

How can people be taught become more kind, in measurable ways? This is a great question because it highlights the difference between doing a kind act and becoming more kind. The answer is yes, people can become more kind. This is an intangible and direct measurement is a challenge. But we can measure the things surrounding the intangible, like time. A simple idea: take 1% of your waking hours today focused on showing kindness to others. For a general number, you spend that 1% on a total of around three people. What does 1% come out to if you divide out your entire waking hours – it's a little less than ten minutes. That's it. Practice is one of the 8 VIPs. Your Kindness quotient and your life will begin to change in ways that IQ and EQ can never touch.

What steps/actions are required to begin down the path of improving kindness. Kindness is an external precipitate (outcome) of meaning making. There are 8 VIPs (Value Informing Principles), when employed, will increase a person's kindness quotient. As we mentioned in the first question, the principle of practice is key, which is one of the 8. Understanding the interaction of values (which are internal, reflect our true desires, and determine our actions) and principles (which are external, apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time, and determine the outcomes of our decisions and actions) will help anyone become more kind.

What variables should be used to measure kindness? The simplest answer is the intersection of Utility (justification, the right reason) and Understanding (judgment, the right thing). Utility and Understanding are measurable scales.

Is there such a thing as universal kindness? There is such a thing as universal principles, and kindness is an outcome of those principles. There is a cultural component to be sensitive to when we talk about any generalization. Kindness may be expressed in different forms and in different processes depending on where you are.

Is it possible to have too much kindness? There cannot be too much of true kindness. There can be too much of clever counterfeits of true kindness (eg. giving too many handouts instead of investing in a person or people and teaching, strengthening them). We are not saying all handouts are bad, but only if that is all we do, in the long run it might teach the wrong lessons.

Why does kindness matter? From our vision statement: LoveThem nurtures a world that believes each individual has value and belongs. True and lasting transformation (of people and communities) comes through kindness, empathy, compassion, and love; driving out fear, hate, loneliness, and oppression. By finding and encouraging the good in others, we uplift them and open our minds to the infinite worth of all those around us. Being kind, and loving is the most powerful act we can do.

What are the levels of kindness? There are several ways to answer that question. The LoveThem Personal Decision Matrix (PDM) highlights several ways to determine levels (eg. Dependent, Independent, and Interdependent; Reactive, Active, and ProActive; etc.). Within the PDM we find lower levels of kindness such as random kindness, purposeful kindness, discovered kindness, etc., and higher levels all the way to Breakthrough Understanding. It's best to study the PDM to understand why this is so.

Can kindness be taught to an adult, if so, what are the best ways to teach it? Yes, it can be taught, and more importantly, it can be learned. The short answer is: understanding the Meaning Marketplace™. A longer answer is, understanding and employing the 8 VIPs™, the PDM for Decision-making for Breakthrough Understanding™, Meaning Making, and then becoming a supplier and consumer in the Meaning Marketplace.

How can we measure an organization's commitment to kindness? It cannot just be measured in acts, because those can be insincere. Measurement of commitment to kindness might be measured by the right surveys, potentially by the amount of Spark (the currency in the Meaning Marketplace™—choice and accountability).

How can we distinguish between real kindness or fake kindness, does that even matter? It is pretty tough to distinguish between the real and the fake by one incident. It is doable, however, over time. It matters a lot. Clever counterfeits of any principle can be terribly detrimental. We have built a kindness matrix that highlights the potential of missing a component of kindness.

How to punish a unkind person, while being kind at the same time? Kindness is not the same thing as "nice." The term we use for the world's kindness is "nice." This is one of the clever counterfeits we mentioned above. Nice is easy, nice is safe. There is no risk or vulnerability with nice. We can be nice, but indifferent, critical, even sarcastic (or cynical). We can hold open a door, smile, even give money to a person on the street, without looking him in the eye or genuinely caring. We can also punish a person and pretend to do it in a nice way. Kindness requires effort, risk, thinking and then deciding and doing, letting go of judgments, perceptions, or our own shortcomings. A true kind word has more power than a "nice" gift. This level gets into purposeful decision making, choice and accountability, etc.

Does kindness differ culture to culture, if so, in what ways? Cultures, communities, tribes, and nations are defined by their common identity to certain values, norms, and expressive symbols. Although kindness springs from universal principles, the expression of that kindness might have different expressive symbols, for instance. A member of our team was given a porcupine quill once by a tribal chief in South Africa. What it meant in giving it to our team member was significant, once he understood its meaning. Another time, a team member was on a small island in Micronesia on a humanitarian mission. Their plane had broken down and they had to wait for a part to be flown in the next day. The island invited them to a big party that evening. He was visiting with some islanders when he saw a truck full of lobster drive by. The person told our team member that was for the party later that evening. They went to the party and were served coagulated pig's blood, while the islanders dined on lobster. It turned out, coagulated pig's blood is a rare delicacy and only given to royalty and visiting dignitaries. Lobster was common and not very special.

Is it true, that there is kindness in everyone, if so, how can we prove that? It is scientifically provable that there are measurable benefits to being kind. We are not saying there is a way to scientifically prove kindness is in everyone. Humans are certainly born with a capacity to be kind — even naturally inclined toward kindness in many situations. We have neurons in our brains, called mirror neurons, and they respond in the same way when we experience pain, say by being pricked with a needle, as they do when we see someone else

experience the same thing. We can point you to many studies on this topic. We are a faith-based company, and thus we should also say that all humans are born with the light of deity in us. As Christians we would call this the Light of Christ. Muslims call this nūr Allāh, the Light of God. Jews call it Ner Tamid—the eternal light. Hinduism talks of Prakasa—the divine consciousness. Buddhism calls it Nimitta—a state of pure consciousness. Most of these religions also have a festival surrounding the celebration of light and the kindness it emanates.

Can kindness be made tangible? Gift giving (whether a tangible object, or a service rendered) is tangible. This is one reason we know that, no matter the other things we focus on and monetize, gifts should be a part of what we do and facilitate. Our actions are tangible, and over time reflect our inner values. The decisions we make also are good markers of our level of kindness.

Can we create a kindness index? We mentioned earlier that there is a way to measure one's kindness quotient. We have created several other indexes that dance around the campfire of kindness. This needs more serious study and we are engaged in that dialogue.

Is there a kindness award, something like the Nobel Prize? The Nobel Prize was created by Alfred Nobel as a sort of penance for being the “Merchant of Death.” Hopefully we will never have a similar reputation. As far as an award, there are several out there. The Aurora Prize for Awakening Humanity winner gets \$100,000. The Wallenberg Medal of the University of Michigan is bestowed upon those whose outstanding actions in the moment of need have helped protect the defenseless and rescue the oppressed. The Carnegie Medal, and others do not focus exactly on kindness, but on courage, freedom, or human rights. We don't want to reinvent the wheel, but in our own simple way we have minted and provide kindness coins to special practitioners of kindness. They are numbered and finite, hopefully increasing the meaning of the gift to the recipient.