

THE PROGRAM

LETTERS ON LEADERSHIP

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- LETTER ON LEADERSHIP #26 -

Nice and Kind



My son, Axel's former school had a "Kindness Initiative." His teachers continuously reinforced the importance of treating classmates and teammates with kindness. If someone falls, help them up. If someone is crying, ask what is wrong. If someone is sitting on the "Kindness Bench" (a bench on the playground where if a child is lonely, they go and sit), someone else takes it upon themselves to sit with them. Say hello. Hold the door open. Say please and thank you. Smile.

The Kindness Initiative is a basic reinforcement of The Golden Rule: treat others the same way that you wish to be treated. And who doesn't agree with The Golden Rule? It reinforces one of the many things that my wife and I strive to teach our children at home. The only difference is that The Program considers the above-stated examples as Random Acts of Niceness. Not Kindness.

We all want to be well-liked. It is a human condition. We have evolved to be such. You did NOT want to be kicked out of the cave for being a jerk. You couldn't survive solo. We all want to be good friends. Good friends are nice to each other. Good friends tell each other what they want to hear. Great teammates, though, are kind for each other. Great teammates tell each other what they need to hear. They know that by doing so, by holding each other accountable, great teammates help make each other the best versions of themselves. Holding a teammate accountable may interfere with being well-liked and most certainly will not be popular. Someone may take being held accountable personally and become emotional. Great teammates have that conversation, nonetheless. By doing so, they are saying that their friend, classmate, teammate, partner, co-worker, husband, wife or child improving is more important than any feeling of discomfort that they themselves might feel during that challenging, uncomfortable conversation. Kindness requires sacrifice.

Nice is a form of laziness. Kindness is an act of love. Show me a team that holds each other accountable, I will show you a team that loves, or at the very least, cares deeply, about each other. Show me a team that doesn't hold each other accountable, and I will show you a team that simply yells, "one, two, three, FAMILY" at the end of practice. Accountability is not about calling someone "out." Accountability is about calling a teammate "up!" Thankfully, we don't need to choose to be nice OR kind. Commit to being Nice AND Kind. Commit to being great friends to each other AND great teammates for each other, on all the teams that we are privileged to be part. The best teammates and best leaders do.

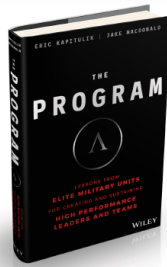
ATTACK!

Eric Kapitulik
Founder and CEO

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