



Are 'Nice' Leaders Effective? Or do you need to be Savage to Succeed as you Climb the Corporate Ladder? Niceness can Win... with Provisos

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Can 'nice' leaders be effective, in the face of what appears to be ever-widening nastiness in leadership? Looking through news headlines, it would seem that kinder styles of leadership are in perilously short supply. From Weinstein, to Kalanick, to sport and presidential campaigns, we are faced with an unrelentingly ignoble highlights reel of nastiness. While such examples compel our attention, there are other examples that show nice guys can indeed 'get the job done'. For example, Apple's Tim Cook and Microsoft's Satya Nadella, whose leadership is typified by authentic yet often humble interactions with their staff and customers, while effectively presiding over two of the world's largest tech companies.

So, is it nasty or nice that wins when it comes to career success? This presentation builds on an article written by the presenter for the May 2017 issue of Boss Magazine, that searched for the evidence on nice.

The topic is particularly resonant with high potentials and emerging leaders who have got to where they are due to their people skills, and coaches who work with this group. They can often feel they have to shed part of their authentic selves if they are to progress; lowering niceness while turning up a nasty dial. "To be like them" is a limiting assumption that often appears. But it needn't be this way, as the evidence is strongly skewed to niceness... though with provisos.

This presentation will highlight a variety of research, including work by Wharton's Adam Grant, that confirms that relationship-oriented leaders - those with an ample dash of nice - can be highly effective and feature prominently at the pinnacles of their professions. However, they can also be embedded at lower echelons. This 'paradox of nice' will be examined, with practical strategies for cultivating a niceness edge put forward.