

What KIND of Leader are you?

Simple ways to introduce kindness into your workplace

Innovators have a clear idea, are very skilled, intelligent with plenty of energy and motivation. All these are essential, but it is also important to know how to be decent and kind to those in our organisation or innovation group.

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The best collaborations and creativity occur when there is considerateness, kindness and respect so that people feel they are part of them and included. Without them, you may get results, but perhaps not the best ones for the idea that you are building. And people may not want to take part as much in any future endeavours.

So, how can you introduce kindness to your workplace?

Looking after yourself

Being kind starts with looking after yourself. Be generous to yourself. Take time out to rest and relax, build your health, self-esteem, and confidence.

The second and most important issue is to think about how you are as a leader. How do you show kindness and considerateness in all you say and do? What is your evidence that you are considerate?

What negative tendencies do you have that need to be reviewed and

altered? It is these that will impede you being thoughtful unless you address them.

Now think about what you can do to build on your current kindness, civility and decency. What more could you say and do? Find opportunities to practice how you will be kinder. Rehearse, even if it feels a little strange.

It takes time to change and become kinder. It may even feel uncomfortable. Please stay with this as the more you practice, the easier it will be.

Kindness is contagious

As you become kinder, others will sense and feel it. This also encourages them to be kind as well. If a group or organisation has kindness at its centre, you will almost sense it in the atmosphere and in how people treat each other. They will make an extra effort to greet each other and provide small gifts with no expectations. People will talk to each other about large and small issues.

People will praise each other. Work practices emphasise collaboration and considerateness. And the atmosphere of decency and respect enables people to look at errors in a blame fair way so that there is learning. Praise and being able to be open about errors will help people be adventurous, brave, and creative. They will be more likely to be innovative and craft the unusual.

Ask people to think about how they can facilitate their work and that of their colleagues in a more thoughtful way. This way you will get 'flow', which is an amazing synchrony to observe when a group works brilliantly. Think of a music concert you went to where you just sensed this. We can achieve this in organisations.

All these behaviours are ones you can model in your daily work and encourage in others. When this is done consistently, then you will create a culture of kindness, thoughtfulness and will facilitate innovation. Having a culture based on these factors means that any difficulties and problems are likely to be tackled properly rather than shelved or ignored.

Make sure that you help to create trust and a feeling of safety as you are building in more kindness and thoughtfulness. People must feel that this is sincere and will continue. Some may be sceptical, but if you persist, they will also change and see the benefits.

Encouraging self-kindness

People in organisations can forget to look after themselves and others, especially if they are working to deadlines or have a huge workload or feel pressure to be creative. When this happens, the impact of what they do diminishes and you may get mediocre rather than extraordinary.

Encourage people to make sure that they have a good self-kindness plan with key elements of self-care. Looking after personal well-being and health is important. You can facilitate this by encouraging people to look after themselves and have a personal plan they will use. You could introduce well-being interventions that promote self-kindness and care.

If you are responsible for groups of people, ask them what they can do collectively to share considerateness in small and large ways. For example, learning from each other about work or an unrelated topic that a colleague is expert in. You never know where the next idea is coming from.

Some organisations reward people for acts of kindness. And this can work. But this must be done with sincerity and care, not as an intervention to boast about.

And finally

Allowing kindness in yourself as a leader and in the organisation will lead to care and decency. And the extraordinary which is what innovation is all about. It is making that difference in a meaningful and considerate way.

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