Justin Patton's Dimensions of Gentleness

Social Research Lab at the University of Northern Colorado

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Executive Summary

Overview

The following report provides a summary of the findings from the survey administered to participants of the workforce omnibus for Justin Patton. The survey assesses objectives such as perceptions of gentleness, and applications and outcomes of gentleness in the workplace. Additionally, Patton would like to examine the relationship between his defined facets of gentleness- confidence, self-control, candor, compassion, civility, and competition as well as how participants define gentleness in their own words.

This report is broken down into four primary sections: executive summary, literature review, findings, and appendices. The findings section of this report is divided into 9 sub-sections based on objectives and the appendices contains tables from the survey data. Please note that the qualitative, open-ended responses included throughout the report have been edited for major spelling errors but not grammar, style, or content.

This report was designed to address the objectives set by Justin Patton in conjunction with The Social Research Lab, essentially, how study participants perceive the facets of gentleness defined by Justin Patton and the connection between Gentleness and leadership.

How to Read this Report

The Findings section of this report summarizes all data collected from the survey, both qualitative and quantitative. Findings are organized thematically, based on the objectives defined by Justin Patton. Appendix A contains tables for the quantitative questions addressed on the survey. The tables referenced in the body of the analysis will be found in the appendix.

Tables 1-6 capture demographic information about the participants, including gender, age, and other information about their workplace. The tables present how often (frequency) a response was selected, followed by the percentages in parenthesis. The total number of responses and mean score for each statement are also provided on Likert scale tables. The N is the total number of responses and varies due to the number of respondents who answered the individual question.

Many of the tables are presented in 5-point Likert Scales. Within each column title (e.g., "Strongly Disagree," "Disagree," etc.) there is a number, 1 through 5, which represents each title's point value on a 5-point scale. For example, a 1 represents "Strongly Disagree" and a 5 represents "Strongly Agree." The higher the mean score, the more agreement respondents have for a given item.

Please note that not all tables will add up to 100%; particularly, when asking certain outcomes based on facets of gentleness, participants were allowed to select more than one category.

Tables 26 through 31 are Crosstabulations. Crosstabulations is a type of analysis that shows if there is a statistically significant relationship between different variables in the survey. For example, different demographic variables like gender and years worked are cross analyzed with a variable, indicating if gender or years worked impacts the way different groups answer the question or rate the statement. All Crosstabulations in this report are statistically significant, meaning that there is a 95% chance the two variables have a relationship and are not impacted by variables outside of what has been tested.

Qualitative responses in the findings section were taken from interviews conducted by Justin Patton and transcribed, analyzed, and coded for themes by the SRL. Additionally, open ended responses on the survey were also coded and cross

analyzed for themes in connection to the interviews.

Key Findings

- Participants feel that gentleness is a key component of good leadership in the workplace and is highly related to creating a trusting workplace culture with high outcomes.

- Participants feel that each of Justin Patton's facets of gentleness (confidence, self-control, candor, compassion, civility, and competition) are positively related to being a gentle leader.

- Responses suggest that participants feel that gentleness encompasses compassion, empathy, restraint, and is the opposite of harshness, roughness, or aggression.

- A large implication of being a gentle leader is creating an atmosphere of trust with coworkers and employees in the workplace.

- Participants feel that when they are gentler, they are able to be better leaders and be more confident, though over-confidence can be negative and hinder gentleness.

- Participants felt that self-control positively affects situations when used in times of leadership and helps control the negative aspects of too much ego in leaders.

- Through survey responses and interviews, there emerged a connection between a leader's ability to communicate candidly, but while also exhibiting gentleness.

- Participants feel that both compassion and gentleness are vital components in

leaders and lead to more effective leadership interactions.

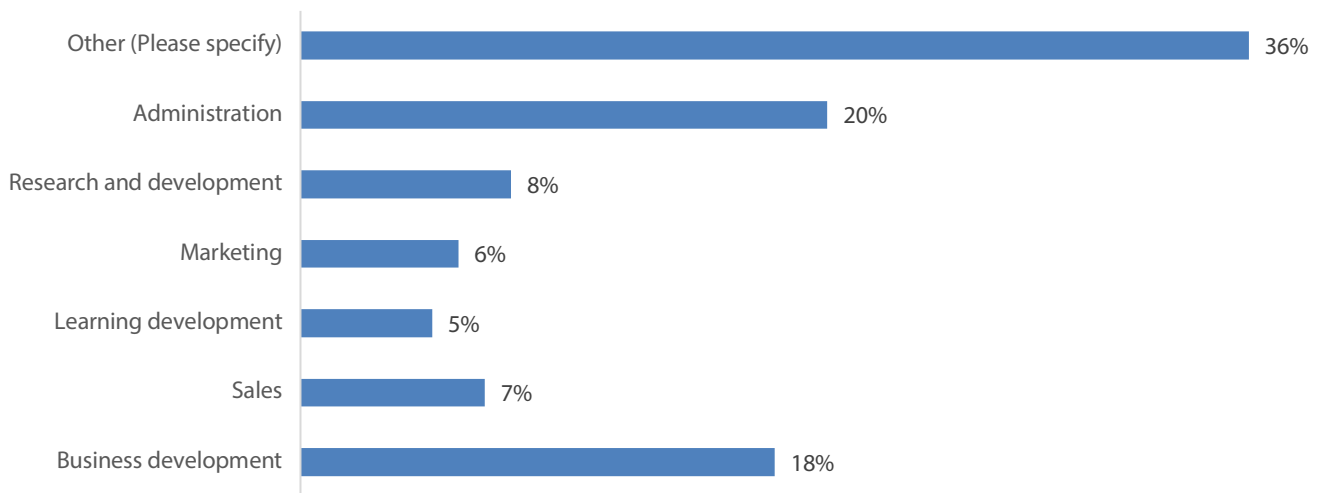- Responses suggest that civility and gentleness are connected and work together to create better relationships.

- The survey responses provide a positive connection between competition and gentleness, specifically when a leader is promoting the two attributes. This is an important finding because leaders that express gentleness while in competitive settings set cultural expectations of continuing to act gently in all circumstances.

Demographics

The survey was first administered on December 8th, 2020 to a national panel. The panel consisted of 1,000 participants of full-time employees, ages 25-55. Data collection was completed for the national panel on December 11th. Additionally, the same survey was then released to Justin Patton's contacts via LinkedIn. The survey was open from December 9th, 2020 until January 15th, 2021. The additional survey collection through LinkedIn garnered 217 responses, bringing the total response rate to 1,217. The survey responses were combined and analyzed together for this report.

Demographics Charts

What is your current role where you work?

Role	Percentage
Other (Please specify)	36%
Administration	20%
Research and development	8%
Marketing	6%
Learning development	5%
Sales	7%
Business development	18%

Gender Ratio of Participants

- Female 33%
- Male 67%

Ages of Participants

- 56-65: 1%
- 65 years and older: 0%
- 46-55: 17%
- 25-35: 30%
- 36-45: 52%
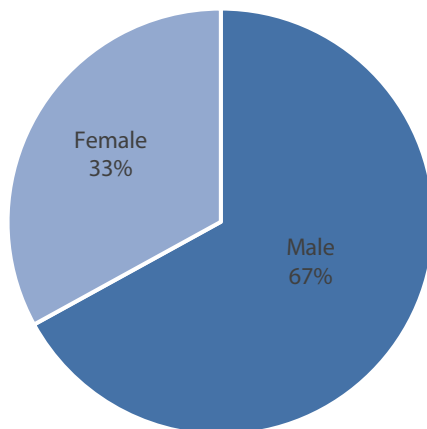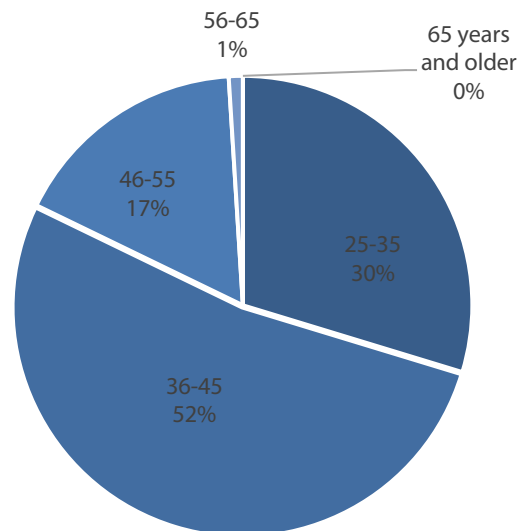
Objectives

The following objectives were defined by Justin Patton and sent to the *Social Research Lab* during the development of the project scope. The survey was created to address the objectives and asked multiple questions to assess each objective. The recommendations and highlights are based on the objectives and the finding section is organized by the objectives, with a subsection for each objective.

Obj. 1	Justin Patton would like to understand how participants define gentleness.
Obj. 2	Justin Patton would like to examine how participants apply gentleness in the context of the workplace and leadership.
Obj. 3	Justin Patton would like to examine how participants define the implications of gentleness in leadership.
Obj. 4	Justin Patton would like to observe how participants define the connection between confidence and gentleness.
Obj. 5	Justin Patton would like to discern how participants connect self-control and gentleness.
Obj. 6	Justin Patton would like to discern how participants connect candor and gentleness.
Obj. 7	Justin Patton would like to examine how participants define the relationship between compassion and gentleness.
Obj. 8	Justin Patton would like to examine how participants define the relationship between civility and gentleness.
Obj. 9	Justin Patton would like to examine how participants define the connection between competition and gentleness.

Recommendations and Highlights

1   The survey results indicate that participants believe kindness, compassion, restraint, and empathy are crucial facets of gentleness. (Addresses Objective 1)

2   Participants feel that gentleness is a crucial component of leadership, and that demonstrating gentleness generally comes with favorable outcomes such as confidence, self-control, and compassion. (Addresses Objective 2)

3   Responses suggest that participants associated gentleness with respect, confidence, and compassion, and feel that a gentle leader creates a workplace culture of trust. (Addresses Objective 3)

4   Participants indicated that when they are gentler, they are able to be better leaders and be more confident, though over-confidence can be negative and hinder gentleness. (Addresses Objective 4)

5   The results suggest that participants believe that self-control is a necessary part of being a gentle leader. (Addresses Objective 5)

6   Participants indicated the power of candor to create authentic conversations, which can be useful both in and out of the workplace. (Addresses Objective 6)

7   Respondents noted that both compassion and gentleness are vital components in leaders and lead to more effective interactions in the context of leadership. (Addresses Objective 7)

8   Overall, participants felt that civility and gentleness were extremely related, and also felt that civility increases the quality of workplace relations. (Addresses Objective 8)

9   Respondents suggested that competition can be a facet of gentleness, particularly when working as a team toward a common goal.

Review of Literature

The following is a review of existing literature compiled for the purpose of validating the findings and assertions of Justin Patton's work on the dimensions of gentleness. Justin Patton wants to change the conversation around gentleness, reshaping how people view the concept. Patton believes gentleness can impact the capabilities, connection, and influence of leaders. Justin Patton's work is a compilation of several key factors that impact and comprise the dimensions of gentleness. The following literature review centers on scholarly work in various fields relating to these dimensions of gentleness. There is a current lack of literature on different dimensions of gentleness. While there is some research currently being conducted regarding the concepts defined below in relation to gentleness, there is an evident gap in the literature about the dimensions of gentleness in regard to emotional intelligence, significant relationships, and leadership presence. Justin Patton's work can help shed new light on these issues on gentleness and its dimensions.

Confidence

Strong convictions and self-confidence are often necessary for a leader to earn follower trust and respect (Covey 1992). Confidence is important to a functional, gentle leader. Leaders who exhibit soft power and gentleness rather than harsh power bases promote freedom of choice and autonomy of action to encourage agreement of outcomes rather than mandated compliance. Soft power and leadership also increase employee's organizational commitment (Pierro, et. al 2013). A key component of exhibiting these soft power bases is the legitimacy of the leader (Pierro, et. al 2013). Confidence helps to foster and improve work relationships. relationships (Chusmir, Koberg and Stecher 1992). Professional relationships are important to confidence just as confidence is important to building these relationships (Holland, Middleton, and Uys 2012). Leader-member relationships develop over time and are impacted by various types of leadership behavior and contextual variables, such as confidence (Yukl, O'Donnell, and Taber 2009).

Measures of sociability, self-confidence, and emotional control were positively related to influential leadership with emotional intelligence (Megerian and Sosik 1996). Through maintaining emotional balance in order to display confidence, determination, and persistence in the face of adversity, effective leaders spark followers' motives (House 1995). Strong convictions and self-confidence are often necessary for a leader to earn follower trust and respect (Covey 1992). Confidence has been found to be a paramount feature of developing and maintaining one's leadership presence (Grant and Taylor 2013). Research has demonstrated that leaders' confidence makes the leader calmer, less prone to fault finding, more open to discussions, feedback, and problem solving in the eyes of employees (Söderhjelm, et al. 2018).

Control (self-control)

Gentleness can inform self-control. Self-control has been linked to a variety of positive life outcomes, such as accomplishing long-term goals, persisting with college, having higher levels of engagement, and even earning more money (Galla and Duckworth 2015). Self-control is often referred to in organizational literature as self-management, defined as the ability to influence oneself to obtain the motivation needed to perform (Manz and Simms 1980).

Self-control helps to foster relationships and trust both with strangers and in established relationships (Righetti and Finkenauer 2011). Employee trust is crucial in the workplace and is associated with higher financial performance, productivity, and product or service quality (Brown, Gray, McHardy, and Taylor 2015). People with high self-control are less likely to engage in behaviors destructive to relationships, such as having destructive or even aggressive outbursts, and more likely to be empathetic and understanding (Tangey, Baumesiter, and Boone 2004). Controlling destructive or negative outbursts contributes to controlling and fostering gentleness in an individual.

Ethical leadership has been seen as an important part of leaders' success, but one study found that ethical traits such as humility, honesty, empathy, and moral courage are not enough to ensure positive results (Sosik et. Al. 2019). Self-control was found to be a moderating factor; in other words, these ethical traits were not enough to ensure positive outcomes if a leader did not possess high self-control (Sosik et. Al. 2019). Gentleness in leadership through control of things such as humility, honesty, empathy, and moral courage is powerful to presence and impact.

Candor (being honest and open)

Previous work has established how the gentleness of a leader through being open and honest – having and exhibiting candor, impacts leadership effectiveness and the workplace. One study found that employees' perceptions of their leaders' openness to experience was positively linked to employee job satisfaction, improved motivation, and less absences to work (Starbuck 2015). A prominent leadership theorist posits that truly transformational leaders are more likely to be honest. This leader honesty helps set an example to followers as well as maintaining mutual trust (Bass 1998). Emotional honesty and candor are crucial components of emotional intelligence (Abraham 2004). Emotional honesty is also linked to higher levels of job performance, especially when given potentially negative feedback (Abraham 2004). Leaders who are able to correctly perceive and be honest with their emotions are generally perceived to be more effective (Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey 2011). That is, leaders who exhibit gentleness through emotional candor and intelligence are more effective.

Candor is also a crucial part of leadership connections; gentle leaders can connect with people through being open and honest about their emotions and their work. Leaders that are not candid and show neither positive or negative emotions tend to suffer in their relationships with their employees; employees with these kinds of leaders are significantly more likely to report lower levels of trust, relationship quality, and job satisfaction (Farmer and Aguinis 2005). A leader who is open and honest with their employees can better cultivate an atmosphere of trust. Trust in the workplace is linked to positive workplace outcomes including higher productivity and a greater level in quality of the product or service (Brown et. Al 2015).

Candor can help improve leadership presence in a gentle way. Leader gentleness through openness is crucial, especially when the leader is in charge of a diverse team. Employees with leaders that are open and honest in a safe psychological environment are more likely to voice their ideas (Tröster and van Knippenberg 2012). Individuals that have high degrees of openness generally score higher on measures of intellectual stimulation and creativity (Bono and Judge 2004). This may lead to them being better leaders due to their ability to engage in divergent thinking. Divergent thinking refers to a fluid way of thinking that generates many different possible solutions or options to the problem at hand (Guilford 1957). Leaders that are able to think divergently are more likely to be able to envision various futures for a company and adapt accordingly (Bono and Judge 2004).

Compassion

When leaders exhibit gentleness through compassion and have more positive attitudes, this influences their co-workers and the work group in a positive way, leading to a greater desire to participate (Söderhjelm, et al. 2018). One study found that leaders' engagement with others was a stronger predictor of success than their competency (Alimo-Metcalfe et. Al. 2008). Compassion at work is linked to a positive work-related identity, which in turn leads to better organizational outcomes (Moon 2016).

Compassion is a key component of gentleness, and in turn, compassion in the workplace is an essential component of building relationships, a pillar of transformational leadership (Eldor and Shoshani 2016). Psychological research has suggested that compassion between coworkers results in a stronger connection (Powley 2009). Those who experience compassion at work also feel more valued by and connected to their work colleagues (Lilius et. Al. 2008). This also results in a reduction in employees' negative emotions as well as their likelihood to engage in more positive long-term workplace behaviors, including staying at their workplace longer (Lilius et. Al. 2008).

Leadership presence and behavior is a central factor in developing a positive workplace climate (Luria 2008). When leaders engage in transformational leadership, which includes gentleness through compassion and emphasizes relationships between employees and leaders, negative employee behaviors decrease (Luria 2008). People who act compassionately are perceived as more intelligent as well as stronger leaders (Melwani, Mueller, and Overbeck 2012). One study found that employees felt more compassion from their direct coworkers than supervisors, suggesting a need for Justin Patton's conception of compassionate leadership (Lilius et. Al. 2008).

Civility

Gentleness in leadership is comprised of "soft" leadership skills. Soft leadership skills, such as self-regulation, empathy, and social skills (each important components of civility) are important for effective leadership. Scholars have asserted that greater attention should be given to strengthen these skills in future leaders (Marques 2013).

Sociability, self-confidence, and emotional control have been positively related to influential leadership with emotional intelligence (Megerian and Sosik 1996). These kinds of traits are those of a leader or employee exhibiting gentleness. A non-gentle leader or employee, those that exhibit incivility and negative interactions in organizations reduces performance, creativity, and retention. Additionally, civility helps strengthen workplace relationships. Relationships in the workplace are built upon gentleness, specifically through professional civility (DeIuliis and Flinko 2016). Improving workplace civility has been found to have broad implications for employees' relationships with work (Leiter, et. al 2011). Decency in relationships, respect for the self and others, assertiveness, ability to express convictions, relational capacity are important factors in workplace civility (Di Fabio and Gori 2016).

Gentleness through civility is a powerful leadership trait (Sergiovanni 2005). A leader behaving civilly ultimately enhances performance and influences how people see another person as a leader (Porath, Gerbasi, and Schorch 2015). Leadership has potent impacts on follows and work culture. Civility and leadership can improve job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Gallus et. al 2013). Authentic leaders influence employees' perceptions of norms and civility through leaders' ability to foster civil and effective work environments (Laschinger and Read 2016).

Competition

There is a significant lack of scholarly work on the relationship between gentleness and competition. Further work, such as Justin Patton's, should be done to promote better understanding on this topic. Previous research has demonstrated that goal-oriented and competitive work environments can foster employee engagement in the workplace and overall performance (Jones, Davis, and Thomas 2015). Research has also shown that organizations promoting competition and cooperation with its members and employees can improve overall performance and team and group engagement amongst employees (Beersma et. al 2003). However, more work needs to be done on how gentleness can be important through this process of competition.

Competition for opportunities and leadership availability can promote further contributions to the collective action of an organization. That is, competition can drive greater performance amongst aspiring leaders (Harrell 2018). Cameron et. al (2014) discuss how through competition, specifically through the "Competing Values Framework" (which examines individual leadership and how it produces proficiencies and "value"), organizations are able to drive and improve performance and leadership strength. However, again, more work needs to be done on how gentleness can be important through this process of competition.

This review of existing literature has been compiled for the purpose of validating the findings and assertions of Justin Patton's work on the dimensions of gentleness. Patton believes gentleness can impact the capabilities, connection, and influence of leaders. Patton's work is a compilation of several key factors that impact and comprise the dimensions of gentleness. Scholarly literature was compiled, analyzed, and reviewed centering on Patton's dimensions. There is a lack of considerable work on Patton's dimensions of gentleness. Patton's work, wanting to change the conversation around gentleness, reshaping how people view the concept, can help to shed new light on these issues on gentleness and its dimensions.

Findings

Objective 1: How Do Participants Define Gentleness?

One main theme that emerged through the qualitative data was specific with defining gentleness. Through both the open-ended responses in the survey and in interviews, participants were asked to define in their own words, what gentleness meant to them. Below are specific key trends from the data.

Kindness, care, and compassion were prevalent ways that participants defined gentleness within open-ended responses. Below are quotes that highlight some participants perceptions regarding gentleness.

"So, it's this ability to be able to share those things in a way that the person feels cared for the person feels, uh, loved, I would say loved. And that, um, where compassion is, is shared in that moment."

"Kind. Take the time to ease into the task."

"I would define gentleness as the ability to carry a message. When I think of gentleness, I think of whether it's a message, a service or, a conversation. It's the ability to take action in a way that those receiving it feel cared for and feel a genuine compassion for them through that.

Responses specifically about describing gentleness with words like "kindness" and "compassions" were heavily prevalent through the qualitative responses. Responses indicate a

trend that many participants believe there is a direct link between gentleness and the act of kindness and compassion.

Participants often used the term "empathy" when defining gentleness and explaining factors involved in gentleness. Below are some responses that show the connection between empathy and gentleness from participants.

"A soft approach, a listening ear and a path to empathy and understanding of other people and perspectives."

"Empathy, EQ [emotional quotient or emotional intelligence], adaptability"

"I mean, for me, the energy of compassion is an incredibly gentle energy and the willingness to be gentle with others, I think naturally includes empathy and compassion as part of that gentleness."

Similar to the finding of compassion directly linked to gentleness, a large majority of participants also discussed empathy when describing gentleness.

Another theme that emerged from the qualitative data was specific to restraint, or self-control. The below statements are from some participants' emphasized restraint as a facet of gentleness.

"Restraint, control, the act of committing the least amount of harm or the act of creating a caring supportive environment to evolve."

"If you think about engaging in a conversation and engaging in conflict, know, even though you have the power, even though you have the strength, even

though you can, you know, do whatever it is, um, you hold back. So as not to unnecessarily injure feelings, emotions, people."

"Aren't reactionary. Don't respond immediately."

Participants describe that having restraint and the ability to diffuse conflict are important aspects to gentleness. This finding is unique in that is reflects the literature found regarding self-control (page 6) and the connection the gentleness.

Inversely, some participants defined what gentleness was *not* to them. These themes included harshness, roughness, and aggression.

"Not being rude or aggressive with people"

"Not being too harsh or rough when dealing with things"

"The mirror opposite of brash, harsh, cutting/cold or indifferent."

Defining what gentleness does not include indicates that participants have very positive inflections regarding the term. The qualitive data that asks participants how to define gentleness is heavily reflected in the quantitative data. As shown in Table 12, most participants (74%) perceived gentleness as a strength.

Overall, responses suggest that participants feel that gentleness encompasses compassion, empathy, restraint, and is the opposite of harshness, roughness, or aggression.

Objective 2: How Do Participants Apply Gentleness in the Context of the Workplace and Leadership?

Tables 7-12 present responses from participants regarding gentleness at work and in leadership.

Tables 7 and 8 present responses regarding gentleness at work. According to Table 7, 62% of respondents agreed that they are able to show gentleness at their place of work. 74% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that people they look up to are gentle in their approach; 75% agreed/strongly agreed that demonstrating gentleness makes them more effective; and 77% agreed/strongly agreed that gentleness is a useful trait to exhibit in the workplace (Table 8). All items had high mean scores (ranging from 3.95-4.04), suggesting that workplace gentleness is valued.

The lowest agreement level for table 7, that participants are able to show gentleness in the workplace, indicates that there is work that needs to be done to help participants feel like they can implement this trait to co-workers or leaders of their organization.

Tables 10 and 14 provide responses for both participants' associations with gentleness and leadership. For the Table 10 item, "The best leaders I know demonstrate gentleness," 75% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed. 79% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that gentleness could change their life outcomes, and 79% of respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that one can be assertive and gentle at the same time. Table 10's mean scores of 3.96-4.07 suggest that participants feel gentleness is good, a positive trait of leaders, and is compatible with leadership.

Respondents strongly agreed or agreed that gentleness plays a role in demonstrating leadership presence" at a rate of 76% (Table 14). 70% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their boss displays gentleness, and 78% agreed or strongly agreed that gentleness is foundational for leadership. Overall, Table 14's mean range of 3.85-4.09 suggests that participants value gentleness in leadership roles.

Additionally, interview quotes emphasize the results of gentle leadership and how gentleness can create a safe environment. Below are specific participant quotes that highlight gentle leadership.

"So, my view is more people centric and enable them to secure the processes. So, with that as a basis, then gentleness means that even though I have the power and the construct to be able to exert force, gentleness plays the role that I don't need to, because people understand that it's safe."

"If you think about a leader's role as really motivating a team, leading a team, you know, if you're comfortable with yourself and comfortable with the people around you, it's so much easier to lead your team."

"By my ability to create a safe space, I feel like what I'm allowing for people is for them to share things that they might not ordinarily share. And I think one of the ways in which we create safe spaces is by the energy we carry into that space. And I think that my energy is naturally very gentle."

The above quotes from leaders highlights the thoughtfulness that leading gently to create a

safe work environment is an important process for organizations to have embedded in their workspaces.

Table 13 provides responses on participants' views of the outcomes of expressing gentleness. 63% of people experience more confidence, 43% have more self-control, and 40% feel that they are able to have more self-compassion as a result of experiencing expressed gentleness.

Overall, responses suggest that participants feel that gentleness is a crucial component of leadership, and that demonstrating gentleness generally comes with favorable outcomes such as confidence, self-control, and compassion.

Objective 3: How Do Participants Define the Implications of Gentleness in Leadership?

Table 13 presents participants' responses on the implications of gentleness in leadership. Tables 13 displays participants' responses regarding outcomes of gentleness. When they are gentle, 63% feel they are more confident, 43% feel they have more self-control, and 40% feel they are more compassionate. On the lower end, 30% feel they are able to be more candid, 23% feel they act with more civility, and 16% feel they are able to be more competitive. This table suggests that participants feel that gentleness is compatible with various other constructs, largely confidence and self-control. Table 13 also displays that participants are hesitant to state that gentleness is connected to candor and competition.

Below are responses from the interviews that reflect table 13. Specifically, participants were asked questions around their perceptions or experiences that traits of gentleness, like confidence, candor, self-control, compassion, civility, and competition have in leadership and workspaces.

"I think that a lot of people don't feel safe to speak their truth because they think their jobs on the line. The fear is I'm going to lose my job. If I say exactly what I'm feeling, I'm going to be judged. If I say exactly what I'm feeling, I'm going to be condemned, misunderstood all of these fears that we naturally have when we're in our vulnerability and willing to speak our truth. Right? So as a leader who is modeling this open, vulnerable, gentle way of being, I think naturally

invites their employees or whomever to, to act the same."

"Respect is a huge piece of leadership, you know, people have to respect you as a human being, not just as a leader, as a person."

"So, I would say gentleness plays a role in respect and then your desire to understand other's perspectives and to be able to act in a way that they feel they deserve."

The comments above indicate participants perceptions gentleness in leadership pertain to mutual respect in the workplace.

Qualitative responses below discuss additional perspective regarding gentleness and its key components within leadership.

"What you're trying to do is trying to build meaningful relationships-if you build meaningful relationships, then they trust your opinion, right? They trust your opinion and they trust your voice.

"I can demonstrate confidence, candor and gentleness all at the same time. It is even possible to be able to say, this is the direction we're going but it's how I approach that. That makes the difference in the type of leader that people are going to like- the legacy that you're going to leave.

"I think it does build trust because now I, I'm not always looking over my shoulder. If I make a mistake, or if I have a question, sometimes you can go into a leader and have a question it's met with

the hammer. I feel comfortable now asking a question. I feel comfortable speaking up in a meeting and offering my opinion."

Overall, participants associated gentleness with respect, confidence, and compassion. A large implication of being a gentle leader is creating an atmosphere of trust with coworkers and employees in the workplace.

Objective 4: How Do Participants Define the Connection Between Confidence and Gentleness?

Table 15 presents participants' responses to various statements regarding the link between confidence and gentleness. The table contains mean scores ranging from 3.95-4.13, suggesting that overall participants believe that confidence is compatible with gentleness. 73% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "Confident leaders exhibit gentleness consistently," and 78% agreed or strongly agreed that they feel more confident when they act with gentleness.

Interview responses regarding the connection between confidence and leadership include:

"You have to be very confident and not cocky, but confident in yourself and who you are to be a great leader and to inspire others, to get the best out of them."

"I think it's connected to the point where if I know I'm going to show up for myself with gentleness, I am more likely to be confident in the world because no matter how I am received, I know I've got my back. Also, if I know I'm going to show up in front of people who carry a signature of gentleness, it allows me to feel more confident in my truth, more confident in my honesty. So, I think gentleness naturally creates an environment where people are going to be more apt to be confidently who they are by the nature of what gentleness invites into our lives."

"Confidence is particularly important if you're going to be more of the kind and gentle leader."

Though participants generally viewed confidence as a good thing, they also felt that being overconfident could be a hindrance to being gentle and creating positive leadership.

"You don't want to be arrogant, but you want to be confident.

"I think an overconfident human is less inclined to receive input and that's going to be damaging to leadership because they're not going to be available to what their team needs to share."

"Have you ever heard of the term of humble confidence? Yeah. So, you can approach things in a way that where you're not coming across as a know it all, but you kind of state your facts."

Overall, participants feel that when they are gentler, they are able to be better leaders and be more confident, though over-confidence can be negative and hinder gentleness.

Objective 5: How Do Participants Connect Self-Control and Gentleness?

Tables 16 and 17 display participants' responses regarding self-control and gentleness. Table 16 asks respondents to highlight their agreement with various statements, such as "Self-control is critical in one's ability to demonstrate gentleness," which 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with. 79% of respondents also agreed that they maintain more self-control when they are gentle. This table had high mean scores from 4.08-4.11. Table 16 has one of the highest mean scores, indicating that participants agreed at a higher rate that self-control is critical to gentleness.

Participants in table 17 were asked to think about a time that they acted with self-control in a leadership position. 82% felt that it positively affected the situation, and 12% felt it negatively impacted the situation; only 6% of participants felt that self-control did not affect the situation at all. Similar to table 16, as well as the literature review and qualitative responses, many participants believe in the positive outcomes acting with self-control, a facet of gentleness, has on work situations.

Comments expressing the importance of self-control included:

"And I believe true leaders really do carefully decide what they should say."

"I think the nature of self-control is vitally important. Because also if you don't have self-control, when you're direct, it can be misread and misinterpreted."

"So, when we're not in our self-control, we might be that much more inclined to

get lost in the mandates of our ego, the need to be right. The need to prove others wrong, all those needs."

"So being able to control your words, being able to recognize and control your feelings. I think it's sort of unrealistic to think you're not going to have a reaction to things but being aware that you're having it and why you're having it and how to manage it and maybe deal with the reaction later and deal with the present now."

"Self-control is a dependency to being able to demonstrate gentleness, you can't be gentle without self-control."

The above comments reflect the connection between gentleness and self-control. Specifically, participants indicated the necessity for leaders to be thoughtful about what they say, and to process situations before reacting.

Overall, participants indicated that self-control is a necessary part of being a gentle leader. Particularly, participants felt that self-control positively affects situations when used in times of leadership and helps control the negative aspects of too much ego in leaders.

Objective 6: How Do Participants Connect Candor and Gentleness?

Tables 18 and 19 display questions about candor and participants' responses regarding the connection between candor and gentleness.

Table 18 shows high mean scores for the items, "Candor is critical in one's ability to demonstrate gentleness" (3.91), "Leaders in my workplace who demonstrate candor create more trust" (3.95), "People can speak frankly and still show gentleness" (4.05), and "I believe that it is easier to be candid with someone when I am already coming from a place of gentleness" (4.02). The high mean scores in response to these statements indicate that effective use of candor is an important component of gentleness. This connection demonstrates that gentleness, when used in tandem with candor, can help people to communicate more effectively.

Table 19 shows that 69% of participants believe it is fairly important or very important when asked to think about a leader they thought spoke openly, even if it was not what people wanted to hear, to which this follow up question was asked: "How important is it for leaders to demonstrate gentleness in situations like this?" Over half (51%) of respondents indicated this attribute was very important. On the other end of the scale, only 3% of respondents indicated that this trait in a leader was not important at all. These findings indicate that candor is a valued asset in a leader. Additionally, there is a strong indication that when leaders are speaking candidly, they must also use gentleness to get their message across.

When participants were asked to explain how gentleness and candor interact with each other, the following quotes were provided by some interviewees:

"You can be gentle and share a very strong point and have a real conversation with people."

"I think you can be straightforward and to the point and still be gentle."

"Gentleness probably opens up the receptors to take more candid feedback."

While participants believe self-control is a necessary trait from leaders, the interviews and survey data also indicate that being candid is a necessary component of gentleness. Specifically, participants believe, while leaders should be thoughtful with what they say, there is still an opportunity to have candid conversations as well.

Overall, there is a strong connection between civility and gentleness. Through survey responses and interviews, there emerged a connection between a leader's ability to communicate candidly, but while also exhibiting gentleness.

Interview responses demonstrate the power of candor to create authentic conversations, whereas survey responses highlight the power of candor as a tool in the workplace. These findings together indicate that candor and gentleness have a connection that can be leveraged effectively.

Objective 7: How Participants Define the Relationship Between Compassion and Gentleness?

Tables 20 and 21 present responses for the relationship between compassion and gentleness.

Table 20 shows that compassion is a critically important component of gentleness. The statements, "compassion is critical in one's ability to demonstrate gentleness" and "acting with gentleness helps me maintain compassion in a situation" had strong agreement levels. The most positive options were agree or strongly agree, which make up 82% of all responses. The means for both statements in Table 20 were high at 4.12 each. This indicates that compassion is an important component of gentleness that is valued when assessing the use of gentleness.

Similar to participants viewing compassion as a critical component of gentleness, Table 21 shows that participants would feel mostly comfortable addressing issues with a workplace leader due to these leaders acting compassionately. The statement "I would not hesitate to report the mistake to leadership-they have always acted compassionately and with gentleness" had the highest rate of agreement at 60% of respondents agreeing with the statement. The statement, "I would put off telling leadership for a while, their reaction may not be compassionate or gentle" was selected by 35% of participants, and the statement, "I would not go to the leadership- I am afraid of how they would react" was selected by 5% of participants.

Interview responses reflect the concept of compassion's influence on gentleness.

"I think gentleness is more about an action. I think kindness is in your heart."

"The energy of compassion is an incredibly gentle energy."

"Compassion is a conduit for gentleness."

Similar to objective 1 of this report, many participants connect gentleness and compassion together. These additional responses highlight that compassion is a facet of gentleness and is a key factor for leadership.

Overall, there is a strong correlation between gentleness and compassion that is expressed in both survey responses and interviews. Additionally, participants feel that both compassion and gentleness are vital components in leaders and lead to more effective leadership interactions.

These findings about the connections between compassion and gentleness are intriguing when discovering both their individual merits and the effect they have on each other.

Objective 8: How Do Participants Define the Relationship Between Civility and Gentleness?

Tables 22 and 23 present responses for the relationship between civility and gentleness.

Table 22 shows that civility is an important component of gentleness, with means for the three statements ranging from 4.02 to 4.15. The statement with the highest mean, 4.15, was "Leaders should be able to be respectful even in stressful situations". The high mean for this statement indicates that most of the participants believe that leaders should exhibit candor in a respectful manor. These high means indicate that there is a high correlation between gentleness and civility when approaching difficult situations.

Additionally, in Table 23 when asked to indicate their predicted response to an uncivil coworker, 66% of respondents indicated they would approach their colleague with gentleness about the situation. This high rate of respondents indicating they would respond with gentleness demonstrates the desire to understand the uncivil behavior and work towards a solution without returning the same uncivil attitude. Interview responses reflect the concept of civility's influence on gentleness.

The comments below from interviews also highlight the importance civility is when acting gently. Many participants saw civility as a key component to acting gently. Additionally, some participants directly linked acting with civility is an importance leadership trait.

"In a lot of communication, gentleness is in tone."

"Diplomacy is very important to leadership and civility and diplomacy are two of the most important traits that are connected to gentleness."

"[I] think it allows for whomever you're speaking with to be in a better place from the beginning."

Overall, responses surrounding civility and gentleness indicate a strong relationship between civility and gentleness. High means indicate that respondents value civility in the workplace and believe leaders need to balance civility and gentleness to achieve and effective leading style and culture.

Additionally, civility and gentleness play a large role in colleague relations and problem solving. Interview responses echo the findings from the survey and further highlight the role of civil communication in forming relationships with gentleness. Overall, responses suggest that civility and gentleness are connected and work together to create better relationships.

Objective 9: How Do Participants Define the Connection Between Competition and Gentleness?

Tables 24 and 25 present responses on the connection between competition and gentleness and the results of this connection.

Table 24 provides responses to statements about competition and gentleness in leadership as well as personal experience with competition and leadership. Participants were provided with five different statements regarding gentleness and competition and asked to rate their level of agreement with each statement. The means for these five statements were high, ranging from 4.01 to 4.05. The statement with the highest mean was "I find that the most successful leaders are competitive in their field." These high means are indicative of a strong culture of competition within respondent's workplaces, as well as a high correlation between gentleness and the success of this competition.

Table 25 reflects a similarly high correlation between personal competition and gentleness. This table asks participants to think of a time when they were expected to be competitive. Respondents then choose their response to the situation. The response with the highest rate of being chosen (65%) was "I was able to be competitive while also showing gentleness to others." This high rate of response for this option indicates that when placed in competitive situations, people are able to associate gentleness with the situation and then act upon that association.

Some interview responses that reflect this interconnected nature between gentleness and competition are as follows:

"It's important to me that we work together because if we all don't win, none of us win and we truly are in it together."

"You can bring a gentle heart as a winner or a gentle heart as a lose."

"I've seen leaders that have a drive to want to be the best but have a gentle nature."

Overall, both interviews and survey responses concerning gentleness and competition demonstrate that the two concepts are connected. The survey responses provide a positive connection between competition and gentleness, specifically when a leader is promoting the two attributes. This is an important finding because leaders that express gentleness while in competitive settings set cultural expectations of continuing to act gently in all circumstances.

Additionally, the survey responses reinforce the idea that in competition, there must be a component of gentleness to promote teamwork and success for all of the people involved. These findings indicate there is value in incorporating gentleness while in competitive situations.

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Appendices

Tables

Table 1: What is your age?

Age	Percent
25-35	30%
36-45	52%
46-55	17%
56-65	1%
65 years and older	0%

*N=1,217

Table 2: What gender do you identify with? - Selected Choice

Gender	Percent
Male	67%
Female	33%
Other (please specify)	0%

*N=1,217

Table 3: What is your current position level? - Selected Choice

Position Level	Percent
Frontline Employee	23%
Manager	50%
Director	12%
Executive Leadership Team	6%
Other (please specify)	9%

*N=1,217

Table 4: What industry do you currently work in? - Selected Choice

Industry	Percent
Healthcare	14%
Hospitality	5%
Nonprofit	4%
Professional Services	27%
Education	10%
Retail	4%
Other (please specify)	36%

*N=1,217

Table 5: What is your current role where you work? - Selected Choice

Role	Percent
Business development	18%
Sales	7%
Learning development	5%
Marketing	6%
Research and Development	8%
Administration	20%
Other (please specify)	36%

*N=1,217

Table 6: How long have you been in the workforce?

Length	Percent
Less than 2 years	7%
2-5 years	33%
6-10 years	30%
More than 10 years	30%

*N=1,217

Table 7: I am able to express gentleness (select all that apply)

Statement	Percent
When I am at my place of work	62%
When I am in my community	44%
In my relationships	46%
In my personal life	48%

*N=1,217

Table 8: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
People I look up to are often gentle in their approach.	3.95	5%	6%	15%	38%	36%
Demonstrating gentleness makes me more effective.	3.98	2%	6%	17%	42%	33%
Gentleness is a useful trait to exhibit in the workplace.	4.04	3%	4%	16%	40%	37%
Gentleness is a useful trait to exhibit in relationships.	4.15	2%	4%	13%	39%	42%

*N=1,217

Table 9: When gentleness is present in a relationship, it helps create outcomes like (select all that apply)

Statement	Percent
Being confident in that relationship	57%
Being able to control my actions and feelings in that relationship	42%
Being candid in that relationship	38%
Being compassionate in that relationship	45%
Being civil in that relationship	35%
Being competitive in that relationship	11%
Other (please explain)	1%

*N=1,217

Table 10: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The best leaders I know demonstrate gentleness	3.96	5%	5%	15%	38%	37%
I believe gentleness can change the outcomes in my life.	4.07	2%	4%	15%	42%	37%
It is possible to be gentle and assertive at the same time	4.1	3%	4%	14%	40%	39%

*N=1,217

Table 11: Demonstrating gentleness represents the value you place upon

Statement	Percent
Yourself	74%
Others	22%
Neither	4%

*N=1,217

Table 12: I perceive gentleness as

Statement	Percent
A weakness	24%
A Strength	74%
Other	2%

*N=1,217

Table 13: What are the outcomes you have experienced when expressing gentleness? (select all that apply)

Statement	Percent
I am more confident	63%
I feel like I have more self-control	43%
I feel like I am able to be more candid	30%
I am better able to express compassion	40%
I am able to be more competitive	16%
I am able to act with civility	23%
Other (please specify)	1%

*N=1,217

Table 14: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Gentleness plays a significant role in demonstrating leadership presence.	3.99	5%	4%	14%	39%	38%
My current boss displays gentleness consistently.	3.85	4%	9%	17%	39%	31%
My parent(s) display gentleness consistently.	3.92	4%	7%	18%	36%	35%
Gentleness is a foundational element of leadership.	4.06	2%	5%	15%	42%	36%
Gentleness can be learned.	4.09	3%	4%	15%	36%	42%

*N=1,217

Table 15: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Confidence is a crucial part in demonstrating gentleness.	4.01	4%	4%	15%	40%	37%
Confident leaders exhibit gentleness consistently.	3.95	2%	7%	18%	40%	33%
I respect others who portray gentleness when having tough conversations.	4.13	3%	3%	14%	40%	40%
I feel more confident when I act with gentleness.	4.08	2%	4%	16%	40%	38%

*N=1,217

Table 16: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Self-control is critical in one's ability to demonstrate gentleness.	4.1	4%	4%	13%	37%	42%
Gentleness is a reflection of one's character.	4.08	2%	5%	14%	42%	37%
Acting with gentleness helps me maintain self-control in a situation.	4.11	3%	3%	15%	39%	40%
I believe that leaders who show gentleness are able to maintain control in situations.	4.09	3%	3%	15%	41%	38%

*N=1,217

Table 17: Think of a time you were in a leadership role and you decided to act with self-control. Which of the choices best describe the outcome of that situation?

Statement	Percent
It positively impacted the situation	82%
It negatively impacted the situation	12%
I did not see any difference made by acting with self-control	6%

*N=1,217

Table 18: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Candor is critical in one's ability to demonstrate gentleness.	3.91	5%	4%	20%	38%	33%
Leaders in my workplace who demonstrate candor create more trust.	3.95	3%	4%	19%	43%	31%
People can speak frankly and still show gentleness.	4.05	3%	4%	16%	39%	38%
I believe that it is easier to be candid with someone when I am already coming from a place of gentleness.	4.02	3%	4%	17%	40%	36%

*N=1,217

Table 19: Think about a leader you thought spoke openly, even if it was not what people wanted to hear. How important is it for leaders to demonstrate? gentleness in situations like this?

Statement	Percent
Not important at all	3%
Slightly important	7%
Important	21%
Fairly important	19%
Very important	50%

*N=1,217

Table 20: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Compassion is critical in one's ability to demonstrate gentleness.	4.12	4%	3%	11%	41%	41%
Acting with gentleness helps me maintain compassion in a situation.	4.12	2%	4%	13%	41%	40%

*N=1,217

Table 21: Think of a time when you made a mistake at your workplace and had to inform your leadership. What choice would you make in that situation?

Statement	Percent
I would not hesitate to report the mistake to leadership-they have always acted compassionately and with gentleness	60%
I would put off telling leadership for a while- their reaction may not be compassionate or gentle	35%
I would not go to the leadership- I am afraid of how they would react	5%

*N=1,217

Table 22: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Civility is critical in one's ability to demonstrate gentleness.	4.06	4%	3%	13%	42%	38%
Acting with gentleness help me maintain civility in a situation	4.02	2%	4%	16%	44%	34%
Leaders should be able to be respectful even in stressful situations.	4.15	3%	4%	13%	35%	45%

*N=1,217

Table 23: Imagine a workplace situation where you start to feel like a colleague is beginning to act uncivil towards you and it starts to impact your work. Select a choice that best fits what you would choose in that situation.

Statement	Percent
I would approach my colleague with gentleness about the situation- I find that is the best way to solve problems	66%
I would be hesitant to approach my colleague with gentleness in this situation- it hasn't always worked in my favor in the past	29%
I would not approach my colleague at all- a gentle approach would not be enough in this situation	5%

*N=1,217

Table 24: Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
It's possible for competition and gentleness to coexist.	4.01	4%	4%	16%	40%	36%
I respect leaders that are able to demonstrate gentleness when competing.	4.02	2%	5%	16%	43%	34%
I find that the most successful leaders are competitive in their field.	4.05	3%	5%	16%	37%	39%
I am able to express my competitiveness while still being kind in the process.	4.01	3%	5%	15%	42%	35%
I believe that leaders who have a gentle demeanor are more successful in competitive industries.	4.04	3%	5%	16%	37%	39%

*N=1,217

Table 25: Think of a time when you were expected to be competitive. Select a choice that best describe how you would act in that situation.

Statement	Percent
I was able to be competitive while also showing gentleness to others	65%
I struggled with maintaining a gentle demeanor while being competitive	31%
I was not able to be competitive while also being gentle	4%

*N=1,217

		Table 26:					
		Please indicate your level of agreement regarding the following statements. People I look up to are often gentle in their approach					
		Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**
What is your gender?	**Male**	6%	4.6%	10.8%	38%	40.6%	100.00%
	Female	2.8%	8.2%	22.1%	37.8%	29.1%	100.00%
	Prefer Not to Answer	50%	0%	25%	0%	25%	100.00%

		Table 27:					
		Please indicate your level of agreement regarding the following statements. Gentleness is a useful trait to exhibit in the workplace.					
		Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**	**Total**
What is your gender?	**Male**	3.6%	4.4%	13.8%	37.2%	41%	100%
	Female	1.2%	3.3%	21.3%	44.6%	29.6%	100%
	Prefer Not to Answer	0%	25%	25%	25%	25%	100%

Table 28:

		Please indicate your level of agreement regarding the following statements. Gentleness is a reflection of one's character.					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
What is your gender?	Male	2.4%	4.4%	12.6%	41.5%	39.1%	100%
	Female	0.8%	4.3%	17%	45.6%	32.3%	100%
	Prefer Not to Answer	25%	25%	0%	50%	0%	100%

Table 29:

		Please indicate your level of agreement regarding the following statements. Gentleness plays a significant role in demonstrating leadership presence.					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
How long have you been in the workforce?	0-5 years	7.1%	5.9%	15.2%	35.5%	36.3%	100%
	10 or more years	3.5%	2.8%	14.5%	41.9%	37.3%	100%

Table 30:

		Please indicate your level of agreement regarding the following statements. Candor is critical in one's ability to demonstrate gentleness.					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
How long have you been in the workforce?	0-5 years	5.8%	6.4%	18.2%	37.3%	32.2%	100%
	10 or more years	3.9%	2.1%	21.7%	38.7%	33.6%	100%

		Please indicate your level of agreement regarding the following statements. Acting with gentleness helps me maintain civility in a situation.					
Table 31:							
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
How long have you been in the workforce?	**0-5 years**	3.5%	6.1%	17.6%	41.2%	31.6%	100%
	10 or more years	1.4%	3.2%	14.6%	45.8%	35%	100%