



Creating **good karma**

Jede Handlung hat eine Folge. Dieses spirituelle Konzept, das wir als Karma bezeichnen, gilt auch für das Verhalten von Führungskräften ihren Mitarbeitern gegenüber. TRANG CHU zeigt, worin schlechtes Karma besteht und wie gutes Karma zu mehr Motivation und Produktivität führt. medium

Karma was in the headlines last year when the head of Microsoft, Satya Nadella, claimed that a woman should not ask for a rise but instead rely on “good karma”. Thankfully, he has since reconsidered his position and even started a new internal diversity plan for Microsoft. But what is karma?

To put it simply, karma is an effect that results from a person’s actions. Perhaps it would have been more beneficial if Nadella had suggested that leaders should try to create good karma. To do so, a leader needs to recognize their own unconscious biases and consciously remove them.

Good karma may not get you a rise, but could it have a positive effect in your organization?

Every day, we slight others in many small ways without realizing it. These are known as “micro-inequities” — a term Mary Rowe, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) professor, coined in 1973. It refers to small, unintentional events that create and strengthen barriers for those we perceive to be different from us. Many micro-inequities that exist in the workplace today are subtle actions that reflect biases and can at times be disrespectful to others.

Micro-inequities can be anything from shaking a person’s hand and hardly making eye contact to not

acknowledging a person because we have made a snap judgement based on how they speak.

Oftentimes, the leaders I work with as an executive coach admit they might

acknowledge sb. [ək'noʊldʒ]	jmdn. zur Kenntnis nehmen; ansprechen
bias ['bi:əs]	Vorurteil
coin sth. [kɔɪn]	etw. prägen
diversity plan [daɪ'vɜ:stəti ,plæn]	Diversitätsprogramm
executive coach [ɪg,zekjʊtɪv 'kəʊtʃ]	Trainer(in) und Berater(in) für Führungskräfte
inequity [ɪn'ekwəti]	Ungerechtigkeit
perceive sb. (to be sth.) [pə'si:v]	jmdn. (als etw.) wahrnehmen
rely on sth. [ri'laɪ ɒn]	auf etw. bauen
rise [raɪz] UK	Gehaltserhöhung
slight sb. [slaɪt]	jmdn. kränken
snap judgement [ˌsnæp 'dʒʌdʒmənt]	(vor)schnelles Urteil
subtle ['sʌtl]	subtil

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make staff feel devalued without intending to — for example, by not greeting them in the lift or hallway, or by checking their iPhone while talking to employees.

These small acts may seem trivial in themselves but their effect over time can lead to a culture of “them versus us”, making it acceptable to single out a certain group because they are perceived as different. They can also have a hugely negative effect on staff, lessening their morale, engagement, performance and job satisfaction. Indeed, when staff leave a firm, they often mention being slighted as a major factor contributing to the decision.

So how do we prevent these unconscious slights or biases? We can start by paying attention to the details of our interactions with our colleagues in order to turn our micro-inequities into micro-affirmations.

Rowe refers to micro-affirmations as “small daily gestures of dignity that make the person we are interacting with feel welcomed, included and valued”. A micro-affirmation could be as effortless as a smile or a nod, or it could mean taking the time to really listen to what an employee has



Engaged, motivated: happy workers are more productive

to say. To be a successful leader, it is very important to set a good example in affirming behaviour. While it might sound simple, in practice, it is much harder to do. When you go to work today, think about who you might be unconsciously including or excluding. Who are you praising and encouraging? Whose good work are you overlooking? Then start applying micro-affirmations to every interaction you have, from acknowledging employees in the lift, to listening to their ideas, suggestions and requests.

The more you practise micro-affirmations, the easier they are, and soon you will find that they become an unconscious effort. This will create an environment in which engagement and motivation are high and your staff are more productive.

In the same speech in which he mentioned karma, Microsoft head Satya Nadella also said he was very impressed by a leader who had managed him early on in his career, who said: “Believe in the system and the right things will happen.” This is a good demonstration of how a lead-

A matter of karma

“**K**arma” is Sanskrit for “deed”, “effect” or “fate”. It describes a law of cause and effect that is central to several Far Eastern religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism. It is the idea that one reaps the consequences of one’s actions and the intentions behind those actions. Good deeds lead to good karma and bad deeds result in bad karma. In Far Eastern religions, this relates not just to this life but also to the next life. In everyday English, the concept of karma lies behind the expression “you reap what you sow”.

Buddhism [ˈbʊdɪzəm]	[wg. Aussprache]
deed [di:d]	Tat
reap sth. [ri:p]	etw. ernten
sow sth. [səʊ]	etw. säen

er’s behaviour sets the tone for the values of the organization as a whole. Employees will model their approach on your lead, and good karma will lead to a positive culture that will enable your employees to deliver their best work. **BS**

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affirmation [ˌæfəˈmeɪʃən]	Bestätigung
approach [əˈprəʊtʃ]	Vorgehensweise
devalued [ˌdiːˈvæljuːd]	abgewertet; hier: herabgesetzt
dignity [ˈdɪɡnəti]	Würde; hier: Würdigung
early on [ˌɜːli ˈɒn]	zu einem frühen Zeitpunkt
engagement [ɪnˈɡeɪdʒmənt]	Einsatz
gesture [ˈdʒɛstʃə]	Geste
morale [məˈrɑːl]	[wg. Aussprache]
nod [nɒd]	Kopfnicken
overlook sb./sth. [ˌəʊvəˈlʊk]	jmdn./etw. nicht beachten
performance [pəˈfɔːməns]	Leistung
set the tone [ˌset ðə ˈtəʊn]	den Ton angeben
single sb./sth. out [ˌsɪŋɡl̩ ˈaʊt]	jmdn./etw. herausgreifen
slight [slaɪt]	Kränkung
trivial [ˈtrɪviəl]	unbedeutend
versus [ˈvɜːsəs]	gegen