

# New Leaf Resumes' Monthly Newsletter: Issue 23

## Manage Your Career

### The Role of Kindness in the Workplace

#### 'Tis the Season for Goodwill

At this time of year, when goodwill and good wishes prevail, and hurt and disappointment are supposed to vanish, I thought that a short exploration of kindness might be appropriate.

I realize that the words “kindness” and “work” don’t often find themselves in the same sentence. I think that that is a pity, and that our world suffers as a consequence.

I’d love to hear from you. Does this topic resonate with you? What has been your experience in the working world? Do you think it’s getting better, is status quo, or deteriorating? Any ideas on how to spark change?

#### As Always

I enjoy hearing from my readers. Email questions, insights, thoughts, experiences, and yes, even disagreements in point of view!

And, as always, please do forward my newsletter to

**The best reason to be kind at work is simply because it’s the right way to be. Kindness is a virtue no matter where you live in the world. But what is kindness, exactly? Does it mean you set aside your convictions in order to comply? Must you never say anything controversial, or potentially abrasive, just to make sure you don’t hurt someone’s feelings?**

#### What is Kindness, Anyways?

Kindness is universally recognized, by major world religions, as a virtue. It is what we mean when we say “People are basically good.” It is what we refer to when we say “Pass it forward.” Kindness inspires more kindness. It is inexhaustible!

Kindness is generosity, it reserves judgment and gives the benefit of the doubt. It is expressed with a simple smile or nod, or by extending a hand up. Kindness is humble and unassuming, yet it has the power to heal or transform. It is an approach that people long for.

#### How to Be Kind in a Negative Situation

I wasn’t quite sure how to frame this section, but even when we must chastise, instruct, punish, fire, or investigate, we can be kind. We can be kind while being honest, bringing up an unpleasant topic, or delivering bad news. I thought the easiest way to explain this would be with a few practical examples taken from the world of careers:

- When letting an employee go, an employer can offer a letter of recommendation, or an outplacement service that will assist that employee in the career transition.
- When telling a person about how ineffective their resume really is, I will try to find something good to mention either about the resume, work history, or hints of accomplishments. Or, I will give them hope about how good it can be, with examples particular to their situation.
- When the recruitment process is complete, the recruiter/interviewer should contact the unsuccessful interviewees. Simply knowing the outcome is a kindness.

#### What Stops Us From Extending Kindness?

Well, dear readers, it is often one of our human flaws that stops the flow of kindness. We may find ourselves wanting to prove we are right; we may consider a person undeserving of kindness; we may consider kindness itself a weakness!

But consider this: it is not up to us to decide who deserves what. We can never, ever have all of the facts and information about a situation, and thus, how can we pass judgment on deservedness?

Although we like to think we have control over our lives, we don’t ever have 100 percent control. For example,

friends, family, colleagues, neighbours who might benefit from its content.

## In This Festive

### Season

In this festive season, with Diwali, Hanukkah, Eid, Bodhi Day, Christmas, and Kwanzaa delighting and enlightening humankind, I wish each of my readers and their families best wishes. May the new year find you well, may you prosper, find love, feel hope, and discover what you were meant to be or do, in a career that makes you proud!

- A family member could become ill, forcing us to use valuable savings, necessitating the sale of a home, causing us to lose our job, and on it goes.
- We could make a job change, thinking it is for the better with a very attractive salary and benefits, only to find ourselves let go in the first few weeks as the “fit” simply wasn’t there.

We would all hope to not be judged in these situations, which from the outside, without all the facts, could look like bad decisions or a reason for being undeserving.

### Kindness at Work

Kindness is amazingly simple. It requires no money, little time, it doesn’t compromise our ethics or beliefs, nor does it land us in hot water. Here are a few simple, straightforward examples of kindness in the workplace.

- Greet people you pass with a smile or nod. A simple acknowledgement is appreciated by all.
- Bring treats in once in a while. Sharing communicates that these people are of value to you.
- Inquire about your co-workers children, weekend activities. Showing interest shows acceptance.
- Drop the sarcasm and making jokes about someone, especially in front of others.
- Find something complimentary to say, but be sincere.
- Don’t gossip, hold grudges, place blame, or refuse to forgive. Not only are these unkind, but they are unhealthy states of mind that can affect physical well-being.
- Apologize if you find yourself with your “foot in your mouth,” having mentioned a topic that is hurtful to one of your listeners.

We all have lapses in good judgment and behaviour. We have times when we’re too tired or self-absorbed to help someone who dropped a bag of groceries, to smile at the cashier, to offer our parking spot to the other driver, or to give up our café latte to put extra money in a fund-raiser. But overall, we need to hold ourselves to a higher standard.

Kindness goes beyond niceness. Being polite and civil are without question needed in the working world. But being kind not only elevates the workplace to a higher plane of conscious living, but it diffuses tension, increases productivity, breaks down silos and enhances collaboration.

We spend hours each day in the world of work. It’s in everyone’s best interests to find ways to be kind.