

# YOUR HIDDEN SUPERPOWER

THE KINDNESS THAT MAKES  
YOU UNBEATABLE AT WORK AND  
CONNECTS YOU WITH ANYONE

ADRIENNE BANKERT



HARPERCOLLINS  
LEADERSHIP

AN IMPRINT OF HARPERCOLLINS

© 2020 by Adrienne Bankert

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published by HarperCollins Leadership, an imprint of HarperCollins Focus LLC.

Any internet addresses, phone numbers, or company or product information printed in this book are offered as a resource and are not intended in any way to be or to imply an endorsement by HarperCollins Leadership, nor does HarperCollins Leadership vouch for the existence, content, or services of these sites, phone numbers, companies, or products beyond the life of this book.

ISBN 978-1-4002-1820-2 (eBook)

ISBN 978-1-4002-1814-1 (HC)

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

[[CIP data to come]]

*Printed in the United States of America*

20 21 22 23 LSC 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*I dedicate this book to everyone who wants to have it all. May we live “all in” with our relationships, dreams, and identity. To the world changers, mountain movers, and breakthrough agents, let’s agree to live authentically and wholeheartedly with kindness. When we know who we truly are, nothing can stop us.*

## CHAPTER 1

---

# THE ASK: KINDNESS 2.0

There is a force that energizes us all with passionate purpose. This superpower leads to relationships without regret and draws out 100 percent of a person's irreplaceable identity.

—AB

**T**here is an unbeatable superpower inside every one of us that is far greater than talent or tenacity. It supersedes strength and intelligence. It crushes selfishness, negativity, and doubt.

It will bring you to 100 percent authenticity, develop unfailing integrity, and help you build trust with anyone. It's something that every individual, and every corporation, needs more of today. Our world, companies, and communities are asking for something more of us than simply getting the job done. The ask right now is for people who know how to be kind under pressure. This is

about more than merely “getting along” with people. *Your Hidden Superpower—kindness*—reveals the highest and best version of you.

### **Kindness Stops the Madness**

Kindness is the answer because our world is so busy and intense. Inevitably, that can lead to short tempers, burn out, increasing anger, and defensive debates. Witnessing kindness brings renewed hope in humanity in the face of jadedness. Kindness keeps us sane when the demands of juggling work and relationships put us on edge and fill us with the urge to lash out.

We can cause irreparable damage when we are unkind, which can lead to becoming numb or unsympathetic—something none of us can afford. We all have the ability to “stop the madness” by being purposefully kind.

Kindness added to any endeavor is a magnet for positivity and a cure for the inevitable side effects of stress. Kindness is an anchor to the soul and the universal language of hope for the billions on the planet searching for meaning. Kindness is inclusive. Kindness displays unity. Kindness is beneficial for all and is mandatory for those who are seeking true success, no matter the goal. Kindness is the gateway to new relationships and opportunities. Kindness is what the world needs now more than ever.

### **Kindness Positions Us**

A pivotal point in my career came while in pursuit of a job that would lead me to my goal of becoming a national news correspondent. While I did not have an agent at that time, I did have a mentor and coach. I also had a longtime connection with a well-known

recruiter who referred me to Cheryl Fair, the general manager of the Los Angeles ABC station. She was looking to hire a new reporter. For the majority of my career, I had been in the studio as a news anchor. I could read a teleprompter with ease and handle breaking news. Now, I knew I needed to demonstrate that I was able to report in the field as well, which meant getting in a news van with a photographer and being ready at a moment's notice for a mudslide, or an apartment fire, or any number of stories where you had to be quick on your feet and still as composed as your colleagues back in the air conditioned studio.

It is a highly competitive industry and, for a lot of people in the news business, their strength is either reporting or anchoring. Few are exceptional at doing both. (*It is for this reason that another news executive would later tell me he would have never taken the kind of chance on me that Cheryl did.*) Lucky for me, when Cheryl called to tell me she was hiring me, even though I didn't appear to have enough in-the-field experience, she said, "Adrienne, I can teach you what you don't know. I can teach you how to be a great reporter or how to be a success at ABC. The one thing I cannot teach you is how to be kind. Our mutual friend told me she has known you your entire career and that she has never heard you say a bad word about anyone. That is what we need more of in this business."

Less than four months later, Cheryl introduced me to the executives who would end up putting me on national television.

This was more than just getting me a job; this helped me find my sweet spot. Massive doors that other people try to kick down can open easily for us if we pursue kindness. But it is much more than being nice. Because people assume they already know what it takes to be kind, it is rarely tapped into in an authentic way. In order to make it your superpower, you must know more about what being kind really means. Consider this Kindness 2.0. Just like the

latest operating system for our cell phones, it is high time for an up-to-date understanding of the scope of kindness.

## Updating the Definition of Kindness

Kindness has been relegated to a form of politeness when it is, in fact, the key to connection. Like all innovation, kindness needs to be studied and practiced in a deeper way or it will remain unintentionally hidden in plain sight. Word meanings have changed over the years, so choosing a specific definition is important. Throughout this book I will be using the dictionary that made Noah Webster famous, the 1828 Webster's dictionary. Webster defined kind as:

KIND, adjective

1. Disposed to do good to others, and to make them happy by granting their requests, supplying their wants or assisting them in distress<sup>1</sup>

Focus on the phrases in this definition. Select what makes you excited. Perhaps it is “making others happy” or “granting their requests.” There is a big difference between helping someone and making them happy! When you are kind, you provide relief, even for a moment. It is a breath of fresh air. When you're refreshed, you enjoy life more, which leads to more clarity. This helps you make better decisions, creating synergy, innovation, and fun. Kindness is the thing that will set you apart while improving the world all at the same time. Kindness is your home button. There are massive benefits to being kind that go beyond the notion that what goes around comes around. When activated, kindness provides a specially tailored path to your unique plan for success, relationships,

and fulfillment. You are going to think differently about how to assist people in their endeavors, which leads you to take unexpected steps to your own happiness and success that put you in the right place, at the right time. It opens you up to a whole new adventure!

I have heard so many times, “Well, what if I am kind and they just take advantage of me? I have to protect myself.” It’s important to also grasp what kindness is not. Kindness does not mean being overlooked and just letting it go. Kindness does not mean you will never speak up. It’s unkind not to make a difference; it’s unkind not to be who you were meant to be. It is unkind not to stand up for what you believe in.

You’ll see from examples in these pages how kindness is a lifestyle. How people grow in their confidence in dealing with us, knowing they’re guaranteed a consistently positive and generous outlook. How even the grouchiest people will want to be around us more and enjoy it! In spite of difficulties and challenging personalities, you’ll be inspired to see the reward of making people’s day better. By honing the skill of being kind, it will eventually become second nature when you are faced with obstacles in life. We can choose to participate in divisiveness, or we can choose to be kind. Kindness has been my daily coach and trained me to determine who I will be and how I will act, regardless of other people involved or the situation.

There are times in life when I have needed a “confidence compass”—when I’ve wondered where I was going next or when I’ve wanted to quit because pursuing a dream seemed too overwhelming. Hard work is only one part of accomplishment; kindness has the ability to take us beyond our natural talents and fast forward us light years beyond experience.



## Kindness is a Win-Win

It is time to advance what being kind does for your identity. You'll learn how kindness is the key for you to "just be yourself." Being ourselves, means being *whole*. Through kindness, we will see that we are each "the one and only," which eliminates comparison or competition. Kindness answers the question, "What makes us so special?" without edging anyone else out of the picture. When you know that you are worthy, valuable, and important for the betterment of others around you, you will *act* better. The more people you impact, the more people look to you for support and kindness. In turn, as you exhibit your truest self—your kind self—you transform into a more engaged, present, and happy you. You being real helps others to discover and maximize who they are.

When you are real, you can combat cutthroat and cancel cultures by creating a positive environment. That is how we change the world: we pursue and embrace realness. When you're kind, you become unapologetically extraordinary in many ways. In these pages, you will see what it takes to be exceptional and down-to-earth at the same time. I highlight some of the powerful people I have met who have risen above negativity and refuse to deny the world the unique gifts they bring to the table. My hope is that everyone who reads this will, perhaps for the first time, feel at home in their own skin. You're going to become comfortable in your greatness.

Being kind not only showcases but produces a healthy self-esteem. The more influence you have, the more you need kindness and generosity to be your safeguard against becoming demanding, arrogant, or harsh. Kindness keeps us grounded and relatable to all people as we soar to the heights we are reaching for professionally and personally.

Kindness produces the timeless power of a reputation, where

people in your circle associate your name with being remarkable. A strong reputation adds indispensable value, which leads to a kindness legacy. My mission for you is to arrive at a place where you live convinced your actions affect those around you and those who will end up following in your footsteps. To know that you are that impactful is a form of kindness. We live in a time where any one of us could appear online, and anything we say or do could go viral and be seen by thousands or even millions of people. Whether you're content to be behind the scenes or feel most comfortable on a stage, there is a huge benefit to making both kindness in general and the specific acts of kindness other people do famous and widely known.

Just as we commit to following the latest diet or regularly going to the gym, we should make it our aim to be kind. It is nourishing and leads to better health, greater growth, and improved quality of life. Kindness can be developed like a muscle. Kindness has no age limits, restrictions, or adverse side effects. It is collateral that leads to some of the most generous charitable gifts, the most lucrative business deals, and inexplicable opportunity.

### **Kindness Makes Moments Count**

Kindness produces elevated conversation and gives meaning to human interaction that would otherwise be taken for granted or obligatory, turning brief moments into impactful impressions. I once attended a book signing and watched as the author greeted the guests and the children of those who attended the event. These kids had not read his book, but they were powerfully drawn to him. The author captivated the whole room with his graciousness, looking everyone in the eye as if they were the most important person in the world. It reminded me of a quote from a book I read about

Mother Teresa, that when people met her, she made them feel like they were the only person in the room. Kindness shines a spotlight on others, without diminishing our own brightness.

How many times do you pass people in the hall at work and just say, “Hi” or “How are you?” and keep moving? A cordial hello is simply not enough to build relationships with colleagues. Instead, engaging in meaningful exchanges will make the workday far more interesting and productive, and can even carry you through difficult times.

Yet it only takes seconds to express that you care. Once, one of my extremely busy managers gave me his usual, “Hello, Adrienne,” in the hall. After I had passed him, in the midst of another conversation he was having, he stopped to ask, “Adrienne, are you okay?”

I was shocked that someone had noticed even a tiny bit of the stress through my usual smile. In that moment, my home and my job were in a time of transition. I was certain things needed to change in my life, yet I didn’t know how to make those changes happen. My manager’s concern snapped me to attention. Although there was a lot of uncertainty, life was good; I just needed to let go of the anxiety. It was kind of him to be so perceptive, let alone ask me. Those words alerted me to change my attitude and replace being overwhelmed with optimism. It didn’t take much, and it didn’t look like much, but he was being sensitive, and I needed a reminder to relax and know that everything was going to be okay.

It’s easy to minimize these seemingly small moments, but you’re going to see how all these times where someone reaches out to you, and vice versa, start to add up. It is very easy to start thinking negative when you are surrounded by negativity, which has become all too common today. Yet, I know that you will get out of reading this book the same thing I saw while writing it: kindness makes you more aware of kindness.

When I began to examine kindness, kind videos starting

populating on social media, kindness campaigns were suddenly everywhere, and people were doing kind things for me and others around me all the time. While on a walk in New York City one morning, this question came into my mind, *What if no one had ever been kind to you?* I imagined where and who I would be if I had not seen kindness extended to me. My gratitude swelled for all of the times someone was a difference maker. If I had experienced zero kindness, I definitely wouldn't be who I am today or be doing what I am doing now. Seeing the world from this perspective brings far more joy as we start looking for and, most importantly, start initiating this superpower.

### **Kindness Is a Force**

Kindness shown to us can compel or confirm that we are headed in the right direction. One day when I was in the office, I saw one of my producers and thanked her for sending me encouraging emails. Kelly had sent me a few notes while I had been out of the country on a multiweek assignment in Asia. On a trip like this, far away from home and in a whole different time zone, it is easy to slip into a feeling of isolation. We were in front of a camera for hours at a time, surrounded by media outlets from all around the world, fenced into (rather, crammed into) a small space beside street vendors and roadside restaurants. It averaged 90 degrees with 90 percent humidity, unless it was raining. On top of that, there was a fourteen-hour time difference from New York, so we were up late and back at it again early every day.

"You know," Kelly replied, "people are doing a great job, and we have meetings where those who did the work are not getting any of that positive feedback because they are working so hard, or in another time zone, or sleeping after being up all day. I know it's

hard to be away from home, especially for a long time on the road, and I just want to pass those gleaming reports back to the people who did the work.”

The fact that she sensed how I was feeling and took the time to send an email spoke volumes to me. I saved them all; they meant so much to me.

One read:

You are crushing it. So captivating. It is so clear that you are so much more than a journalist. I can feel your compassion through your reporting. THANK YOU SO SO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING today!

This note not only made me feel appreciated, it was an affirmation of a goal I had made for my career from the beginning, which was to deliver compassionate and compelling journalism. Her note wasn't just nice, it was powerfully kind.

Being kind is a game changer on the job, resulting in employees who are invested because they know their value. You'll succeed in building a career with compassion, have a team that no longer finds “soft skills” hard, and enjoy a life of generosity and impact. It will also lead to radical connection. Genuine kindness changes a normal atmosphere into rarified air where we are engaged and aware of the strengths of others in the room.

I recall the first time I met *Good Morning America* anchor Robin Roberts. I will never forget how she gave me a hug, and then stood back, looked at me with those captivating eyes, and said, “You fill the room.”

It was a powerful statement. I smiled inside, knowing how far I had to come to get inside these rooms with powerhouse people. I reflected on how it took more than a village, it took an army for me to arrive! All the hopes of every teacher, coach, mentor, family,

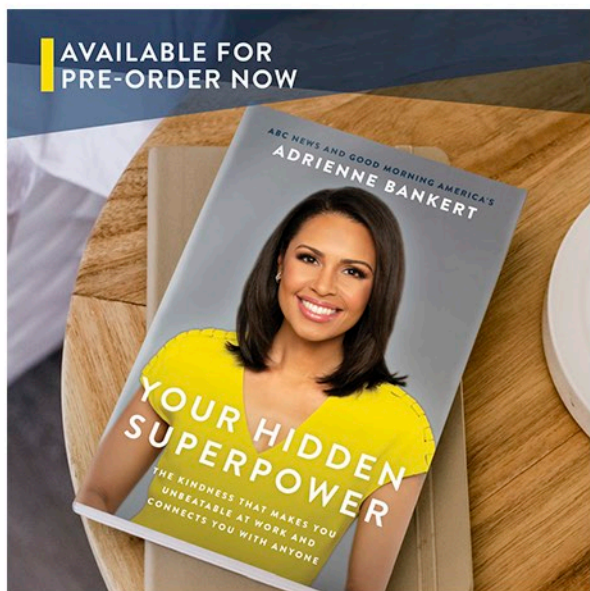
and friend who believed and invested in me is with me on this journey. Wherever we go, we carry with us the people whose love and kindness brought us to where we are today. Kindness envelops the generosity and lessons of every person who has touched your life and gives you much more than you could have ever accomplished alone.

It's kindness that will give you a powerful purpose. You won't just make an entrance or impression; you will fill the room.

Kindness is more than the golden rule; it is a *superpower*. And amazingly, it is within reach for every one of us.

It is time to change our perspective.

AVAILABLE FOR  
PRE-ORDER NOW



# YOUR HIDDEN SUPERPOWER

THE KINDNESS THAT MAKES  
YOU UNBEATABLE AT WORK AND  
CONNECTS YOU WITH ANYONE

**ADRIENNE BANKERT**

## **Preorder Bonus**

Preorder today and receive 30-day access to the Your Hidden Superpower eCourse — a \$149 value.

**Preorder Now**