

Pay it Forward

1 READING What do you think 'pay it forward' means? How is it different from 'paying someone back'? Read the article and check your ideas.

The man at the front of the queue for coffee was surprised. 'Why is my coffee free?' 'The woman ahead of you paid for it.' replied the server. So the man paid the bill for the next customer in the queue. And she did the same. Amazingly, people just carried on buying coffee for the customer behind them for three hours, and 288 people.

'There was a great feeling in the coffee shop,' said Maria LaTrobe, one of the servers at the café in Winnipeg, Canada. 'Something like this just makes you feel happy all day.'

It seems to be a growing trend in Canada, with more and more stories of strangers paying for others' groceries, parking tickets, train tickets and even meals, and leaving without being thanked.

But the idea isn't a really a new one. It's often called 'paying it forward', which means that instead of paying someone back for their loan or favour, you pay it forward to someone else, creating a chain of generosity. One famous example from the past was the famous American, Benjamin Franklin, who in 1784 lent money to a man on the condition that he helped another person at some point in the future.

Of course, it doesn't have to be about money. Any act of kindness, such as helping someone carry something heavy, or picking something up for them can make both you and the person you helped feel good. And when this happens to you, pay it forward!



2 Discuss the following questions in pairs or small groups.

- A What examples are there in the text of someone 'paying it forward'?
- B What do you think makes people want to do this?
- C What effect do you think it might have on the person receiving the favour?
- D What examples of small kindnesses from strangers can you think of which have happened to you?



3 VIDEO Make a list of different ways of doing something kind for a stranger. Compare your ideas with a partner.

Then watch the video. How many of your ideas did you see? What other kind things did people do?

Do you think receiving a kindness makes someone want to 'pay it forward'?



4 GRAMMAR Watch the video again to 1.36, and put the following actions in order

- A Moving a suitcase out of the way of a blind woman.
- B Catching a rubber ring which has blown away.
- C Letting someone go in front in a supermarket queue.
- D Giving someone some paint.
- E Painting graffiti
- F Riding a bike
- G Cleaning up a mess on the floor
- H Helping someone pick up papers.
- I Helping someone get up from the floor
- J Raking leaves

**Now complete the following summary with the correct relative pronoun : *who, which, that, where or whose*.
[More than one answer may be possible]**

The boy 1_____ sees the other boys painting graffiti decides to do something about it. On the way he sees a girl 2_____ paint pot is empty, so he gives her some of the paint 3_____ he is carrying. Then we see a man 4_____ moves a suitcase 5_____ is in the way of a blind woman. A man 5_____ sees this then helps up a football player 6_____ plays for the other team. A woman 7_____ is watching this then helps a man 8_____ papers blow away. A man 9_____ sees her do this then lets a woman in front of him at the supermarket 10_____ he is doing his shopping. At the beach, a man 11_____ works at the supermarket catches a rubber ring 12_____ has blown away. A woman 13_____ is riding a bike notices his kindness. Next we see the woman at home, 14_____ she is raking leaves. She helps a neighbour 15_____ lawn is covered with leaves. Another neighbour sees this and, when he goes to work, he cleans up something 16_____ has spilt on the floor.

We can use relative clauses to explain which one we are talking about. Which relative pronoun(s) do we use to talk about:

A person? A possession? A thing? A place?

Watch a bit more of the video and write your own description, using relative clauses as appropriate.

5 WRITING Read the following start to a story. What do you think might happen next? Imagine how the favour might be paid forward and complete the story. When you need to explain which person, thing or place you mean, use a relative clause.

It was a cold and rainy day. In fact, it was pouring rain and I was on my way to a job interview. Suddenly my umbrella blew inside out. I tried to fix it, but it was completely broken. I couldn't believe it. I was going to arrive at my job interview looking like a drowned rat! 'Here', said a voice, 'take my umbrella. My office is here, so I don't need it anymore.' I turned around to see who was speaking and saw a kind face.....

When you have finished, read each other's stories. How are they different, or the same?



Key, Notes and Links

1 'Pay it forward' means 'that instead of paying someone back for their loan or favour, you pay it forward to someone else, creating a chain of generosity.'

2

A Paying for coffee, groceries, parking tickets, train tickets and even meals, but also any act of kindness, such as helping someone carry something heavy, or picking something up for them.

B/C Perhaps because it makes them feel good. Research shows that carrying out small kindnesses like these has a positive effect on people's happiness- the person who does it and the person who receives.

D There are lots of other ideas at <http://payitforwardday.co.uk/ideas-to-get-involved/>

4

E Painting graffiti

D Giving someone some paint.

A Moving a suitcase out of the way of a blind woman.

I Helping someone get up from the floor

H Helping someone pick up papers.

C Letting someone go in front in a supermarket queue.

B Catching a rubber ring which has blown away.

F Riding a bike

J Raking leaves

G Cleaning up a mess on the floor

The boy 1 who/that* sees the other boys painting graffiti decides to do something about it. On the way he sees a girl 2 whose paint pot is empty, so he gives her some of the paint 3 that/which** he is carrying.

Then we see a man 4 who/that moves a suitcase 5 which/that is in the way of a blind woman. A man 5 that/who sees this then helps up a football player 6 who/that plays for the other team. A woman 7 who/that is watching this then helps a man 8 whose papers blow away. A man 9 who/that sees her do this then lets a woman in front of him at the supermarket 10 where he is doing his shopping.

At the beach, a man 11 who/that works at the supermarket catches a rubber ring 12 which/that has blown away. A woman 13 who/that is riding a bike notices his kindness. Next we see the woman at home, 14 where she is raking leaves. She helps a neighbour 15 whose lawn is covered with leaves.

Another neighbour sees this and, when he goes to work, he cleans up something 16 which/that has spilt on the floor.

* It is possible to use 'that' instead of 'which' or 'who' in defining relative clauses such as these. However, if we use 'that' all the time, the text will become quite confusing, so, in this case, who and which might be clearer.

** In some cases a reduced relative clause might sound more natural 'The paint he is carrying.' There is also a higher level version of the lesson, which asks about this point and reduced relative clauses (as well as a slightly simpler version). If you have a mixed level class, you could use all three versions with different students.

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