



Tolerance is more than just “getting along.” Being tolerant of one another involves respect, compassion, love, and kindness. By learning to work together – even with our multiple differences – our workplace environment and our lives can be more peaceful and productive. Perspective is developed over time and is influenced by a number of factors. We can benefit from others’ perspectives and our interaction can enrich lives.

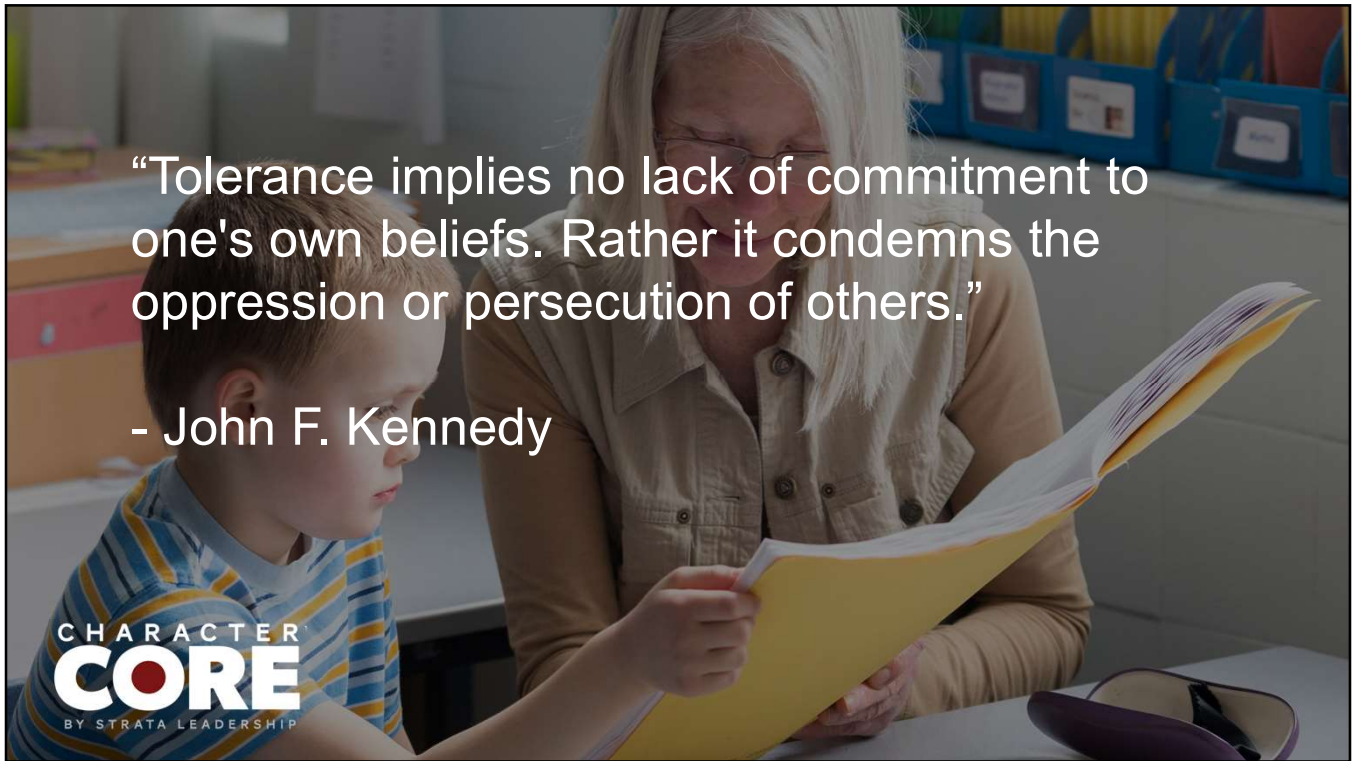


Despite efforts to encourage understanding, it seems like today's world is becoming more and more intolerant. Daily we read of tragedies with roots in a lack of understanding for others. But what can we, on an individual and organizational level, do to help people learn to get along? How can we encourage respect, compassion, understanding, and kindness?

Opposite: intolerance, disapproval, disunity, bias, prejudice, narrow-mindedness, unkind, disrespectful

Related Concepts: patience, charity, kindness, respect, forbearance, fairness, esteem, considerateness

Summary: Respecting others.



John F. Kennedy (May 29, 1917 – November 22, 1963), John Fitzgerald "Jack" Kennedy, commonly referred to by his initials JFK, was an American politician who served as the 35th President of the United States from January 1961 until his assassination in November 1963 (Wikipedia).

Other Tolerance Quotes:

"In the practice of tolerance, one's enemy is the best teacher." - Dalai Lama

"Our uniqueness, our individuality, and our life experience molds us into fascinating beings. I hope we can embrace that. I pray we may all challenge ourselves to delve into the deepest resources of our hearts to cultivate an atmosphere of understanding, acceptance, tolerance, and compassion. We are all in this life together." - Linda Thompson

"What is tolerance? It is the consequence of humanity. We are all formed of frailty and error; let us pardon reciprocally each other's folly - that is the first law of nature." - Voltaire

"The responsibility of tolerance lies with those who have the wider vision." - George Eliot

"It is essential to employ, trust, and reward those whose perspective, ability, and judgment are radically different from yours. It is also rare, for it requires uncommon humility, tolerance, and wisdom." - Dee Hock

"Tolerance implies no lack of commitment to one's own beliefs. Rather it condemns the oppression or persecution of others." - John F. Kennedy

"Acceptance and tolerance and forgiveness, those are life-altering lessons." - Jessica Lange

"The highest result of education is tolerance." - Helen Keller

"In a multi-racial society, trust, understanding and tolerance are the cornerstones of peace and order." - Kamisese Mara

"It is thus tolerance that is the source of peace, and intolerance that is the source of disorder and squabbling." - Pierre Bayle



A tolerant person finds ways to reach beyond social, physical, and cultural barriers in order to relate to others. Respect diversity, and try to learn what you can from other perspectives.

A photograph of an older woman with white hair and glasses, wearing a light-colored shirt, sitting at a desk and reading a large yellow book to a young boy. The boy is wearing a blue and yellow striped shirt and is looking at the book. The background shows a classroom setting with blue storage bins on a shelf.

2. Give Room To Grow

There is no substitute for experience. Be understanding of those who are still learning – including ourselves.

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People – particularly the young – will not grow unless they can try their ideas and learn from mistakes. There is no substitute for experience. Be understanding of others because you appreciate the same for yourself.



Tolerance is not an excuse for ignoring problems. When conflicts arise, go to those involved and try to resolve the issue quickly.

Discussion Starters

1. How does it make you feel when others listen to your point of view?
2. What is something you have learned from the younger generation? From someone older than you?
3. When you disagree with someone what is one of the first things you should do?

Additional Tolerance Discussion Starters:

How do you feel when others try to understand you rather than jumping to conclusions?

What are some ways you can demonstrate to others that you are listening to them?

Is it easier to be tolerant of a friend than a stranger? Why might this be the case?

How can people with diverse backgrounds unite around a common goal? Can you think of an example?

When did someone give you room to learn from your mistakes? How has that benefited you?

Have you ever given someone room to grow and then realized that you learned something from them? Share a bit about that experience. How did you grow as a result?

How can different generations learn from one another?

Sometimes it is difficult to give responsibilities to someone who is unproven. How can you make this process easier?

In what areas do you have greater tolerance or leeway to do things differently at work? In what areas is there little or no tolerance?

How do you decide whether to ignore a certain behavior or confront the person about it? If you decide to confront someone, how can you do it with humility and a gracious attitude – with kindness? What are some ways you can start the conversation?

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