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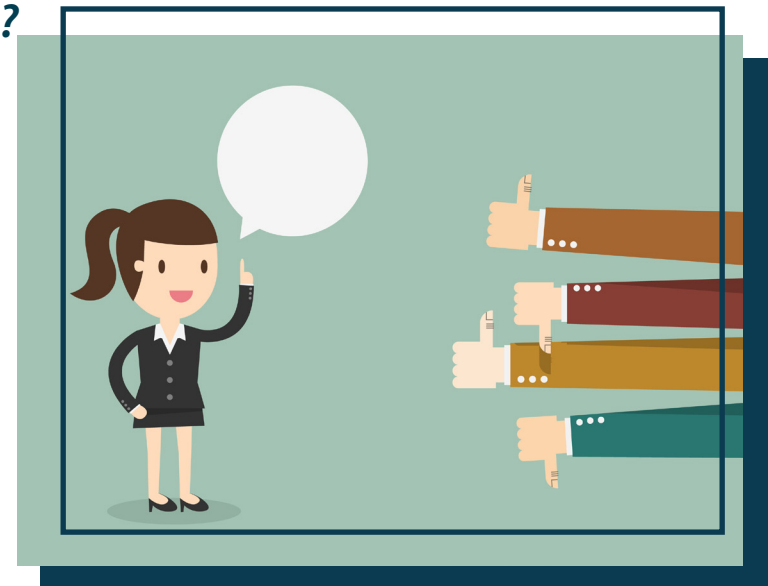
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# THE WORDS WE USE

## How Are Your Words Affecting People?

The words we use every day have a certain power. A simple “please” or “thank you” is not only basic manners, but it validates the thing you are requesting or receiving. The way we speak to each other, our tone, and word choice go a long way. The problem is that we never really know what someone’s day is like — the things they’ve experienced up until that moment that your paths cross. And the way you communicate with them has the ability to make or break that moment and all moments after that.

It sounds a little trite to say that you need to be respectful in your speech, but it’s something that I’ve noticed has started to fall into the background of our day-to-day lives. There is a certain restaurant that has drilled into their employees that a proper response is *my pleasure*. It’s their pleasure to serve you, to get the things for you that you’ve requested. It’s positive, it’s courteous — it’s just plain nice. I started thinking about that simple phrase, and I began comparing it to the other things we hear in our normal day to day conversations.



While *not a problem* is just a simple phrase, one that gets thrown out there without any question or thought about its implications, it allows for a divide between the two people conversing. It implies that what you’ve requested is a burden. It has a negative context. It really hit on the vitriol of our nation — especially with the most recent national events we’ve lived through — that our daily lives are surrounded by negativity. Has common courtesy been abandoned entirely?

Since this moment of realization, I’ve really worked hard to monitor my own responses — my own language. You could be saying something off the cuff, but the way it’s being said by people and the way it’s being used could really affect the people in our lives. We may only see them once, for one moment out of each other’s lives, but that moment will influence one another down the road. It’s always been my thought that positivity breeds positivity, and in a world so full of anger and negativity, we could all work a little harder to be nicer, to be courteous, and to share positivity with everyone around us. Positivity should be a pleasure not a problem.

— John Colvin

## SHARING IS SAVING *How Your Smartphone Makes Travel Cheaper*

New-age entrepreneurs have pioneered a host of apps to help you find cheaper alternatives to expensive aspects of traveling. They call it share economy — a new business approach where companies provide a platform for consumers to work with each other directly, making services and goods cheaper. The result is a more affordable way to travel.

### SAY GOODBYE TO TAXIS AND RENTAL CARS.

Popular apps like Uber, Lyft, and Sidecar allow locals to turn their car into a personal taxi which people — like you — can request rides from using their phone. It’s cheaper than a rental car or traditional taxi, and more direct (and better smelling) than public transportation.

### COUCH SURFING IS THE NEW TRAVEL SPORT.

Hotels are easily one of the most expensive parts of a vacation — even if you find a deal online. With apps like Airbnb and CouchSurfing, locals offer their couches, beds, and rooms for as low as \$20 a night.

### IS THE CONCEPT KINDA SKETCHY?

One might pause before staying with or getting a ride from a total stranger, but the accountability keeps things safe. Both the host and guest are required to submit a review of their experience before they can

use the app again, and in most cases, both users are required to scan their IDs in order to register. Using these services is as safe as using a traditional taxi, according to a study by the Cato Institute.

Beyond saving you cash, these apps can also guide you to a more personal experience and the chance to make your vacation truly unique.



*It’s always been my thought that positivity breeds positivity, and in a world so full of anger and negativity, we could all work a little harder to be nicer, to be courteous, and to share positivity with everyone around us.*

Upon visiting another establishment, my wife and I were saluted with *not a problem*. Now, I might be splitting hairs here, but compare the two phrases. One implies that your interaction with someone has had a positive effect — that you are both leaving the situation having influenced each other in a better light. Now, *not a problem*, while it’s just become a common response, has negative implications. Would it have been a problem on another day? What if I was a different person? Would my request have been an issue then? By comparing them, I was really able to meditate on the language of the world we live in.

# Traveling With Kids in 2017

## Goodbye Backseat Breakdowns

The holidays have come and gone, but many parents are still feeling a little dazed by the whirlwind of excitement and chaos. If you traveled during the holidays, you might be wondering now how you could've done it without the Santa Claus leverage — "If you don't stop poking your sister, Santa's going to see and put you on the naughty list."

If you're traveling with young kids this year, you want to focus on what really counts — spending a few relaxing days away. Let us help you minimize the stress with the help of these simple tips.

### Pack smart.

When packing your kids' luggage, make sure the kiddos have everything they need, but don't overpack. Unfortunately, this may mean having to play the "bad guy" when kids want to bring their entire toy arsenal on the plane. Make sure the bag is easy for them to handle and that each item is essential.

### Use apps.

If space is an issue, bringing a tablet or phone with games downloaded is much easier than carrying a variety of books and games along for the ride. You can still limit your child's time on the device, but for long airport wait times or car rides, such a distraction can be the difference between breezy and breakdown.

### Give them a say.

Keep your kids interested in the journey by letting them be a part of it! Show them the path you'll be taking, tell them about where you're going, and let



them document the adventures you have by photographing the whole thing. They'll be more excited about the destination and more actively involved in how you get there. If you take public transportation, let them have a seat by the window, and ask them about the people and places you see outside.

Traveling with kids isn't easy — any time of the year — but 2017 offers the chance to take family travel to the next level of relaxation. Whatever you do, remember to stay calm and focus on the memories. You've got this.

# Kindness Is the Key to Happiness

## Celebrate Random Act of Kindness Week February 12–18

*"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." – Aesop*

February 12 marks the start of Random Act of Kindness, or RAK, Week across the globe. Brought to you by the foundation of the same name, RAK Week is dedicated to the belief that the world "will be a significantly better place if we encourage the spread of kindness in schools, communities, and homes."

Little moments have big impacts that stay with you and the people you show kindness to. And we're not just saying that. Just seeing an act of kindness done boosts oxytocin — aka the "love hormone" — in the brain. In turn, blood pressure drops and feelings of self-esteem and optimism increase. Kindness is beneficial to not only your health, but the social health of those around you.

This event is promoted annually by RAKtivists, or kindness ambassadors who have pledged to spread kindness at every turn. They range in age from 14–89, and they're everywhere! Of course, you don't have to be an official RAKtivist to spread kindness. Random acts of kindness can come from anyone.

While some acts of kindness have been powerful enough to save lives, others show the value of the human spirit. And it doesn't take much, either. Kindness means simply writing a personalized thank-you note or offering to babysit for a

friend who could use a night off. The point isn't always the act itself, but what that one act of kindness can lead to.

"The positive effects of kindness are experienced in the brain of everyone who witnessed the act, improving their mood and making them significantly more likely to 'pay it forward.' This means one good deed in a crowded area can create a domino effect and improve the day of dozens of people," according to the RAK Foundation.

This month, commit yourself to just one random act of kindness and feel for yourself how one small deed can make the world a better place. To learn more about RAK week, log on to [www.randomactsofkindness.org](http://www.randomactsofkindness.org). There, you'll also find inspiring stories and great ideas for small, random acts of kindness.



# WAL-MART: PUBLIC NUISANCE?

## As Store Crime Rates Climb, the Nation's Biggest Retailer Does Little

Wal-Mart may be the quintessential American retailer, but it's also decidedly unsafe. On average, at least one violent crime occurs every day at a Wal-Mart somewhere in the country, and thousands of petty crimes happen each year. Bloomberg Businessweek investigated the trend and found that Wal-Mart is more dangerous than other retailers — such as Target — and less likely to take preventative measures.

Cost-cutting is a big cause; over the last decade, Wal-Mart has cut down on its staff dramatically, relying heavily on self-checkout machines. But those machines aren't as good at stopping shoplifting as a human being, and an understaffed and overworked employee team can't do much either. As a result, people know they can steal in Wal-Mart, and with theft comes other crime — like violent assault.

All businesses have a duty to protect their customers, including crime prevention where needed. Wal-Mart shrugs off this duty, spending its money elsewhere. They know that the local police forces will deal with crime, and they're fine with making the taxpayer foot the bill. They don't seem to care about the safety of their patrons, preferring instead to spend billions of dollars in profitable sales channels when that money could dramatically cut down on the crime that occurs in Wal-Mart stores instead.

Things aren't likely to change, especially if the Beech Grove, Indiana, Wal-Mart is any indicator. After a video went viral of a confrontation in the store and the mayor made statements denouncing the chain, Wal-Mart promised to separate



their store from a nearby retirement community with a fence and invest in security. They failed to deliver, and the mayor threatened to fine them every time an officer was called to the store. Wal-Mart finally hired security, but it took bad publicity and incredible effort by government to prompt action. A company this profitable should not be a bane to the community, but that's exactly what's happening across the nation.



## 1-Pot Moroccan Chicken

Recipe inspired by [bbcgoodfood.com](http://bbcgoodfood.com).

### Ingredients

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 onions, 1 chopped and 1 sliced
- 1 small tomato, chopped
- 1/3 cup ginger root, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 teaspoon turmeric, ground cumin, coriander, and cinnamon
- 1 large butternut squash
- 2 1/2 cups chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1/3 cup dried cherries

### Instructions

1. In a pan, heat 2 tablespoons oil, then brown chicken on all sides. Remove chicken from heat. Mix tomatoes, ginger, chopped onion, and garlic into a paste-like consistency. Fry sliced onion in remaining oil until softened, then add spices and fry until fragrant. Add the paste and fry to soften.
2. Return chicken to heat, along with squash (deseeded and cut into large chunks), stock, sugar, and vinegar. Bring to a simmer, then cook for 30 minutes. Remove chicken and stir in cherries, then continue simmering the sauce to thicken. Shred chicken into bite-sized chunks. Stir the chicken back into the sauce.
3. Serve topped with red onion, lemon zest, mint, and feta. Couscous and yogurt make great sides.

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