

OAK FORWARD · FREE TOOLS

30 Ways to Help People Feel Seen and Known

Small, specific ways to show up for the people around you

The list

This isn't a checklist to get through. It's a way of slowing down enough to actually see the people around you, and let them know you see them.

1. Remember people's names, and use them when you talk to them.
2. When you see someone do something good, tell them. Let them know you noticed.
3. Speak well of people when they're not around. Point out what's good about them to others.
4. Reach out to someone you haven't talked to in a while. Ask to spend real time together.
5. On a hard day, text five people you haven't talked to in a while. Ask how they're doing, and tell them one thing you appreciate about them.
6. Notice what your kids are into. Surprise them with something tied to it.
7. Have a real conversation with the person checking you out at the grocery store.
8. If your spouse leaves you home with the kids, skip the to-do list. Build a fort instead.
9. Ask your kids what they're into, and daydream with them about it.
10. Pay for the coffee of the person behind you in line.
11. Reach out to someone who made a real difference in your life, a mentor, teacher, coach, or old boss. Tell them, today. Life is short and you don't always get another chance.
12. Ask someone what they're proud of lately, then let them talk about it without redirecting to your own story.
13. Offer to grab someone's shopping cart in the parking lot and bring it in for them.
14. If a neighbor or friend is sick, bring them a meal or mow their lawn.
15. At work, when you see someone struggling, come alongside them. Help with no expectation of anything back.
16. Leave a waiter or waitress a bigger tip, with a thank-you note.
17. When someone asks how you're doing, ask them back. Actually listen to the answer.

18. Ask your spouse what they dream about, and what's on their mind. Then just listen.
19. At a party, introduce yourself by your name, not your job title. Ask more questions than you answer. Be genuinely interested, not interesting.
20. If you lead a team, meet with each person one-on-one. Ask how they're really doing.
21. When someone's telling you a hard story, don't jump to advice. Just say, "That sounds really hard."
22. Write a short note to someone and mail it. Not a text, an actual letter.
23. Ask someone how their family is doing, and remember what they tell you next time.
24. If you notice someone's been quiet lately, check on them privately, not in a group.
25. Let someone finish their sentence before you respond.
26. Celebrate someone else's win like it's your own.
27. Show up early to something, just so you have a few extra minutes to talk to people before it starts.
28. Ask an older family member about their life before you existed.
29. When a friend cancels plans, respond with kindness, not guilt.
30. Put your phone away when someone's talking to you. All the way away, not face-down on the table.

ONE THING TO PRACTICE

Pick just one

You don't need to do all 30. Pick one that feels doable today, and do it. Notice how it feels, both for you and for the person on the other end. Then pick another one tomorrow. Small and consistent beats big and occasional.