

Cultivating an Outward Mindset

Members of the Caliber leadership team recently attended a two-day training course on the outward mindset led by the Arbinger Institute, a global leadership development firm. The Arbinger Institute's outward mindset approach allows us to see others as people who matter as we do, paving the way for a more engaged and collaborative workplace.

In practical terms, having an outward mindset means actively seeking to understand and empathize with the people you interact with. This involves being open to feedback, listening actively, and recognizing that the success of any group or organization is dependent on the collective efforts of its members. Adopting an outward mindset can lead to improved communication, better conflict resolution, and a more cohesive team in the workplace.

Conversely, an inward mindset keeps us focused on our own needs, wants, and goals, often at the expense of others, by seeing people as vehicles to get what we want. Inward mindset tendencies show up in ways such as blaming others, justifying our mistreatment of others, or avoiding responsibility.



[Employee], [Title], was among the workshop attendees. The outward mindset, she says, gives you a more holistic approach that best serves the business, the employees, and the customers.

"It's a constant reminder that there are people besides you that exist in this business, and they're trying to meet their needs as well," says [Employee]. "Everyone has priorities, and it's important to get their feedback and not get defensive about it."

The most crucial thing [Employee] learned at the workshop was that having an outward mindset means not being complacent.

"You will still have conflicts that need to be resolved," she explains. "Choosing not to resolve those conflicts because they're uncomfortable is actually having an inward mindset. An outward mindset isn't always about being the nicest person in the room. It's about approaching hard conversations with a foundation of trust and seeing the other person as a person."

Establishing trust is a cornerstone of the outward mindset. It is essential to avoid forming a narrative about why the other person is doing what they're doing. With an outward mindset, you're more likely to give that person the benefit of the doubt.

"One thing that helps me is to imagine this person in the back seat of their parent's car as a child," [Employee] says. "There are experiences that made this person the way they are, and the way they respond to conflict likely has nothing to do with you. You may disagree with that person, but you can have compassion and empathy."



The outward mindset is not just a concept but a process we are committed to integrating into our culture and building into our long-term strategy. The Arbinger Institute offers a variety of tools like worksheets, exercises, and frameworks that can help employees address and work through different types of conflict. Watch this [video](#) for an introduction to the two mindsets and read more about the outward mindset [here](#).