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The Business of Kindness – Part 4

Building Leadership Character Traits

Using kindness as a driver in business is a proactive approach aimed at enhancing the health and sustainability of the people within our organizations; the influence of a leader in creating this positive and sustainable culture cannot be underestimated.

Olivia McIvor

“
*If your actions
inspire others to
dream more, learn
more, do more and
become more, you
are a leader.*”

In my previous article [Editor's note: published in the June issue of *AMT Events*], I shared with you six of the 12 Leadership Character Building Traits which, when cultivated, support creating a kinder, more respectful workplace — **Authenticity, Attitude, Resilience, Excellence, Trust, Compassion**. In this article, I will share with you the other six Leadership Character Building Traits — **Courage, Friendship, Service, Responsibility, Integrity, Tolerance**.

Seed by seed, we plant a flower garden; grain by grain, we create a healthy baked loaf of bread; and with brick & mortar, we build magnificent stone cathedrals and homes.

Growth and change are a process, a work of patience as we progress and a labor of love for those we want to impact and influence. John Schaat, an American writer and professor of political philosophy at the University of California, has such a weighty view on growth and change that I feel strongly compelled to share it. “The future,” Schaat states, “is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created -- created first in the mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found, but made, and the activity of making them changes both the maker and the destination.”

I will dare to add that it can also change destiny, and our conscious actions control how the paths will lay out. This gives me great hope for our organizations both small and large -- knowing that positive change can occur, that it lies within our grasp. As our organizations mature both intellectually and emotionally, we begin to realize that it is not the techniques or tactics of change we require, but a change of heart in how we do business. It requires connection, compassion and community encompassed within the corporate vision and simple concepts that when applied, can influence a culture for a greater common good.

Here is one simple concept we all can start with as we strive to embark on our journey to creating kinder environments to work and thrive in.

*Kindness in business is simple.
Always remember before you speak
or take any action,
ask yourself three imperative questions:
Is it truthful?
Is it necessary?
And above all else, is it kind?*

Final Six Character Building Traits

Courage: Step through fear to do what is right.

Courageous people believe in doing the right thing for the right reasons even in the face of obstacles and adversity. You don't allow fear to paralyze you from moving ahead and you consistently take small steps forward to complete your goals.

With the spirit of tenacity, as a courageous person, you take risks in order to grow and strengthen your character.

- Develop the internal resolve to make a change in your life and do what is right even in the face of personal adversity.

Friendship: Welcome others into your circle.

A friend is someone with whom you can talk freely, in an open and authentic manner. A friend accepts you without judgment, tells you when you are off base and warmly brings you back to earth with their profound bluntness.

Friends give you a sense of belonging and help pull you through during the day-to-day challenges of work and life.

- Provide a safe and supportive environment full of goodwill and respect for one another.

Service: Reach out to those around you

When we are in the spirit of service, our intention is to contribute outside of ourselves. Service is about looking around you each day and realizing it's the small acts of service that surround you that make the difference.

No act of kindness is too small to make an impact.

- Make a difference in others' lives through giving of one's self altruistically.

Responsibility: Take positive action wherever you are.

Being responsible is a choice we make daily in all our actions and decisions. We are accountable for how we treat others. We know we have the ability to impact and influence those around us, and we always strive to set a positive example for others.

We know that everyone on the team is accountable to the group. When it's one person's problem, it's everyone's.

- Identify where you have the power to influence, and accept responsibility for leading positive change.

Integrity: Do the right thing.

You know you have integrity when you walk our talk and those who know you can depend on your words and actions.

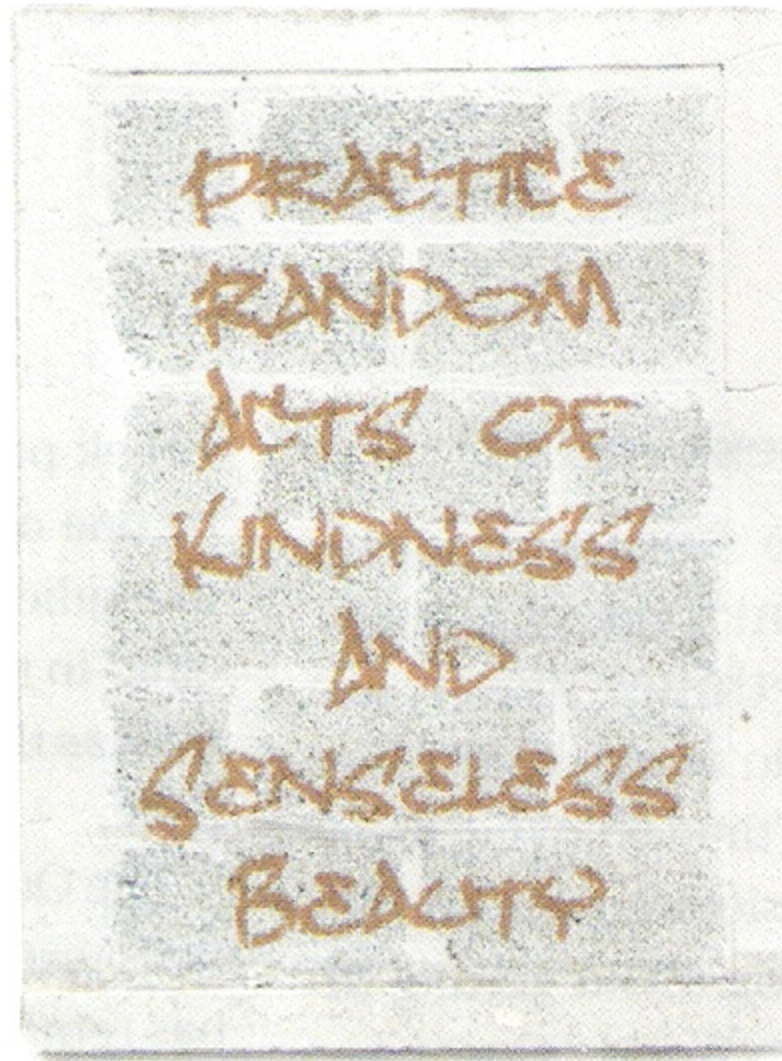
Integrity is taking a stand for what is right and being honest in all your dealings.

- Generate inclusive conversations around justice, fairness, equality and sustainability.

Tolerance: Honor the strength in diversity.

Our workplaces and neighborhoods are made up of a diverse mixture of multicultural, multigenerational and multidimensional people with different beliefs, wants and needs. Each person and business has a story to tell of struggles and triumphs that need to be shared openly. By opening up, you welcome others into your circle of friendship, you break down the barriers that cause fear and hurt.

- Seek to develop understanding of the intrinsic value of treating everyone equally, with respect and dignity.



I wrote *The Business of Kindness* for the leader in all of us, regardless of what our job description reads. As John Quincy Adams reminds us, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader." More now than ever we need champions with the will and courage to change the workplace, one person and one kind act at a time.

So how about taking the kindness in business challenge? When was the last time you committed a random act of kindness for yourself, your colleagues or your community?

I warmly challenge you — in the next 48 hours — to stand up for an ideal and send forth a tiny ripple of hope. Commit an act of kindness and participate in transforming the world of work, as we know it today.

We live, we learn, we laugh. ■

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