

Work hard and be kind

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*Inspired by a poster I saw recently I had pause to ponder the two best pieces of advice I could possibly give to higher education graduating students (and I do) – **work hard** and **be kind**. In a world that often feels unnecessarily complex and somewhat chaotic - certain truths remain timeless. Among the simplest and most profound is a guiding mantra - “Work hard and be kind.” These words, unassuming yet powerful, encapsulate values that transcend cultures, eras, and professions. They do not require privilege or special talent—only dedication and empathy.*



The importance of hard work

Without doubt hard work is the *engine* behind progress, achievement, and self-discovery. Throughout history, individuals who have reached great heights - whether in science, art, sports, or social change for that matter - have done so not merely through talent, but through relentless effort. Hard work is not just about the hours invested, it is also about the resilience to face setbacks; the discipline to persist; and the willingness to stretch beyond comfort zones.

The literature on the matter suggests that working hard does many things – it builds character; unlocks potential; fuels opportunity and cultivates fulfillment. Work hard does not always mean working longer hours - it often means working smarter. If you establish clear goals – and break them into manageable smaller steps - a great deal can be achieved. Consider an athlete training for years before reaching the podium; or a student mastering a subject one concept at a time. In the workplace - hard work can manifest in many ways including - taking initiative, collaborating with colleagues, and continuously seeking improvement. Over time, these small, consistent acts of effort accumulate, often yielding results that seem impossible at the outset.

The importance of kindness

'If hard work is the fuel for achievement, kindness is the glue that holds communities together'. Being kind should not be seen as a weakness - or for that matter a luxury. Kindness is an essential component of human connection and wellbeing. Again, the literature suggests kindness does many things – it strengthens *relationships*; it boosts *well-being*; it creates a positive *environment/workplace*; and believe it or not – it inspires *change and innovation*.

Combining hard work and kindness

There is no doubt in my mind that combining the two concepts – hard work and kindness – can truly be transformative. If applied to leadership, teamwork, family and community – great outcomes can be achieved. There is much talk, at the moment, about 'resilience' – In challenging times, hard work helps us endure, while kindness provides the comfort and solidarity needed to persevere.

How to put these essential into practice

There are many ways to integrate working hard and being kind into our daily routine/lives. These include – setting personal goals; practice gratitude; offer help whenever you can; reflect and improve; and of course – lead by example.

*"Work hard and be kind" may sound simple – it is not - but its impact can be significant. These principles underpin personal achievement, strengthen relationships, and enrich communities – I have witnessed it first-hand. They are accessible to all, regardless of background or circumstance. In embracing **hard work**, we discover our capacity to grow, create, and achieve. In embracing **kindness**, we affirm our shared humanity and build a better world - one act at a time.*

Also worth reading –

Transformational leadership and the new reality (2025) - [6113ad_94f769b047444a0082b26903741fa569.pdf](#)

Understanding emotional intelligence (EI) – and applying it to your leadership style and approach (2025) - [6113ad_688b923e84e44169b9420f3e8fd5d126.pdf](#)

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