

Kindness in the Workplace: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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Most business leaders know that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the workplace are areas on which they should focus. Often, they are overwhelmed as to where to start. So, start with kindness. Kindness is defined as *a type of behavior marked by acts of generosity, consideration, or concern for others, without expecting praise or reward.*

Here are some simple steps you can take to bring true kindness to all people in your workplace:

Self-Reflection – Where are you starting from? Knowing your implicit bias is an excellent place to start. According to the Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence, “Implicit or unconscious bias operates outside of the person’s awareness and can be in direct contradiction to a person’s espoused beliefs and values. What is so dangerous about implicit bias is that it automatically seeps into a person’s affect or behavior and is outside of the full awareness of that person.” Just asking yourself, “What are my unconscious biases?”, surprisingly, can help you identify them. You can also take the Harvard Implicit Association Test or read more about this phenomenon in the book, [Blindspot: Hidden Biases of Good People](#).

Expand Your Circle of Influence - According to Tanya Gibson, VP of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and HR at Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, it is important to look at who we have in our circle of influence and check for diversity. If we only follow others on social media with the same background as us, our worldview will likely be very closed. Proactively find thought leaders who have a different perspective from you and begin to grow your empathy and understanding capacity.

Lean in to Difficult Conversations – Kwame Christian, Director and Lead Trainer at the American Negotiation Institute, outlined a very useful guide for leaning into difficult conversations in his LinkedIn Learning course, [“Difficult Conversations: Talking about Race at Work.”](#) Using this framework, you can acknowledge and validate emotions, use curiosity to open up dialogue, and work with others to determine what you're trying to solve.

Commit to being a kind and inclusive leader as Jennifer Brown, author of [*How to Be an Inclusive Leader*](#) says, "there are visible and invisible aspects of diversity within all of us." The more we can embrace that diversity, the more everyone (including the business) will thrive.