

KIND LEADERSHIP

“Love is kind ...” – I Corinthians 13

In the context of servant leadership, kindness is about the attitude you express toward situations around you, in the present and in the future.

The circumstances of business are constantly changing, and leaders help others adapt and adjust to these changes. As a servant leader, a kind attitude is something you can't afford to keep to yourself – it must come out openly through the words you express. You know that enthusiasm is infectious, and that expressions of confidence make a difference in the attitudes of others as you work together to create a positive future.

Cynicism and pessimism have a negative effect on motivation and morale. As a servant leader, you are expected to encourage others in their efforts and express optimism in all situations, particularly in times of adversity.

Key Actions for Being Kind

- **Speak optimistically about the future.**

Show an upbeat attitude toward what lies ahead, and toward trying new things.

In business, you are called upon to adapt to changing circumstances and innovate. You apply learnings from past failures to achieve new successes. With this in mind, as a servant leader, you encourage people to bring forward their innovative ideas as solutions to problems, and to treat “failures” as learning opportunities. You and your team can't let fear hold you back from trying new things.

Your attitude toward the future comes out in what you say about it.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY:

- *“This will be an exciting journey for all of us to take.”*
- *“I like this idea, and for these reasons...”*
- *“We’ve thought it through and I think we are ready.”*
- *“We’ve faced challenges bigger than this before, and we can do it again.”*

Avoid expressions of pessimism or cynicism – and counter them immediately when they are expressed.

Expressions of pessimism or cynicism have a way of shutting down the expression of ideas, and can have a demotivating effect. Not only do you not express unkind words of cynicism – you also present a more optimistic counterpoint to them when they are expressed.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT NOT TO SAY:

- *“That will never work. We should just give up.”*
- *“This is how we’ve always done it.”*
- *“Why get your hopes up? It’s not worth the bother...”*
- *“I don’t like it either, but this is what we’ve been asked to do.”*
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Key Actions for Being Kind (continued)

- **Express confidence that goals will be accomplished.**

Make sure goals are challenging, but also realistic and achievable.

Leaders lose credibility when their goals are seen as “pie in the sky” or out of touch with reality. As a leader, you have some influence over what the goals are, and how they are perceived by the members of your team. When goals are just challenging enough, you have something exciting to “stretch” toward. But goals also need to be realistic and achievable. This will ensure that when you express confidence that goals can be met, others will see you as sincere, and you will know in your heart that you mean it.

Adopt an attitude of ingenuity and initiative.

Goals by their nature have a sense of uncertainty about them; when the goals are set, you know what you want to achieve, but may have no idea about how to achieve it. One of the ways you express confidence in the ability to achieve goals is to simply get started working on them, knowing that progress will reveal the path that needs to be taken. Your words will help others keep moving forward along that path.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY:

- *“Let’s try it out ... we can make adjustments as we go, and I know we will get there.”*
- *“We don’t have all the answers today, but we will do our best and adapt along the way.”*
- *“There will be many lessons ahead, and we need to get started learning them.”*
- *“This goal is very important, and by working together I am certain we can achieve it.”*

- **Talk enthusiastically about what needs to get done.**

Find the pleasure or value in doing the day-to-day tasks, and invite others to do the same.

Your work day may include repetitive tasks, but that doesn’t mean it has to be routine. You can find ways to take any task and make it interesting, meaningful, collaborative, or fun.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY:

- *“This work is important, so let’s structure the process so it’s on time and done right.”*
- *“When we work together collaboratively, we all benefit. We have more fun, we get a better outcome, and we support our core values. So let’s plan on doing it that way.”*

Address any doubts or unpleasantness associated with the work, and remind others of why you do it.

You are equipped to overcome doubts or resistance to doing the work when you remind people of the reasons why the work is important, and of what you stand to gain by doing it.

EXAMPLES OF WHAT TO SAY:

- *“This project will be challenging, but we will be so much more efficient when we’re done.”*
- *“The workload will be tough for the next month, but the outcomes we achieve will be worth it.”*