgWkE8?t=3> 6:44

Do all the ambitious things—travel, get rich, get famous, innovate, lead, fall in love, make and lose fortunes, swim naked in wild jungle rivers, but as you do, to the extent that you can, **err in the direction of kindness**. Do those things that incline you toward the big questions, and avoid the things that would reduce you and make you trivial. That luminous part of you that exists beyond personality—your soul, if you will—is as bright and shining as any that has ever been. Clear away everything that keeps you separate from this secret luminous place. Believe it exists, come to know it better, nurture it, share its fruits tirelessly.

**–George Saunders**, Commencement Address, Syracuse University, May 11, 2013

## **“Holy Ghost,” Wynton Marsalis/**

**Wynton Marsalis Septet** <https://youtu.be/7vI7BiwM5Gc?t=126> 9:33

*Too many definitions and examples of kindness are goody two-shoes platitudes or cliches that turn kindness from a selfless act into a quid pro quo: it will make you feel good, you will get recognition, or you will get kindness in return. “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted,” the moral of the Aesop Fable, “The Lion and the Mouse,” is based on the lion being later “repaid” for having released the mouse who awakened it. <https://read.gov/aesop/007.html>*

During my depression, there was one friend who truly helped. With my permission, Bill came to my house every day around 4:00 PM, sat me down in an easy chair, and massaged my feet. He rarely said a word. But somehow he found the one place in my body where I could feel a sense of connection with another person, relieving my awful sense of isolation while **bearing silent witness** to my condition. By offering me this quiet companionship for a couple of months, day in and day out, Bill helped save my life. Unafraid to accompany me in my suffering, he made me less afraid of myself. He was present—simply and fully present. We have no “fix” or “save” to offer those who suffer deeply. **And yet, we have something better: our gift of self in the form of personal presence and attention, the kind that invites the other’s soul to show up.** **–Parker J. Palmer**, “On Being,” April 27, 2016

**“Sanctuary,” Carrie Newcomer** <https://youtu.be/HjOioWTVAL4> 4:19

**The Dalai Lama says kindness is water, religion is like tea.** Tea is a great luxury. It increases the savor of life. It's wonderful if you have it. But you can survive without tea. You can't survive without water. Everyday kindness and responsibility is the starting block for every life. It's a nice reminder to ground ourselves in the people around us before we start thinking about our texts and our notions of the absolute. —**Pico Iyer**, *On Being with Krista Tippett*, Nov 29, 2018

**Jesus moves among the pots and pans. —Saint Teresa of Ávila**

**“Scaramouche, II Modéré, III Brazileira,” Darius Milhaud/  
Renata Rybol, alto saxophone; Marek Werpulewski, piano**

<https://youtu.be/xBL4rv-G4mc> 6:41

**“Scaramouche, III Brazileira (Mouvement de Samba),”  
for 2 pianos and percussion, Darius Milhaud/**

**Victor & Luis del Valle, pianos** <https://youtu.be/zYnC2xOQDM8?t=11> 3:38

**Amy Chiu & Chia-Lin Yang, pianos** <https://youtu.be/anbpINPWUm8> 2:31

*Scaramouche was originally written as a suite for two pianos but later transcribed by the composer for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra.*

**The Kindness of P.J. O'Rourke** (Nov 14, 1947–Feb 15, 2022)

P.J. O'Rourke was maybe the nicest person I've ever known, which is an interesting thing to say about a man who made his name and his reputation as a take-no-prisoners cynical wit and observer of political foibles. **His passing** after a short illness is devastating, not only because it robs us of his gimlet eye but because it **reduces the store of kindness in the world, which is more precious than rubies.**

—John Podhoretz, *New York Post*, Feb 15, 2022

I suspect that the biggest reason **P.J. was beloved by his peers and colleagues was his openness and kindness....** When he was stopped on the street by admirers he was as gracious as you could hope for.... P.J. spent his life bestowing such respect on a constant stream of writers and editors and researchers and fact-checkers and all of the sundry tradespeople who populate the world of letters.

—Jonathan V. Last, *The Buwark*, Feb 15, 2022

**Starry Crown (Chased Old Satan Through The Door), Woodie  
Brothers/Miles of Music, Brooklyn Winter House Camp**

[https://youtu.be/f9\\_7oMvM-xg](https://youtu.be/f9_7oMvM-xg) 5:56

Over there, over there / I'm gonna wear that starry crown over there

<https://secondhandsongs.com/work/239335> <http://www.bluegrassmessengers.com/chased-old-satan-through-the-door.aspx>

**“A Lovingkindness Meditation,” Sylvia Boorstein**

**May we feel safe. / May we feel content.**

**May we feel strong. / May we live with ease.**