



Don't be cruel

***Being nice
is good for
your career,
your family,
and you***

By Robin Friedman

It's easy to be cruel. Some would even say it's perversely pleasurable. And it certainly seems cool to be cruel these days. From road rage to getting ahead, stomping on people is the "in" thing to do.

But a new movement, courtesy of a bestselling book called *The Power of Nice: How to Conquer the Business World With Kindness* by Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval, finds nice isn't just positive, it's powerful.

Nicer people earn higher incomes, live longer, and lead happier lives.

How? Behold the power of nice.

Being nice to the right people

We all know being nice to the "right people" — bosses, potential bosses, neighbors, co-workers — is smart. But we're much less worried about a stranger we'll never meet again.

But how do we know that?

That stranger could be the sister of your boss.

Or a real estate agent who knows a

*Niceness must be cultivated
within ourselves so its use is automatic,
like breathing or blinking.*



home in your dream neighborhood.

Or the head of a foundation that could give you the backing you desperately need.

You have to treat every person you meet as if they are the most important person in the world, because ultimately, they are. If not to you, then to someone; if not today, then perhaps tomorrow.

One common mistake people make is assuming there's no need to be nice to receptionists, security guards, cleaning people, and secretaries. After all, they can't do anything for you.

That may or may not be true — now. But you have no idea who might become important to you in 10, 20, or 30 years.

A domino effect

Niceness — treating all people with graciousness and respect — creates positive energy. That energy makes an impression on people that's passed along.

Eventually, those favorable impres-

sions find their way back to you. The results of the power of nice are rarely direct — you may not notice any impact on your life for years — apart from the warm glow you feel inside.

Nonetheless, niceness has a domino effect.

You may never be able to trace your good fortune back to one specific encounter, but it's a mathematical certainty that being nice lays the groundwork for opportunities down the road.

You will know

Niceness must be cultivated within ourselves so its use is automatic, like breathing or blinking. It must be second nature in order to work properly, not as a once-in-a-while gesture granted only to important people.

When you're discourteous to someone who "doesn't count," people unconsciously respond. Just as positive energy multiples, so do disrespectful actions.

You may not see the impact they have on you for a long time, but they're there, silently infecting you and every-

Nice Cubes

These exercises are taken from *The Power of Nice: How to Conquer the Business World With Kindness* by Linda Kaplan Thaler and Robin Koval.

Model yourself after the kind of person you admire.

Do you admire people who remember the details of the lives of their clients, friends, and colleagues?

Those who do volunteer work?

Those who always seem cheerful?

Complete this statement: If I were a better person, I would...

Exercise your niceness muscles.

Every day for a week, do three nice things that have no immediate payoff for you.

Smile at someone.

Hold a door.

Say thank you.

Compliment a stranger.

Ask a colleague about her children.

The point of this is not to gain anything.

It is to get into the habit of being nice — and to rediscover how good it makes you feel.

Be a "best supporting actor."

Most of us don't mean to be thoughtless.

We're just so busy starring in our own movie that we forget everyone else is starring in theirs.

That's why it's extremely important to see yourself as others do — the supporting actor in *their* movie.

Are you the loving daughter or the distracted one?

The sweet husband or the demanding one?

The office troubleshooter or the office drama queen?

Write down three ways you can make your "character" more considerate.