

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/building-a-culture-of-kindness/>

Patrick Schmitt, co-founder and co-CEO of FreeWill, describes how the company incorporates kindness into its culture in practical ways. Managers look for empathy in potential new hires, employees build a culture of caring for each other, and leaders openly talk about mistakes without focusing on blame.



Transcript

- We score for kindness in the hiring process.. 00:00:05,150 - Wow.. 00:00:06,310 - Practically, what does that look like? 00:00:08,810 You can't just be like, "Oh, she looks kind, 'cause she's got soft features or whatever." You say, "Okay, tell me about something that didn't go well? And do they empathize with the other people in that project?" What do they say? "I really did my best ever and then product screwed it up." Well, maybe product did screw it up, but do you have a sense of why that happened? Are you thoughtful about it? Or are you just blaming folks, right? You can start to do that.. I think it brings this culture of people looking out for each other.. One other thing we do that I really love is starting with, I think, our first employee, we created a list of pre-readings, and a bunch of them were our favorite readings in grad school, but there's something called "Radical Candor." There's a whole book, it became a book, but it was also a nine-page article or eight-page article about how to give feedback.. We really set the tone before you get here, and then you show up.. People have really carried it forward.. This week, this past week, we have been, as a team, working on addressing everyone as guys less, right? Team is way more than 50% female, but I think colloquially, a lot of us will say, "Hey guys," as sort of a meaning of, "Hey all." Someone on our team said, "Hey, it feels very gender and it feels male norming, whatever, and try not to do it." I said, "Great, we'll try not to do it." We've all made a bunch of efforts.. Someone on our support team basically made this Slack bot.. When you say, "Hey guys," or something similar in Slack, it says, "Oh, did you mean folks? Oh, did you mean y'all? Oh, did you mean people?" Whatever you say, it randomly generated an alternative..

This is an amazing thing.. This is very small, very lovingly supportive way to help everyone get better, and not like- It doesn't say, "Don't say guys." 'Cause whatever.. - Yeah.. 00:01:46,500 - Everybody's trying their best.. 00:01:48,500 I think that's it, and then I think also we talk about things that we did wrong.. We talk about mistakes that we made.. We try to do it publicly.. We try to be super clear in what's gone well and what's gone poorly without blaming ourselves or blaming the person.. That creates this really open environment where we're solving a problem together, as opposed to trying to stake credit...