

# The Power of Kindness

*Creating a Culture of Well-Being, Belonging and Care*



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# Do You Believe in the Power of Kindness?

Oooh, I believe in the power of kindness.

Oooh, I believe in the power of love.

Oooh, I believe in the power of kindness.

Oooh, I believe in the power of love.

*--Ma Muse (Song)*



*What values would you like to have guide your school?*

# The Power of Kindness

*Creating a Culture of Well-Being, Belonging, and Care*



Mindfulness in Education: Our Bridge to the Future

A brief sampling of things I did last school year to create /deepen a school wide culture of well-being and care. These can be stand-alone activities that you can do in the classroom, staff room, or school-wide. Woven together, a systemic approach to creating a mindful nurturing culture where everyone belongs.

What do we mean by mindfulness in school settings?

The following mindfulness-related activities are about:

- \*setting intention;
- \*finding opportunities to pause and reflect;
- \*cultivating wholesome states of presence and well-being;
- \*practicing right speech and action

Mindful awareness and mindful engagement and ways we act

# Setting the Stage: Our Guiding Theme & Theory

Vision / Portrait of the Graduate + Data + End of Year Staff Meeting → Theme for Next School Year +  
"Theory of Change" (Statement/Question to Guide our Plans and Action):

## Guiding Statement and Question

We have devoted time and energy on creating a culture of belonging yet there are many people who haven't experienced this consistently.

What can we do to deepen and expand our culture of kindness and care?

## Driving Question

What does it mean (*really mean*)  
to be kind (*radically kind*)  
to each other?



## I wonder...

...If we, as a staff, experience and model kindness, connection, belonging...

...It will have positive effect on ways students feel connected and contribute to a community of kindness and care.

*What vision, big idea, question guides your school year?*

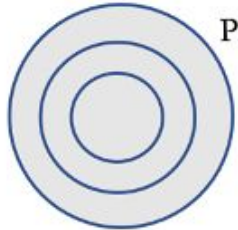
# Beginning of the Year PD

What are some “small kindnesses”  
we can offer and receive from each other  
throughout the day, week, year  
that would demonstrate  
we care.

*\*See slides 9, 10 for poem / hand-out.*

Where in your childhood  
did you learn  
about kindness, connection, joy?  
What person or situation  
comes to mind?

What is the difference  
between  
being “Nice”  
and  
being “Kind?”



Planting Seeds of Kindness:

Class-room  
Staff-room  
School-wide

The Monk's Story

Write and post a virtue on your colleagues' back.

Mindful moment: Include everyone. Equally.

We all are worthy of each other's kindness and respect.

# Empathy Interviews...

*...are a method for understanding the experiences of people whose lives are impacted.*

*They can help to identify the root causes of challenges people are facing, and can uncover powerful solutions that will have a real impact on community members' lives.*



## Student Empathy Interview Prompts

1. What does it mean to be a kind person at school?
2. On a scale of 1-10, how is your class/ our school doing with regard to being kind?
3. What are some ways we can improve? What are some things people do that are not kind?

# Recapping our Journey: A Checklist

## *Principles & Practices re: Well-Being, Belonging, and Engagement*

- \_\_\_ Purpose (Vision, Portrait, Question, Theory of Change)... *something that guides, inspires, aligns*
- \_\_\_ Common Language...*Poems, Quotes, Songs, Ted Talks, etc. that are used, repeated, posted*
- \_\_\_ Agreements, Norms...*and articulation of specific things you will say and do to reflect these values*
  
- \_\_\_ Include All... *Invite, encourage, remind; repeat. All means all. Avoid voting; Whoever wants to join, joins.*
- \_\_\_ Provide Opportunities to Mingle...*Purposeful grouping and seating*
  
- \_\_\_ Use of Data
- \_\_\_ Check in. Monitor progress. *“Create the path by walking”*
  
- \_\_\_ Rituals and Celebrations
  
- \_\_\_ Restorative Practices



# Kindness Cards



Stop & Breathe.

Identify the size of the problem.

Small → let it go. Medium → work it out. Big → speak up; get help.

Work it out:

Stop & Breathe.

“I feel \_\_\_ when \_\_\_; I need \_\_\_; Will you please \_\_\_?”

Ask a Peacemaker for help.

# Small (and Not-So-Random Acts of) Kindness

## Small Kindnesses by Danusha Lameris

I've been thinking about the way, when you walk down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs to let you by. Or how strangers still say "bless you" when someone sneezes, a leftover from the Bubonic plague. "Don't die," we are saying. And sometimes, when you spill lemons from your grocery bag, someone else will help you pick them up. Mostly, we don't want to harm each other. We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot, and to say thank you to the person handing it. To smile at them and for them to smile back. For the waitress to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder, and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass. We have so little of each other, now. So far from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange. What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here, have my seat," "Go ahead—you first," "I like your hat."

# Nice vs. Kind: Why Does It Matter?

At some point in your life, you have probably been told to “be nice” — or told someone else the same. You may also have been taught to value the concept of kindness. We may not realize, though, that these two are not interchangeable — and can affect the people around us in very different ways.

What’s the difference between nice and kind? Generally, niceness involves doing something that is pleasing or agreeable. By contrast, kindness is doing something that is helpful to others, or that comes from a place of [benevolence](#). Kindness is often expressed through actions that you take for other people, while niceness typically involves more superficial words or simple gestures. A nice person may tell a neighbor that they are sorry that they are sick — while a kind person may drop off some soup or offer to pick up groceries for them. Consider a situation where a student is being bullied at school. A nice classmate might tell them, in private, that they don’t deserve this treatment and that they are sorry that it is happening. A kind person might stand up in the moment, telling the bullies to stop or getting a teacher involved.

Being nice is a result of social conditioning and expectations of how we should act. In many ways, these unofficial rules are a good thing, leading us to be polite and helping us avoid conflict. Yet too often, niceness is prioritized over true kindness — which can be damaging and destructive.

For example, if you are at a party and hear someone make a sexist joke that is degrading to women, your “nice” response might be to not say anything to avoid making anyone uncomfortable. The kind response may be to speak up about the joke. It may not feel “nice” to do so, but ultimately, it is far kinder — to both the joke teller and the others in the room with you — to call out this type of harmful conduct. A person can be both kind and nice. In the example above, a kind person can nicely call out the joke by saying something straightforward like, “I don’t get it. Why is that funny?” Being kind doesn’t always mean being nice, however — because the truly kind response won’t always be pleasing to the other person. In many situations, being nice is not necessarily kind.

True kindness isn’t always easy. It typically requires more than niceness, and can be uncomfortable. For example, if your close friend makes a homophobic comment, you might be tempted to just pretend that you didn’t hear it to be “nice.” Yet if you want to be kind to your friend, you will say something. They may not have realized that what they said was offensive, or may simply need to hear another perspective to understand that these kinds of comments are hurtful. It may be easier to be nice in this situation — but being kind is the far better option.

# Checklist

## *Principles & Practices re: Well-Being, Belonging, and Care*

\_\_\_\_ Purpose (Vision, Portrait, Theme, Question, Theory of Change)... *something that guides, inspires, aligns*

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