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Don't Leave Home Without It: Take Compassion to Work

Los Angeles, Calif.—Showing compassion in the workplace has long been thought of as a “weak” or inappropriate behavior, but new studies are finding that compassion at work can often lead to stronger worker commitment to the job and increased employee engagement.

“For the longest time, it was believed that feelings and emotions had no place in the workplace,” says [Dr. Noelle Nelson](#), author of "[Make More Money By Making Your Employees Happy.](#)" “We were told to ‘leave it at home,’ with the obvious exception of happiness at the company’s success, or the displeasure managers were expected to convey over poor performance or productivity. But that has changed. It is increasingly recognized that people who are suffering or upset bring that upset to work with them and ‘sucking it up’ isn’t good for the person or the business.”

Research reported by [Professor Jane Dutton](#) suggests that when people experience compassion at work—a recognition of their pain—whether they are the recipient of the compassion, the giver or just a witness to the compassion, feelings of commitment to the organization increase by all and employees feel more engaged in their work.

“Of course, businesses are not meant to be ‘group therapy.’ There’s work to be done,” says Nelson. “So how can you show compassion to an employee or co-worker going through a rough patch, without turning yourself into Dr. Phil?”

Dutton suggests, “Rather than worrying about fixing someone’s pain, simply taking the time to see their pain, to inquire, to empathize and to listen without judgment, can be an act of compassion at its best.

“None of Professor Dutton’s suggestions takes much time or energy,” notes Nelson. “But the caring and respectful attitude toward the pain of your fellow human being can be just what’s needed to help that person get through the day, and engage with renewed commitment to their job. No Dr. Phil-ing required.”

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