Better Libraries and Stronger Communities Through Kindness, Empathy & Love
Deep Thoughts by Lance Werner

I have a few theories that I live by:

1. Human nature seems to trend toward flowing to the path of least resistance, like electricity and water
2. Life is short, so do not wait

I believe a couple of things about library folks:
1. They are altruistic people
2. They want to change the world
Kindness is a component of empathy and love and vice versa 2(x).
Why? Because Studies Have Shown:

» Looking at the individual:

- Being kind to others may make you feel happier. *Why Kindness is Good For You* by David R. Hamilton Ph.D. (Hay House, 2010)

- Increases positive emotions (love, contentment, joy, hope, interest, etc.) and decreases negative ones (anger, sadness, doubt, shame, etc.) (Study by Fredrickson, Cohn, Coffey, Pek & Finkel, 2008)
Why? Because Studies Have Shown:

» Looking at the individual:


- Can decrease chronic pain (Carson, et al., 2005)

- Kindness can create a higher sense of emotional warmth, which may reduce blood pressure. Hence, kindness may be heart healthy. *Why Kindness is Good For You by David R. Hamilton Ph.D.* (Hay House, 2010)
Why? Because Studies Have Shown:

» Beyond self:

- Kindness makes for better relationships. (Kok, et al., 2013)
- Kindness increases empathy. (Klimecki, Leiberg, Lamm, and Singer, 2013)
- Kindness decreases bias towards others. (Kok, et al., (2013); Kang, Gray, and Dovidio, 2014)
Surprise! An Exercise!
“Don’t mistake my kindness for weakness. I am kind to everyone, but when someone is unkind to me, weak is not what you are going to remember about me.” – Al Capone

- Kindness takes strength and courage.
- Living a life focused on kindness, empathy and love generates courage and confidence.
- Courage and confidence are essential to allowing oneself to be vulnerable.
- “The lowest level of behavior you accept is the highest level of behavior you can require or expect.” – Brian Mortimore
The World is in Desperate Need of More Kindness, Empathy & Love

- Living with kindness, empathy, and love day to day will inspire others and creates much stronger friendships (personal and professional) and familial relationships.

Now for some editorializing.........

- I feel strongly that a lot of the world’s negative issues can be traced back to a lack of kindness, love and empathy.

- People tend to lack the ability to empathize with abstractions. Living through kindness helps bridge the knowledge gap.
Creating a culture of kindness, empathy and love within the work environment (in our case, within libraries) creates a familial, non-competitive work culture where people feel embraced and valued.

Chances are that most people spend as much time with their coworkers as they do with their friends and family.

Based on this, it is critical that our work environment and culture feel like home and are familial.
Kindness, Empathy & Love—
In the Workplace & Within the Community

- High level customer service is only obtainable through kindness, empathy and love.
- Kindness is self-perpetuating: the way your staff will feel is the way your patrons will feel, and if your staff does not feel valued, neither will your patrons.
- Appreciation stems from empathy
How We Define Customer Services at KDL

» We call it the “KDL Way”

- At KDL we provide Relationship-Focused Service by creating solid relationships through attention and a heartfelt commitment to serve with no expectation in return.
- The “KDL Way” means we put serving people first by making connections and working to find solutions and accommodations for problems that arise through the lens of kindness and empathy.
- Our goal is to take great customer service up a notch to a more genuine style that focus on individual needs.
Why Is It Important?

Library staff are in the position to bring true social connection to the people they serve. We have power to give somebody that wonderful feeling of importance that comes from a truly authentic interaction.

- 63% of consumers point to service as the most important factor in their choice of a brand.
- 44% have higher customer service expectations than they had a year ago.
- 70% say they are likely to switch brands if they deal with agents who are unable to answer their questions.
- 62% have actually switched brands in the past year due to poor customer service.
KDL Way Service Priorities

Our Service Priorities are a list of priorities that guide us in building procedures and in our decision making. Staff can use these priorities to help make sound judgement calls when working with people.

1. Convenience
2. Efficiency
3. Consistency
4. Protection of Materials

Because even when we are going forth with kindness and understanding, we must not forget there are procedures to make sure we are being consistent with other patrons and not infringing on their rights.
KDL Service Goals

Our services goals are a set of simple objectives to help staff get started in providing Relationship-Focused Service in a consistent and caring manner. These goals clearly state “KDL WAY” expectations and provide a roadmap that empowers staff to give excellent service to all people.
At KDL….

- All people will feel welcome, comfortable and acknowledged.
- We serve all people while working to develop authentic relationships.
- We do everything in our power to provide trustworthy solutions for the people we serve.
- The entire service journey is positive, productive and seamless.
- Every person leaves feeling fulfilled and excited for their next visit.
Kindness, Empathy & Love in Advocacy

- Good news, you’re already an expert advocate
- Coming from a place of kindness, empathy and love is proof of authenticity
- Authenticity is critical in advocacy
- OCLC Voter Perception Survey
Call to Action

- Embrace the practice of kindness, empathy, and love
- Work on it
- Incorporate it into your DNA, and your organization’s DNA
- Let’s make it the new library/librarian stereotype
Questions?