

THE LEADERSHIP TOOLBOX

Welcome to the Leadership Toolbox – a reference focused on enhancing professional success. This is an on-going Bulletin designed to provide you with practical and useful tools, techniques and tips that you can immediately implement to increase your effectiveness. For this edition, we are going to focus on the skill of *kindness*.

AREA OF FOCUS: KINDNESS



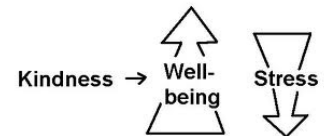
DEFINITIONS FOR KINDNESS

Being kind means caring for others, showing love and compassion for others. Philosophically, kindness is an emotion, helping one in need and not expecting anything in return. In religion, kindness is considered one of the core virtues, almost a commandment. Buddhism talks about loving kindness with compassion for others. Psychologically kindness is considered a trait and a highly desired one in selecting a mate. In the work environment, kindness means showing respect, acting professionally, offering a helping hand, and being nice to one another.

BENEFITS OF DEMONSTRATING KINDNESS EFFECTIVELY

Many U.S. leaders have defined a good leader as one that demonstrates an individual, strong, analytical, decisive and executing style. The soft-skill competencies and traits such as kindness and compassion have often been perceived as weaknesses. I would agree that fifteen years ago, this style was accepted and effective. But for today's workforce, especially Gen Xers and Millennials, the command and control leadership style is often ineffective. Leaders who are choosing to keep their autocratic style are struggling in their effectiveness, influence and the results they produce.

Effective leadership in the 21st Century a much kinder form of leadership, dare we even say one that encompasses a balanced mix of compassion and direction. Successful leaders of today's workforce demonstrate kindness and foster employee engagement at all levels within the workplace. Having empowered employees that want to do their best to accomplish their responsibilities or staff that feel as though they can do whatever it takes to take care of their customers, internal and external is the goal. Kind leadership recognizes that you get empowered employees by trusting them, caring for them, and demonstrating compassion.



ENHANCING THIS COMPETENCY

Tip: Hire For Character

When you can, look for this competency during the selection process. It is much easier to maintain this competency than it is to learn it. And, as we typically judge people within seconds and it's hard to break that image once set, if you hire a person who chooses not to show kindness or doesn't know how to, even if they try to modify their leadership behaviors, it can be difficult if not impossible to change their image. Use selection assessments or an outside source qualified to measure this competency to ensure you are bringing the right person on the bus.



Tip: Foster A Kind Work Environment

Encourage everyone, including supervisors and managers, to be enthusiastic, positive, and supportive. Create a workplace that provides meaning and purpose for employees, a place where they feel they are making a difference in the lives of those they serve.

Tip: Attain 360° Feedback

Invite others you work with to meet with you individually and share three things with you that intimidate them or that they fear about you (they exist). Let them know that you are working on improving your leadership skills and value their feedback, and that there will be no repercussion for their honesty. (If you have to add the no repercussion words, you are likely not going to attain honest feedback right away, it at all which also speaks to your leadership style and how kindness may be lacking.)



When attaining this type of feedback, it's important to ask behavioral questions vs. judgment questions when attaining useful feedback. For example, asking, "What can I do differently or continue doing to be a better leader for you?" is more effective and useful than asking, "Am I an excellent, good or poor leader?" Respond with "Thank You" (verbally and nonverbally) and an appreciation for their honesty. Let them know you will think about what they have disclosed and try to use their feedback to make positive changes in your leadership style.



Tip: Model Expected/Desired Behaviors

Take a few days to think about how to implement the feedback provided to you. Determine one modification you will make each week for several weeks to enhance your leadership effectiveness. Let those who gave you feedback know what you will be trying to change. Thank them again for their honesty. Then, walk the talk – go out and demonstrate that you are serious and display modified behaviors sincerely.

Tip: Appreciate and Express Gratitude

Let others know you are thankful for their contributions. Catch them doing good things and show kindness by recognizing their efforts. Go out of your way to say thank you and show your appreciation when staff members go above and beyond. Demonstrate random acts of kindness at work. If you're stuck for ideas, here are a few suggestions:

- Smile
- Bring someone a cup of coffee, water, tea, etc., without them asking
- Leave a flower or a nice Thank You note on someone's desk
- Help someone carry their stuff



CONSEQUENCES OF NOT DEMONSTRATING THIS COMPETENCY EFFECTIVELY:

Think of an unkind leader you know. What is he/she like? Imagine what this person's personal life is like? What is their family like? And, what is the impact on this person's work area? The unkind leader may get results temporarily, but this is not a sustainable leadership style. It can drive fear a panic into the organization. The unhappy leader leads a miserable personal life and creates a culture at work that is dysfunctional and unproductive.

QUOTES ON KINDNESS

If you haven't any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble.

Bob Hope

It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice.

Unknown

Great persons are able to do great kindnesses.

Miguel de Cervantes

Kindness can become its own motive. We are made kind by being kind.

Eric Hoffer

The everyday kindness of the back roads more than makes up for the acts of greed in the headlines.

Charles Kuralt

Ask yourself: Have I been kind today? Make kindness a daily modus operandi and change the world.

Annie Lennox

Human kindness has never weakened the stamina or softened the fiber of a free people. A nation does not have to be cruel to be tough.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

You cannot do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

I do not owe any personal income tax. But nevertheless, I send a small check, now and then, to the Internal Revenue Service out of the kindness of my heart.

David Rockefeller

You see, antiquated ideas of kindness and generosity are simply bugs that must be programmed out of our world. And these cold, unfeeling machines will show us the way.

Bill Gates

TO RECEIVE PAST BULLETINS...

If you are interested in reviewing past Toolbox Bulletins, visit:

<http://www.lynn-and-associates.com/Bulletins.html>



If you are in interested in talking with Lisa or Jim on how to implement any of the tips, tools or skills within this or other bulletins, please feel free to contact us anytime!

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Make it a productive day! The Lynn & Associates Team