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LEADING THE WAY

AN UPDATE FROM MANAGEMENT

> **Where niceness protects feelings, kindness protects people.**
>
> *Dirk Mostert - COO Nano Fibre UK*



WHAT KINDNESS REALLY DOES

FASTER DECISIONS
Teams using direct-but-kind communication make decisions **40% faster**

BETTER PROBLEM-SOLVING
Kind workplaces see up to **36% stronger** problem-solving

LONGER IMPACT
People remember kind behaviour **five times longer** than polite behaviour.

BETTER MOOD
One kind moment can lift a person's mood for up to **24 hours.**

Kindness isn't soft.
It strengthens teams from the inside out.

The Mix-Up

Most people confuse kindness with niceness. Niceness keeps things smooth on the surface. Kindness goes underneath and fixes what actually matters. One avoids friction. The other reduces it.

The Purpose

Kindness keeps communication clear. It builds trust fast. When people feel respected, they collaborate rather than compete. Work becomes easier because the people in it get along better.

The Habit

Real kindness isn't random. It's practiced. It's the decision not to take shortcuts in how we speak, respond, correct, or support someone. It's a tone, a standard, a form of steadiness you choose every day.

Kindness works best when it's consistent, not occasional.

Kindness and **niceness** get lumped together far too easily, but the people who treat them as twins haven't paid attention to how differently they behave under pressure. From a distance, both look polite and pleasant. Up close, niceness is surface-level sugar, while kindness is structural steel. One keeps things comfortable. The other keeps things honest.

Kindness moves differently. It creates breathing room instead of tension. It gives people enough steadiness to talk about what's real without turning it into an event. It treats honesty as something gentle, not something sharp. Kindness doesn't jump into every awkward moment, but it doesn't avoid them either.
It's the quiet middle ground where people can speak plainly without fear of being judged or knocked off balance.

I once saw this play out most ordinarily. A teammate had clearly been having a tough few days. She was distracted, flustered, and carrying that look people get when life outside work is weighing heavily than usual. Most colleagues did the polite thing: a quick smile, a sympathetic nod, and then back to their tasks. But one person sat with her for a minute at the kettle, asked how she was holding up, and actually waited for the answer. No prying. No pressure. Just enough space for her to exhale. It was small, quiet, and completely normal and yet that moment steadied her more than any polite distance could have.

That's what kindness does. It **softens the edges of the day without ignoring its realities**. Niceness would have stayed on the surface. Kindness **created comfor**t without making it complicated.

You see this difference clearly in leadership. Nice leaders want to be liked. They smooth things over, soften every bit of feedback, and avoid difficult conversations until they become full-blown crises. They believe they're protecting morale, but in reality, they're abandoning people by refusing to guide them. **Niceness in leadership often shows up as false reassurance, vague praise, and an unwillingness to call out destructive behaviour.**

Kind leaders don't hide behind pleasantries.
They give direct, constructive feedback because they want people to grow, not drift.

They step in when someone crosses a line, not to embarrass them but to protect the team. They tell the truth without turning it into a spectacle. They don't trade clarity for comfort. Kindness in leadership takes courage, because you're choosing what is helpful over what is easy.

Niceness loves quick emotional wins. Kindness plays the long game.

Kindness builds durability. It clears the air early.
It makes space for honest conversations. It creates a climate where people know where they stand. When you work in a kind environment, you don't hold your breath waiting for an explosion. You don't spend time decoding someone's tone. You don't waste energy guessing what someone really meant. **Kindness makes communication cleaner, and cleaner communication makes work faster and more human.**

That doesn't mean kindness is endlessly patient or self-sacrificing. Sometimes the kindest thing you can do is set a boundary. Sometimes it's drawing a line and saying, *This stops now*. Sometimes it's refusing to participate in drama. Niceness would keep absorbing everything until resentment takes over. **Kindness knows when enough is enough and handles it with maturity instead of martyrdom.**

If you want a workplace where people don't dread Mondays or walk around tense, forget the culture of niceness. It's fragile, and it falls apart the second reality gets messy. **Build a culture of kindness instead**. Honest conversations, genuine respect, real accountability, real support. Not the fake-smile version, but the grounded, grown-up kind that makes people feel safe enough to do their best work.

Niceness keeps things pleasant. Kindness keeps things healthy.

And when you choose between the two, select health every time.

With kindness that strengthens

