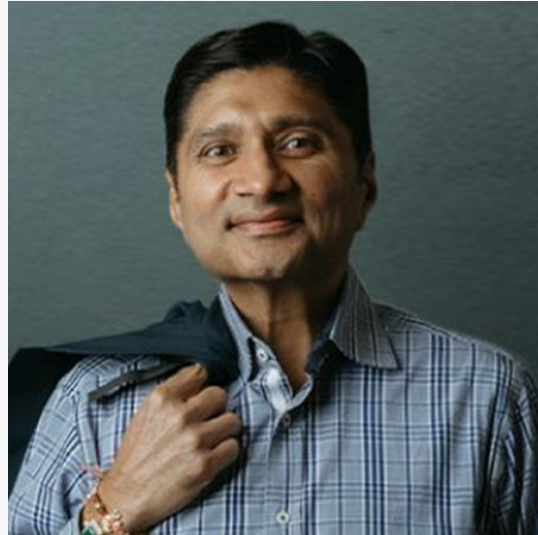September 17, 2025

From Incivility to Kindness:
The Business Imperative

Session Outline:
Embedding Kindness with the INTEGRATE Model

Introductions

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Goals

1 Explore the INTEGRATE model as a framework to embed kindness in structural and relational systems.

2 Design interventions that build psychological safety, respect, and mutual care.

3 Develop an individualized action plan to operationalize kindness in your own organization or setting.

The Roots of Incivility

Traditional Management Often Relies on Fear-based Approaches.

- Top-down control
- Command and control
- Reward and punishment

Suppression of Voice

When people fear punishment, ridicule, or retaliation for speaking up, they stay silent. This silence builds resentment, mistrust, and passive resistance. Over time, frustration leaks out in subtle forms of incivility—eye rolls, dismissive comments, gossip—because it feels safer than direct confrontation.

Survival Mode Thinking

Fear triggers the brain's "fight, flight, or freeze" response. Instead of collaboration, individuals prioritize self-protection. In this defensive state:

- Fight = sarcasm, rudeness, cutting others down.

- Flight = withdrawal, ignoring colleagues, withholding information.

- Freeze = disengagement, stonewalling, or passive-aggressive behaviors.
  All of these erode civility.

Scarcity Mindset

Fear creates a sense of **competition for limited resources**—time, recognition, advancement. In scarcity, colleagues see each other as rivals instead of allies. This zero-sum outlook normalizes uncivil acts like interrupting, hoarding information, or undermining others to "get ahead."

Why Kindness Is An Asset

- Kindness is not a soft virtue—it is a **strategic asset**

- Embed kindness as a **measurable system design principle**

- Evidence shows:

  a. **$1.9 trillion** lost annually from disengaged employees

  b. **Toxic culture** is *10x more predictive* of attrition than pay

  c. **High-trust workplaces** outperform the S&P 500 by **3x**

- Kindness impacts both **organizational performance** and **human well-being**

Why Kindness Is An Asset

Real World Case Study – Santa Clara County

- Addressed incivility as a **structural, technological, and cultural challenge**

- **Structural** – Redesigned workflows to reduce friction

- **Technological** – Transparent feedback loops & user-centered design

- **Cultural** – Leadership training in empathy, accountability, and inclusion

- **Result**: Improved collaboration, reduced silos, stronger resilience during transformations

The INTEGRATE Model

The **INTEGRATE model** is a transformational framework designed to embed love, compassion, dignity, and systemic healing into every level of an organization. It recognizes that sustainable change requires both cultural and structural alignment, and it provides a practical blueprint for creating organizations where people—and systems—can flourish.

Each letter in **INTEGRATE** represents a key system domain:

★ **I – Inspire – Leadership & Vision**
Lead with humility, presence, and shared purpose. Align leadership with emotionally intelligent, values-driven strategies.

★ **N – Nurture – Teams & Relationships**
Build safe, high-performing teams through trust, inclusion, and psychological safety. Prioritize connection over roles.

★ **T – Trust – Relational & Informational Systems**
Design transparent feedback loops and repair systems that strengthen trust, accountability, and communication.

★ **E – Embody – Culture & Values in Action**
Bring mission, vision, and values to life in visible, felt, and celebrated ways—rituals, storytelling, behaviors, and symbols.

★ **G – Guide – Management Practices**
Shift management from control to compassionate clarity. Center coaching, listening, and development.

★ **R – Regulate – Policies & Governance**
Review and redesign policies through a lens of equity, emotional safety, and restorative justice.

★ **A – Align – Workflows & Operations**
Ensure day-to-day systems support—not deplete—people. Harmonize operations with purpose, clarity, and capacity.

★ **T – Transcend – Community & Social Impact**
Extend love beyond the organization. Co-create healing with communities and address systemic injustice.

★ **E – Engage – People (Voice, Agency, and Belonging)**
Design inclusive systems where every voice matters and everyone can contribute, lead, and grow with dignity.

INTEGRATE Best Practices

Understand your strengths and opportunities, prioritize and align resources, and create a roadmap to advancing your journey as A Loving Organization

INSPIRE – Leadership
- Loving Leadership
- Shared Governance

NURTURE – Teams
- High Performing Teams
- Real-Time Conflict Resolution

TRUST – Technology
- Empathetic Automation – Ambient Listening
- Layer Trust in Technology & Processes

EMBODY – Values
- Embedded Mission, Vision, Values, Behaviors
- Images and Narratives of Kindness

GUIDE – Management
- Accountability, Feedback, Communication, Decision-Making
- Pulse-Checks, Cascading Huddles

REGULATE – Policies
- Loving Incentives
- Empowering Policies

ALIGN – Workflows
- Ensure Humane Workflows which Balance Productivity with Relationships and Outcomes
- Humanize Handoffs

TRANSCEND – Community
- Engaging Patients, Families, & Friends – "Home Teams"
- Being an "Anchor" in the Community

ENGAGE – People
- Design Loving Inclusion & Belonging Programs
- Invest in Human Relations – Building Love and Loving Systems into Job Descriptions, Hiring, Parting

The Impact of Kindness

University Hospitals

Key Achievements with "Living and Leading with Love"

University Hospitals applied this model to over 100 projects, leading to numerous measurable improvements in patient care, safety, and efficiency:

- **Length of Stay (LOS) Improvements:** The observed-to-expected LOS was **reduced from 1.31 to 1.16** days, with significant reductions across multiple hospitals. UH Cleveland Medical Center, for example, **reduced its LOS from 1.67 to 1.44**.

- **ERAS and Surgical Care:** Enrollment in Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) programs **increased from 59% to 68%,** contributing to reducing the LOS for surgical patients **from 6.3 days to 2.3 days**. The system achieved an observed LOS of 0.89 for ERAS patients, showcasing the effectiveness of this comprehensive model.

- **Patient Mobility and Follow-Up Visits:** The percentage of patients with daily mobility **increased from 42% to 64.8%,** and patients scheduled for follow-up visits from the emergency department **rose from 2% to 20%.**

Saint Luke's University Health Network

Key Achievements with Aligned Principles

St. Luke's dedication to fostering a compassionate culture has driven notable improvements in employee engagement, patient experience, and innovation.

- **Staff Engagement:** The turnover rate **was reduced from 15.3% in 2023 to 12.9% in 2024** and the vacancy rate **shrunk from 15.3% in 2023 to 12.4% in 2024**. Staff engagement surveys ranked them in the **96th percentile, with a 69% response rate**, well above national averages.

- **Deterioration Index:** There was a **57% reduction** in cardiac arrests, and the survival rate **was 27.7% compared to the national average of 25%**. There was also a **23% reduction** in transfers to the ICU.

- **Patient Experience:** Percentile ranks improved from 2021 to Q1 2025: Network Inpatient **70 to 82,** ED **63 to 72,** Inpatient Physician Communication **58 to 81**, and Transition of Care **59 to 82**.

The Impact of Kindness

- **Inspire (Leadership & Vision):** Shifted leaders from command-and-control to modeling humility, empathy, and accountability.

- **Nurture (Teams & Relationships):** Introduced recognition rituals and real-time conflict resolution to strengthen psychological safety.

- **Trust (Relational & Informational Systems):** Built transparent dashboards and closed-loop feedback systems so staff knew their voices were heard.

- **Embody (Culture & Values):** Codified kindness in daily operations through micro-rituals, inclusive practices, and visible leader behaviors.

- **Guide (Management Practices):** Redesigned meeting cadence and escalation paths, reducing friction and reinforcing compassionate clarity.

- **Regulate (Policies & Governance):** Adjusted policies to balance accountability with equity and restorative practices.

- **Align (Workflows & Operations):** Simplified handoffs and reduced workflow bottlenecks to cut the stress that drives incivility.

- **Transcend (Community & Impact):** Extended the culture of respect beyond the organization during hospital integrations and partnerships.

- **Engage (Voice, Agency, Belonging):** Created multiple safe channels for staff input, increasing participation and responsiveness.

Interactive Design

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

Step 1. Pick an INTEGRATE Element
☐ Inspire (Leadership)
☐ Nurture (Teams)
☐ Trust (Relational & Informational Systems)
☐ Embody (Culture)
☐ Guide (Management)
☐ Regulate (Policies)
☐ Align (Workflows)
☐ Transcend (Community)
☐ Engage (People)

Step 2. Brainstorm Structural Intervention

Step 3. Reflection Prompts

1. How will this intervention create psychological safety?

2. How will it be measured?

3. How will it be modeled by leadership?

Step 4. Structural & Relational Levers

- **Structural Lever (system/process):**
- **Relational Lever (trust, connection, kindness):**

Implementing Kindness

ORGANIZATIONAL SELF-ASSESSMENT

Maturity Level Descriptions:
- **Level 1: Unconscious / Inconsistent** – Loving practices are rare, episodic, and not recognized as systemic.
- **Level 2: Foundational / Aware** – Leadership and teams are beginning to recognize the importance of love, with early pilots or pockets of practice.
- **Level 3: Intentional / Structured** – Systems are in place; practices are increasingly consistent and measured. Love is visible but not yet universal.
- **Level 4: Anchored / Embedded** – Love is deeply integrated into structures, policies, leadership, and daily operations. It feels like "the way we do things."
- **Level 5: Exemplary / Generative** – Love is sustaining, self-renewing, and externally recognized. The organization becomes a model and generator of love for others.

Inspire (Leadership): Score (1–5) ___
- Do leaders embody love, vision, and courage in setting direction?
- Are they modeling humility, compassion, and transparency?
- Do staff feel inspired and connected to a larger purpose?

Nurture (Teams): Score (1–5) ___
- Are teams supported to be high-performing, safe, and inclusive?
- Do systems encourage collaboration, trust, and peer recognition?
- Are conflicts addressed with respect and care?

Trust (Relational & Informational Systems): Score (1–5) ___
- Are data, technology, and information systems trustworthy and people-centered?
- Is communication transparent, timely, and respectful?
- Do staff trust leadership and one another to act with integrity?

Embody (Culture): Score (1–5) ___
- Are mission, vision, and values lived daily—not just written?
- Do rituals, symbols, and behaviors reflect a loving culture?
- Are dignity, inclusion, and belonging embedded in practice?

Guide (Management): Score (1–5) ___
- Do management systems (e.g., feedback, accountability) reflect compassion?
- Are managers trained to coach, listen, and empower rather than control?
- Is psychological safety prioritized?

Regulate (Policies): Score (1–5) ___
- Do policies empower people and remove fear?
- Are policies reviewed for their fairness, equity, and love orientation?
- Do staff feel that "rules" protect dignity rather than punish?

Align (Workflows & Operations): Score (1–5) ___
- Are workflows designed to reduce burden and enable caring connections?
- Are patient, client, and staff experiences considered in operational design?
- Do cross-functional processes align toward shared values and outcomes?

Transcend (Community): Score (1–5) ___
- Does the organization build loving partnerships with its broader community?
- Are equity, justice, and sustainability woven into strategy?
- Are community voices (people, caregivers, partners) invited into decision-making?

Engage (People): Score (1–5) ___
- Are staff supported to grow, learn, and thrive as whole persons?
- Are recognition, gratitude, and well-being practices embedded in daily life?
- Do people feel they belong, are valued, and have a voice?

Implementing Kindness

INTEGRATE Element	Starter Skills (Rate 1–5)	System Mapping (Org-Level Expression)	Self-Rating (1–5)
Inspire	Visioning, storytelling, presence, motivating others, modeling hope	Leadership → How leaders set tone, direction, and inspiration beyond authority	____
Nurture	Empathy, listening, emotional support, compassion in conflict	Teams → High-performing, psychologically safe teams	____
Trust	Integrity, transparency, reliability, fair use of technology, data stewardship	Technology/Systems → Designing trustworthy systems, tools, and information flow	____
Embody	Living values, resilience, authenticity, dignity, role modeling	Culture → Mission, vision, and values in daily practice	____
Guide	Coaching, feedback, communication, accountability, facilitation	Management → Feedback, communication, accountability systems	

Regulate	Policy design, fairness, justice, compliance with compassion	Policies → Rules and policies that empower rather than restrict	____
Align	Coordination, workflow design, efficiency, cross-boundary thinking	Workflows & Operations → Alignment of patient, nurse, physician, org workflows	____
Transcend	Partnership-building, diplomacy, bridge-building, service mindset	Community → External partnerships that heal and elevate	____
Engage	Mentorship, inclusion, dialogue facilitation, learning, voice	People → Growth, development, learning, authentic engagement of staff	____

Implementing Kindness

- Technology can **amplify stress** or act as a **lever for kindness**

- **Best practices:**

  - **UX Design** – Reduce friction, simplify tasks

  - **Feedback Loops** – Enable listening & action from frontline voices

  - **Transparency** – Clarify performance & outcomes with data

  - **Empathetic Automation** – Support human judgment, preserve dignity

- **Goal:** Design systems that **serve people—not the other way around**

Committing to Kindness

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY, PART 2

1. Who will you need to vet this idea with? (e.g., leadership, compliance, frontline staff, IT, union, board)

2. What other stakeholders should be engaged early?

3. What impacts will you track? (psychological safety, engagement, workflow efficiency, patient/family experience, etc.)

4. What is a realistic timeline for piloting and scaling this?

- Start: _____

- Pilot review: _____

- Full implementation: _____

5. How will you ensure accountability and sustain success?

Your Call to Action

1 Turn at least one of your ideas into a visible change within the next 30 days

2 Learn more about the power of systems in implementing kindness

3 Spread the word to your colleagues

Q&A

What are your thoughts?

Thank You!