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Education

It's Good 2B Good: Why It's Not Bad to be Good
Sandra Zerner
NICE Creative
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> *Every human being has the potential to make the world a better place. You may not believe it, but it's true. All it takes is a decision on your part. Just wake up tomorrow morning and say: 'Today I'm going to make a difference in the lives of others.' Once you put your mind to it, you will start noticing opportunities popping up all over the place. They were always there. You just never noticed them before.*

So writes Sandra Zerner in a lively little book aimed at children between the ages of eight to twelve who may soon come under the pressure not to be so nice to others. In middle school, Zerner, like too many of us, experienced peer pressure not to be nice at all. She was picked on and bullied until she felt she could no longer be herself. Eventually her teacher was able to help her reflect on what this did to her as a person and convinced her to be proud rather than ashamed of helping others. It's a message that Zerner has done well in sharing here.

So common is the experience of alienation and ostracism in the lives of adolescents that Zerner decided to write preemptively to reach children at a formative age before they learn unkindness and intolerance toward others. She makes a compelling case for why it is good to be good by pointing out some obvious and not so obvious benefits of altruism, such as improving the health, happiness, and self esteem of the doer and making the world a better place in which to live. Zerner even includes an amazing scientific anecdote about water and how it responds to both positive and negative words and energy that it is exposed to.

This is an admirable text that is easy to read and can be put to good use by kids, their parents, teachers, and community members. It will be a welcome addition to school, worship, and home libraries in a world where bullying has become endemic and images of violence

surround us daily. When events in the news become too hard to take, messages like Zerner's are like fresh air. We're lucky to have her contributing to the dialogue.

Pamela Harris Kaiser