

# Ep #021: Cultivate Compassion and Kindness for Better Results

## Full Episode Transcript



With Your Host

**Aaron J. Jacobs**

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What if you could write your own life story? How would you spend your time? What would your career or business look like? What kind of parent or partner would you be? Welcome to *Storied Life Coaching*, the only podcast that will show you how to stop living life by default, and teach you how to build a thriving business that fuels an amazing life on your terms. I'm Aaron J. Jacobs, and as a master coach and CEO of OMH Creative and Storied Coaching, I've had the privilege and opportunity to learn what it takes first hand to rewrite your own life story. It's never too late for a rewrite.

Welcome, everyone to this week's episode of The Storied Life Coaching podcast. It's Aaron again. If you are expecting someone else, I'm sorry to disappoint. I want to talk to you today about compassion and kindness and how knowing the difference between them, and then using them to a greater extent in your personal life, for your personal stories that you're building for yourself as well as your professional life and the business you're building for yourself. And those stories will help you get greater results. But I want to tease these two apart and show you how they work together in order to create the kind of environment that you will love working in and living in and that also the people that are around you that are on your team, if you're a leader, that people that you lead the people in your personal life, how it will help them as well. And it will help you feel better about your interactions with you on a daily basis. I know it has for me and it also will affect other people for the better as well.

So these are all good things. This is a win for everyone. This is something that we definitely—it's worth our time to explore and figure out because compassion and kindness are a little bit different from each other. But they often get confused. And so we're going to talk about that. I want to start off with a little bit, as I often do, with a story of how this can actually improve your interactions with people in small ways that can have large impacts as well. I actually was calling in to book some air travel recently. My wife and I are planning this amazing trip for our—much delayed because of pandemic reasons—but our anniversary trip and so we belong to this concierge service

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because we have business accounts with the airline. We called in and I called in and it was one of those times where as soon as someone answers the phone, I don't know if you've ever been in this situation but as soon as someone answered the phone, I could tell that they were having a day. Like their voice was a little bit shaky, and maybe somebody had yelled at them in the previous, you know, call that they'd had or something like that. And I could tell they were very tentative but this person needed a break. And I just, you know, they told me a little bit about their day and what was going on and "I apologize for having to wait so long." I let them know it was no big deal. "Hey, it's absolutely fine. In fact, if you need to take a quick break, I don't mind if you want to take my number down. I know you can call me back. Why don't you call me back and then we can talk about booking my travel. It's not a big deal." And they thanked me and I could tell they were a bit surprised that someone was treating them like a human. By the way, we all need to do a better job of treating our customer service people that we call on the phone. I know it can be frustrating experiences that we're going through, but there's humans on the other end of those lines and we need to take care of each other. This episode is all about that.

But they call back, you know, not that long later, like 30 minutes, maybe 45 minutes later and I could tell that they're just a completely changed person, that by giving them a little bit of time and showing compassion, that now their day was going a little bit better and had a better chance of us having a good interaction. And here's the thing: I benefited from it immediately. This small act of compassion and then kindness resulted in me having an amazing experience with them. They, I could tell, were going over and above trying to help me make sure that I had the best connections and the shortest amount of layovers and the best creative ways in order to be effective as far as how much money we were spending and how much time we could spend at each location and suggestions for, you know, what they would do in order to ensure that we just had a very delightful experience and a great trip. And I so appreciate it. And this is just an example of how showing compassion for someone else and then following up with an action of kindness, even if it's a

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small way, like the interaction I'm talking about, it makes you feel great. And it makes them feel amazing as well. And it can lead to greater results for you.

I'm not saying that that's the reason that you should do it because you get stuff, but hey, if you get stuff because of the fact that you're compassionate and kind to other people, I don't think that's a bad thing. I think you might agree with that as well. I actually saw a post about this just recently from Adam Grant. By the way, I love Adam Grant. If you haven't read any of his books, or if you haven't followed him, even if you follow him on Twitter, I think he posts on Instagram now as well and the last time screencaps of his Twitter posts, but they're wonderful. And there was one in particular on compassion and on kindness and the one of the reasons I love Adam Grant is because he talks about something that resonates emotionally with you, but he backs it up. He's a scientist. And so he backs it up with data of like, these are facts of why this actually is a thing. Which I so appreciate. And he had some great points about this. He's like, why is compassion wonderful? It's because compassion and kindness: it reduces cynicism. Like in clinical trials, people's mental states are better and it reduces cynicism. You know, going about your day and feeling like things are horrible and then those results manifesting themselves because you're in that mental state, you having an act of kindness for someone else actually reverberates back to you and helps you get rid of cynicism about people in their intentions. Pretty cool, being kind to yourself, statistically lessens exhaustion. So at least if you're feeling burnt out, which a lot of us are right now, whether it's at work, or at school, or all the things that we've been going through over the last several years, that exhaustion can build up, right? We've heard a lot about burnout and so being kind to yourself and showing yourself kindness immediately can lessen that, that sense that feeling of exhaustion. And kindness, when you give kindness to other people or to yourself, it restores a sense of belonging, especially when you're doing externally to someone else.

if you're a leader, this is really important and I really want you to listen. This is something that I've been practicing as well and I've been encouraging those in our organization to practice as well with us as well as our customers,

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is, it's when you when you extend kindness to someone else, it makes them feel like they belong, that they're not the other, that unless they perform and get everything right on the first try, that they then aren't valued, and that they are an outlier. So kindness brings people in if they if they're feeling detached. It helps bring them back in and help them feel like they're part of the group and that they're cared for, which helps with performance for your employees, for the people in the team that you're leading. So it can be really important and it helps, you know, with a sense of control and a sense of confidence as well. That person will feel more in control and feel more confident, and will probably help you get better results out of that confidence and out of that interaction with you if you're showing kindness instead of just treating them as a strict like employee relationship where it's only about what the result they produce, or you don't care.

So let's talk a little bit more about what the difference is now that we've talked a little bit about what it is and like, why you might want to do it in your business in your professional life. Let's talk a little bit about how compassion and kindness are different than each other. Because they're very closely related to each other and important to each other, because one helps facilitate the other one, but they're not exactly the same.

So compassion involves understanding that someone is suffering and desiring to somehow alleviate that suffering. That's what it is. It's an emotional state. It's you recognizing as a human that, "Oh, this person's going through something right now in a little or large way and I would like to help them to suffer less right now.

That's what it is. It's not as action-based. It's emotional based. It's you observing and then attaching an emotion to it. It is very empathetic. You may have been in a situation like that or know what that feels like. For instance, when I was talking with that person on the phone, that service representative, I know what it's like to have someone be angry with you at the on the phone. I think most of us do so you can show compassion because of that empathy you have for them. A lot of times we, you know, as we get older as well, we can find an experience in our own life that can relate to what that person's

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going through, even if it's not exactly the same. And that can help you generate that feeling of compassion.

Now, kindness is different in that it is more action-based. If you are just using an act of kindness, it's usually because you felt compassion for that person and now you want to take a step, a tangible action step, in order to help alleviate that, to try and do something in order to help them out, if they, you know, are feeling emotionally in a pit. How can you throw them a rope, or a ladder and help them back out, or let them know that you've been there before? And listen, and then maybe offer how they might be able to change that situation. So, kindness is an act when trying to help others that are in need of help. It's action based. Think of it that way.

So compassion is more of the feeling that you generate for yourself or others. Kindness is the action you take from that in order to actually alleviate that, which you can be very creative with so if it helps you generate the feeling of compassion, and it helps you. What are a few ways that you could do this in your business, in your personal life and in stories that you're working on? We're all about the base operating system here, with Storied Life Coaching, and for our business balance of our life as well as our life, and how those two relate to each other in those base operating stories. And so how can this help in those different areas? A big example might be, for instance, a salesperson. Let's say that you have a salesperson on your team, or in a sales or marketing capacity and they're not hitting their target, their marketing goal for the quarter, their sales goal for the quarter. It's getting to the end of the quarter. We've just had that happen just now where we've just ended another quarter, and we're starting a new one. And they're kind of they're feeling crappy. They're feeling scared because they haven't, they haven't met the expectation, the result that they wanted to get. And you can tell that they're really beating themselves up. That's the situation as a leader, where you can go, "You know what?" Man, if you've been a marketing or sales leader, you've probably been in the trenches at some point yourself as well and you know what that feels like to be behind, to feel like you're not living up to expectations, to feel like you're disappointing your leader, to feel like

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you're not pulling your weight. All of those things start to bog them down, and actually are even lessening the results that they're getting. There's even less of a chance they're gonna be able to pull themselves out of this pit now because the fact they're beating themselves up. And you can tell that they're doing it. I see this all the time. So you as a leader can have compassion for that because you know you've been in a situation like that before. And because you have that experience, you can show kindness through the actions. Listening is an action. It's not, it doesn't have to be passive.

So active listening: asking them what's going on, not just why are they aren't hitting the number or why it hasn't happened yet, but asking them some more questions like, "Hey, what's going on right now? How are you feeling about the situation that you're in right now?" Listening, participating, maybe showing them, empathizing with them that you've been in a similar situation. Being a little bit vulnerable. And through that, that act is an act of kindness that will make them feel more included, that will make them feel like they're part of the team and make them feel valued. And from that sense of confidence, they now have a better chance of performing for you and your business. Kind of amazing how that happens, right?

It can be so tempting—and I know that I felt this way before—it can be so tempting to see that result not popping up that you agreed to with the salesperson or this marketing person, and just immediately want to hold their feet over the fire for it. But the thing is, that might feel good in the moment, but you're probably going to feel crappy about yourself afterwards. And it's going to push you further away from the result that you want. Because motivating people through fear: sometimes it has some short-term games, but in the long term, it's not going to help you to build a team that's sustainable. And people are gonna want to leave like that fear-based employee/employer relationship. Man, it's not fun for you, it's not fun for them. It's not good for your results long term. It's just not. Kindness and compassion will actually help you get more longer term results, will help you feel good about it in the moment as well as the results you're getting, it will help the employee be able to feel good about it, feel included and do that as



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well. So that's just one example of how this can be applied. Compassion and kindness to your business, sales, or marketing example. There are lots of other examples that you could use as well.

Now for your personal life, I'm gonna use an example and we're gonna bring it all the way around in a circle and make it a little meta on you to show you just how this can be like ripples in a pond and can reverberate when you're doing it. If you start to be aware of the fact that through compassion and kindness, you can actually have better results in your life—sometimes we lose our tempers, right? I know I have with my kids. Sometimes they're doing something—it's like: I asked them to please take out the trash nicely, five times, six times. This time that the trash is overflowing and someone has actually put—this has happened—someone's put a smaller bag on top of the trash can because the trashcan lid of the main trashcan will no longer close and so there's a smaller bag. But then one of my kids has placed on top of the trashcan lid that will not close all the way and started to fill that with trash. And so it's balanced and about to fall off.

I may have gotten upset about this and raised my voice. In fact, 100% I did, probably more than once. Now as soon as I do that, I feel horrible about myself because I can see the look on my nine year old's face and it doesn't help me get the result that I want, which is for them to be motivated to take out the trash before this leaning tower of trash Pisa happens. So I show kindness to myself, or compassion for myself, the fact that I'm human, I just lost my temper. I'm a human, this is going to happen. I'm not going to beat myself up about it. I'm going to try to do better next time. I'm going to talk with my kid about it and I'm going to show myself kindness by not calling me in my head, calling myself a jerk, calling myself a bad parent, “A good parent wouldn't lose their temper like that,” all those little micro thoughts or stories that we have and our base operating system that can form narratives of how we think we're failing or doing a bad job as a parent. Now, we sometimes ruminate on those right before we fall asleep as well. But I'm gonna try again. I can have compassion for myself. And through kindness for myself say, “Hey, I'm human. This is what I'm gonna do differently next time. This is how



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I'm going to have a conversation with them to say like, 'This is why this annoys me. These are the things that led up to this. How can we work together so that this doesn't happen again?'" and I don't raise my voice. So I tried to do better, see if I can apply some of that compassion and kindness to myself.

That's how you can in, your personal life, show compassion and kindness for yourself, which is really important because when you start doing this for yourself and realize that you're not letting yourself off the hook—You're not saying that there shouldn't be high standards for the way that you conduct yourself with your family and in your personal interactions. What you're saying is, "Hey, I'm gonna have compassion for myself to not be perfect, not the perfect parent all the time, not the perfect partner all the time and I'm going to show myself kindness by not beating myself up mentally that I'm not more perfect or that I'm not already that future version of myself that I want to be. And through that, through showing kindness and compassion for myself, it's going to be a lot easier for me to extend that to others, to my kids, to my partner, at work to my employees, and to my vendors that I work with, and to that person on the phone that I call and talk to to book some tickets." When you are compassionate and kind to yourself first, it makes it so much easier for you to do it to other people.

That's what I would leave you with. This chart: start trying this out in small ways for yourself. Compassion. Noticing when you need some compassion for yourself, empathizing that you're human and that we're all here to evolve and to make things that get things better in small increments. And then be kind to yourself. Tell yourself: you're not going to tell yourself that story of why you're horrible or you're not the best version of yourself and beat yourself up, or punish yourself in some way. And then start to look for opportunities to extend that same sense of compassion and then acts of kindness to people in your business and to the people that you interact with in your personal life. Once you start getting curious about it and noticing situations where you can choose compassion and kindness over that quick feeling of anger or that feeling of "You said you were going to do this and you

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didn't do it and so now, I'm just going to be a jerk about it," you'll notice that you actually get better results in your personal life, that you feel better about doing it. It makes your life better, to feel better, and it improves those relationships in your business and in your personal life.

So try it out. Find a way to be kind to yourself this week. Be compassionate to yourself, and then see if you can find a person to cultivate some compassion and kindness for. We all have somebody in our lives that could probably use that right now, so try to think of a specific person in your life that you could do that for or look for an opportunity to do it the next time you're getting coffee at your favorite coffee shop. Let's help the other humans and let's help ourselves by realizing that we're human, too.

All right, I will talk to you next week, my friends. Until then, have a fantastic week. Bye, for now.

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