

Boot Camp for New (and lightly-trained) Supervisors Week 2, Day 2: Kindness Matters

Leaders often push back at the idea that kindness matters. They say, “I don’t have to be kind. I’m not their best friend!” We talked yesterday about how we should definitely not be an employee’s best friend if we can avoid it. We don’t have to be someone’s friend to be kind to them. Being kind also doesn’t make us a pushover. We still need to set clear expectations and be sure that everyone is living up to those expectations.

Holding high standards for someone while being respectful is expecting excellence with kindness. Parenting is a good example. As children grow up, parents maintain high expectations and standards for them. There are consequences if the children don’t live up to those standards. The parents aren’t helping the children by letting them get away with less than their best. Parents deeply want their children to be successful.

That’s the same perspective we want to have with employees. We care about them and their success, so we set clear expectations and standards. Then we hold them to those standards. We want to maintain a positive relationship, so we act with kindness. We don’t yell or belittle. We help them succeed in a positive way.

When we talk about coaching later in the course, we will discuss specific ways to talk to someone about meeting a standard. The mechanics of coaching are important, but not as important as the intention to be kind as we help your employees succeed. One of our primary goals as a supervisor is to create positive relationships and create personal influence. Both of those things are really impossible to create unless we are kind to people.