Kindness in Difficult Times
In one word

How would you describe the people you are leading right now, in the face of this crisis?
Our world changed
Those we lead are...

- Stressed
- Afraid
- Lonely
People are stressed

83% of US workers suffer from work-related stress

Organizations lose $300 billion yearly as a result of workplace stress

Stress causes around one million workers to miss work every day.
Stressed a lot

43% - ‘boss doesn’t care’
$51 billion - absenteeism
$26 billion – treatment costs
120,000 - deaths
$190 billion – healthcare costs
And with the virus?

- Increased alcohol, tobacco, drugs
- Worsening chronic health problems
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sleeplessness
- Change in routine
People are afraid

#5 – people I know becoming ill
#6 – fear of loved ones dying
#10 – fear of high medical bills

March 4, 2020
“Nearly two hundred dead, fourteen thousand who are sick, millions, as you witnessed, who are scared. What do you say to Americans who are watching you right now who are scared?”
Viral fears

Economy
Shelter in place
Abundance of caution
People are lonely
2010 study

social connectedness = 50% decrease in risk of early death

prolonged isolation = same health risks as 15 cigarettes per day
2015 BYU research

Holt-Lunstad, 2015
2020 US loneliness index

61% of those surveyed are lonely
Generational?

Age 18-22 – 73% sometimes / always alone
- Heavy social media = 71% lonely
- Light social media = 51% lonely

Older folks? They’re good!
Workers

New?
Entry level?
Senior executives?

Men?
Women?

F2F?
So.....

Stress
Fear
Loneliness
It’s time for kindness
.....despite leadership theory

Great Man Theory
What it’s not
When we succeed?

Significant impact on well-being

Kindness ranked above physical attractiveness

Patients’ colds shortened 1 day

Lowers the effects of stress / social anxiety
When we fail?

Neural shutdown
Depressed immune systems
Elevated glucocorticoids
Mental / Physical illness
And now.....

...the stakes are higher.
Step 1. Self-care
Step 2. Be visible

YOU NEED TO BE VISIBLE
Step 3. Be empathetic

“*It's not really my problem if others are in trouble and need help*”

"*Before criticizing somebody I try to imagine how I would feel if I were in their place.*"
Step 4. Be clear (and often)

“Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind.”

—Brené Brown—
Step 5. Trust them
Step 6. Embed it

Revise your mission and values
Be clear with employees
Hire better
Help the de-energizers
Recognize kind behavior

Want 12% more production?
Better retention?
Positive employees?
Finally....

“Practice kindness all day to everybody and you will realize you’re already in heaven now.”

Jack Kerouac
Now go be kind!

Key Executive Leadership Programs

@AUKEYPROGRAMS

pmalone@american.edu