



The universe of kindness: How doing good can unexpectedly boost your business

Kindness in business is not just good karma—it is a powerful strategy that builds trust, opens doors, and drives shared success.

Ever notice how the universe has a quirky sense of humour when it comes to kindness?

You help someone, move on, and forget about it. Meanwhile, the universe is backstage, taking notes, waiting for the perfect moment to surprise you with a reward you never saw coming.

In business, as in life, much of what you put into the world often finds its way back to you, sometimes with interest.

For the past two decades, I have been an avid student and learner of what makes work a delightful experience, with a deep focus on the positive effects of appreciation, kindness, and feedback. Along the way, I have developed a few concepts, including the one below, which maps the journey from empathy to compassion and ultimately to kindness.

AVI LIRAN'S KINDNESS MODEL

While exploring workplace case studies on these concepts, I came across an HBR article on kindness by Andrew Swinand, CEO of Inspired Thinking Group (ITG). Intrigued, I reached out on LinkedIn. He was kind enough to accept, and after a few email exchanges, he took it a step further by setting aside time for two sessions to share his perspective on kindness, its impact on workplace culture, and his five powerful tips.



But it all starts with a surprising story.

When Andrew and his team founded Abundant Venture Partners, they did so with a clear purpose. Doing well while doing good. Their core belief was more than a tagline. It was the foundation of how they operated. Success was not an individual pursuit but something to be shared. A rising tide lifts all boats.

Their early success was swift, and as they sought investors, they had a simple filter. They sought partners who excelled in M&A, real estate, or law, but who also demonstrated kindness in their approach. The ask was clear. Who are the smartest and kindest organisations in Chicago?

One name kept surfacing. GCM Grosvenor Capital Management. With US\$60 billion under management then (now B80, they were a financial powerhouse). The only challenge everyone mentioned was that Andrew's team was too small to get a meeting.

Andrew decided to take a chance. He sent an email to the leadership of Grosvenor, explaining how their values aligned with his own. Kindness, shared success, and the belief that doing well and doing good could go hand in hand.

Then, something remarkable happened. Within 24 hours, the managing partner replied. He said he receives many emails like this but rarely responds. This one was different because he already knew Andrew's name. His son had told him about Andrew. The mentor who helped him and other young graduates navigate their careers, land jobs, and build confidence. All without expecting anything in return. He knew Andrew walked the talk.

And just like that, a door that seemed locked swung open because a reputation built on generosity and integrity opens doors that no pitch deck ever could. What goes around truly does come around. And sometimes, it comes back with a lot of billions of dollars in credibility behind it.

Kindness is more than a virtue or a warm, fuzzy feeling. It is an asset, a currency that appreciates over time, turning goodwill into unexpected opportunities. The best investments do not always sit on a balance sheet. The power of your kind actions exists in the way people remember you, in the way your name carries weight long before you enter the room.

ANDREW SWINAND'S FORMULA FOR KINDNESS

Andrew Swinand believes that kindness is a strategic force, not just a personality trait. His approach involves five key practices:

1. Radical Self-Care

You cannot pour from an empty cup. True kindness starts with taking care of yourself. Failing to do so will hurt your well-being and your team's performance.

“The best way to be a valuable, thoughtful team member is to be disciplined about your own wellness – your physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing,” – Andrew Swinand

Andrew emphasised the importance of managing workloads, setting priorities, effective time management, and creating boundaries to prevent burnout. This means knowing when to unplug and recharge when necessary so you can bring your best self to work.

2. Fulfill Responsibilities Diligently + Support

Excellence and kindness go together. Performing a job well and volunteering to support others prevents unnecessary stress on colleagues and fosters a supportive work environment. Andrew encourages setting daily goals, reviewing performance, and actively seeking feedback to stay accountable.

“When you see a colleague struggling (and your workload is comparatively light), offer to help, even if the task is outside your normal scope of work. The smallest favours can foster a sense of team camaraderie and support, helping build that culture of kindness.” – Andrew Swinand

3. Reach Out – Intentionally Connect with Colleagues

Strong relationships do not happen by accident. Whether working remotely or in person, Andrew advocates for frequent check-ins, active listening, and genuine interest in colleagues' lives to create a culture of trust and support.

“In addition to getting to know your colleagues better, connecting with them on a deeper level is also a way to learn about their challenges and pain points. This will give you insights into how they’re feeling in and outside of work, what motivates them, and how you can help build up their confidence.” – Andrew Swinand

4. Recognise and Acknowledge Others

People thrive on appreciation. Andrew emphasises the importance of acknowledging contributions, offering praise, and cultivating a habit of gratitude. Even a small amount of recognition can have a lasting impact.

“The brain processes verbal affirmations similarly to financial rewards, and praise and gratitude make people feel valued and increase their morale.” – Andrew Swinand

5. Provide Conscientious Feedback

Kindness does not mean avoiding uncomfortable conversations. It means delivering authentic feedback with honesty and care, helping people grow rather than merely critiquing them. Andrew views this as an essential leadership skill that strengthens teams.

“Niceness tends to border on people-pleasing and can be disingenuous, while kindness is honest yet sensitive to other people’s experiences. Being kind means offering feedback that benefits the person receiving it and ultimately contributes to the overall success of your organisation. You’re seeking to build someone up.” – Andrew Swinand

By embedding these practices into your workplace culture, Andrew believes kindness becomes a force multiplier. One that drives innovation, boosts morale, and creates success that is shared by all.

About the Author:



Avi Liran is an economist, author, humourist, writer, C-level mentor, and one of Asia’s top motivational and inspirational keynote speakers. Avi is a thought leader and expert in creating delightful customer and employee experiences, positive cultures, fostering appreciation, and building authentic resilience.
