

# *Love as a Business Strategy: Resilience, Belonging and Success*

## Book Review and Reflection

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**ABSTRACT:** Teaching students about the value of organizational culture can be a daunting task for university professors. At faith-based universities, faculty face the additional challenge of connecting faith in Christ to organizational culture and answering the questions about how our faith should be reflected in our leadership. In *Love as a Business Strategy: Resilience, Belonging and Success*, authors Anwar et al. (2021) lay out the plan to flip any culture into a culture of love just as they have done at Softway, a software company Anwar created in 2003 during his senior year in college at the University of Houston. This book attempts to illustrate the methods they used along with sharing the stories of their journey and lessons learned. Though this is a secular market book, the biblical connections are evident on each page, and the lessons students can learn are transformational.

**KEYWORDS:** love, culture, strategy, resilience, inclusion, empathy, vulnerability, trust, empowerment, forgiveness, servant leadership

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### INTRODUCTION

When I began to look at books to include in my Introduction to Business course last fall (2021), I knew that I wanted a market book to add to the general textbook. I knew that I wanted something that incorporated servant leadership, inclusion, empowerment, and resiliency. There were several books that were starting to look like possibilities, many of which were published by the Christian Booksellers Association (CBA) publishers. But one book stood out among the crowd. One book not only covered every topic I wanted to teach my business students but was also personal, reflective, and vulnerable in its approach. And it wasn't a Christian, faith-based book. That worked out pretty well as I was no longer teaching at a faith-based institution. I needed a way to integrate biblical truths without bringing the Bible up. What I found was that the students were hungering for those truths that can only come from God Himself. Those truths were found page by page in the book *Love as a Business Strategy: Resilience, Belonging and Success*, written by Softway founder and CEO Mohammad

Anwar and co-authors, Frank Danna, Jeffrey Ma, and Christopher Pitre. Surprisingly, using their book has opened more doors to point to Jesus than any CBA book I have used in the past. And the authors' passion about spreading their story was so evident, especially when they became personally involved in my teaching their book.

### THE STORY OF SOFTWAY AND MOHAMMAD ANWAR

*Love as a Business Strategy (LAABS)* starts with the story of Mohammad Anwar and his quest to flip the script and change the culture of the company he founded. The culture, by the way, was one that he had created. Anwar started Softway in 2003 during his senior year in college at The University of Houston with the goal of making a million dollars. He was bottom-line focused, and did not spend much time putting people first. Before 2015, the culture at Softway was very cutthroat and toxic. Like all cultures, the culture at Softway was top-down, and it started with Anwar himself. In an interview, Anwar stated that when

he launched Softway, his only goal was to become a millionaire (M. Anwar, personal communication, January 27, 2022). He did become a millionaire, and Softway had some success. However, he soon realized he was leaving people behind. That is when they had their “Darkest Day,” when they called 100 of the 260 employees into a room to let them know: “Unfortunately, the company is going through a downturn. Effectively immediately, everyone in this room is being let go” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 17). Security arrived and quickly escorted the terminated employees from the building. One employee asked, “Why me?” and the executive replied, “There wasn’t a reason you made the list. You just did” (p. 18).

Anwar thought he was handling the layoffs the way he was supposed to handle layoffs in the corporate setting. It wasn’t personal. It was just business. But his heart sank, and he knew it didn’t feel right. That was when he realized that business as usual “sucks” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 22), and he started seeking a better way. He had a lot of questions and not many answers about improving his leadership and company culture. He entered into a period of soul searching when he found himself at his alma mater, at a University of Houston football game. Under their rookie head coach, Tom Herman, the Cougars were undefeated and were in the top twenty-five rankings in the AP Poll. On this day, they were in a tough game against the University of Memphis Tigers. In the fourth quarter, the Cougars were down fourteen to thirty-four and only had a 0.1% chance of winning, and that was when Anwar witnessed one of the greatest comebacks ever. It was that comeback, and Coach Herman’s words, which sparked a fire in Anwar’s heart to create a culture of love at Softway. Coach Herman talked to reporters about how much his players loved one another, and you just don’t hear that too much in football. In fact, Coach Herman went on to say that in order to be elite or to be a champion, you need “a genuine love and care for the guy next to you” (as cited in Anwar et al., 2021, p. 38). And so began Anwar’s quest for creating a culture of love at Softway.

### DEFINING LOVE AS A BUSINESS STRATEGY

One of the first things the authors do is to distinguish between romantic love and the kind of love you need to have an elite culture of love.

First, let’s get the obvious out of the way. When we talk about a culture of love, we aren’t talking about office romance. In a business context, love doesn’t have anything to do with romantic feelings at all. Love in the workplace isn’t about hugs and kisses. In

no way should a culture of love be misconstrued as an invitation to invite an HR dumpster fire to your organization. (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 41)

Instead, the authors describe love in the workplace as a “deep-rooted and intrinsic care for other humans” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 41). And they were convinced that in creating that sense of intrinsic care for others, it would be contagious, having a ripple effect throughout the company. This journey began in 2015, and when asked if they had achieved their goals, the authors stated that they are still working on it. And that journey is about individual efforts and behaviors. Yes, love as a business strategy is top-down, but it is also person to person. The authors also make it clear that a culture of love is not built with words; rather it is built with consistent, loving actions every day.

### SOFTWAY’S SECRET SAUCE

In *Love as a Business Strategy*, the authors present what they call their “Secret Sauce,” which is in essence a road map of creating a culture of love (see Figure 1). The behaviors that are at the foundation of their culture of love are mindsets, attitudes, and communication. Those behaviors lead to the culture of love, which has six components: inclusion, empathy, vulnerability, trust, empowerment, and forgiveness. That culture of love creates a sense of resilience and belonging among the employees, which leads to innovation, efficiency, and high-performing teams. And of course, the bottom line is positively impacted in increased revenues, operational efficiency, and cost containment. Though this road map looks easy, it is far from that. As the authors state, there are always “mistakes and triumphs, highs and lows” (p. 32) and many of their successes and failures are laid out between the pages of this very profound, honest, and vulnerable look at creating a culture of love.

One year after the big change, Anwar shared his story of how the University of Houston Cougars football game and Coach Herman’s inspiring words had sparked his desire to create the culture of love at Softway. Anwar closed his letter to his employees stating, “Take care and I love you all very much!!!” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 53). And he meant it. He had gone from simply leading a company towards profits to truly caring about and loving the people he surrounded himself with at Softway. He had gone from a guy wanting to earn a million dollars to a man who put others’ needs first. This is how the six pillars of a culture of love were created.

#### The First Pillar of Love: Inclusion

The first pillar of love is inclusion. The authors discuss the importance of inclusion and making others feel that

they have a seat at the table. “That’s what the first of the Six Pillars of love is all about- making sure that everyone in your organization (and everyone you invite to visit) has what they need to speak, contribute, and bring their full selves to work” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 102). The authors also emphasize that true inclusion allows everyone to contribute at a high level. The authors even state, “Inclusion and belonging are basic human needs” (p. 103). They share many examples that bring this value to life, including the challenges Anwar has faced himself as a Muslim at airports. The four tips to increase inclusion, as stated by the authors, are (1) understand and accept differences, (2) practice patience, (3) be vulnerable, and (4) be an advocate.

### **The Second Pillar of Love: Empathy**

The second pillar of love presented in the book is empathy. The best example the authors share is about listening to others before yourself. “Empathy is being able to turn off your mic and turn up the volume on everyone else’s” (p. 122). According to the authors, there is a difference between empathetic leadership, sympathetic leadership, and apathetic leadership. “Apathetic management takes care of the business while disregarding the person. Sympathetic management takes care of the person while disregarding the business. Empathetic leadership takes care of the person in the context of the business” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 127). They go even further in what they call the Platinum Rule. The Golden Rule is to treat others as we would want them to treat us. However, the authors focus empathy on what they call the Platinum Rule, which is when we treat others as they would want to be treated (p. 128). They conclude that empathy reduces attrition and turnover and builds organizational citizenship behaviors.

### **The Third Pillar of Love: Vulnerability**

The third pillar of the culture of love is vulnerability. The authors emphasize that “vulnerability takes courage but is almost always worth it. We should own our mistakes and failures, learn from them, and grow (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 139). In many organizational cultures, vulnerability is seen as weakness, and the authors emphasize that vulnerability is not weakness but strength. They state that uncertainty is to be expected, and even though vulnerability may not change the situation nor solve the problem, it does “contribute to feelings of safety, understanding, and resilience” (p. 141). The more resilient a culture is, the more flexible and sustainable it will become.

### **The Fourth Pillar of Love: Trust**

The fourth pillar of the culture of love is trust. Trust is difficult to establish and very easy to destroy. The authors

describe two kinds of trust, predictive and vulnerability-based trust.

“Predictive trust is based on the idea that you know someone well enough to predict what they might think or do” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 150). Vulnerability-based trust is more productive and consists of three elements: relationships, expertise, and consistency. Predictive trust is only based on past experiences, whereas vulnerability-based trust has more value because you build it through long-term relationships, job expertise, and consistent care for one another. Only vulnerability-based trust leads to true growth, according to the authors. “Each element is important, but relationships are ultimately the determining factor in building vulnerability-based trust” (p. 153). The authors go on to share a thirty-six-question exercise known to build vulnerability-based trust and a vulnerability tool kit which can be implemented in the classroom or the workplace.

### **The Fifth Pillar of Love: Empowerment**

The fifth pillar of a culture of love is empowerment. The authors define empowerment as setting someone up for success, and they connect it to having a growth mindset. The authors suggest practicing empowerment in small moments with less risk so that you are prepared for larger moments down the road. They also discuss empowering others from a place of vulnerability. “When you empower someone from a place of vulnerability, when that person sees that you trust and believe in them, it unlocks what we call the power of empowerment” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 171). In this section you can see the connections between the six pillars begin to grow, and the full picture of the culture of love begins to take shape.

### **The Sixth Pillar of Love: Forgiveness**

The sixth pillar of a culture of love is forgiveness. Anwar begins this section by sharing a story that impacted him:

After two years of working to create a culture of love at Softway, in the front of a meeting, Mohammad asked his employees how many of them trusted him. Only 2 people raised their hands out of 100. This gutted Mohammad until through introspection he figured out what was holding back the trust. (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 174)

Through introspection, Anwar realized that he had “never held himself accountable to the person he was before embracing the path of love” (p. 174). His past behaviors had hurt people, and he had yet to own that. He realized that he needed to apologize and then back up that apology with his actions.

So, Mohammad held a meeting with his team in India, and stated the following: “I realize that I was asking you to trust me when I didn’t show you trust first. I want to apologize for the trouble both my behavior and my policies have caused you. I am sorry to everyone, both to current and former employees and their families. I know that I have caused you harm, and I want to do better.” (p. 174-175)

The immediate action he took was to then, in front of that audience, tear up the two-year contracts he had required all employees to sign. He stated that from that point forward, they were free to choose to leave Softway with no financial repercussions. Then he said something very powerful: “Please forgive me” (p. 175). He left that meeting in tears. On his last night in India, he was presented with a gift that changed everything: “A book filled with messages for him from everyone in the company. The title of the book was *We Love You and We Trust You, Moh*” (p. 175). And that is how forgiveness looks at Softway today.

### Putting Love to Work

In Part Three of *Love as a Business Strategy*, the authors wrap up what it takes to create a culture of love by discussing what it takes to put love to work. In this section, the authors present tangible takeaways for readers, including “To Lead is to Serve,” “We are Better Together,” “Humanity Required,” “Systems: Lovin’ those Business Outcomes,” and “Waiting on the World to Change.”

*To lead is to serve.* Anwar founded Softway 2003. In 2013, Anwar set the goal of growing the company to be a \$50 million company. Since he had never done that before, he sought help from a new leadership team, executives with tremendous experience. They told Anwar that he needed to follow the following rules:

1. Separate yourself from your employees
2. Dress and spend like a CEO
3. Have a large executive office separated from the rest of the company
4. Never go to anyone with questions (p. 186)

This focus was on the perception of leadership, not real leadership. Anwar naively followed these rules for three years and created toxic space between himself and his employees. Then, in 2016, when he embraced love as a business strategy, only then, did Softway begin to turn around. The authors then discuss how he became a servant leader and what that looked like. It took a while for Anwar to understand what servant leadership is since he was coming from his culture in India which was a tiered system with servants at the bottom and leaders at the top. The authors cite the definition of servant leadership from the Greenleaf

Center for Servant Leadership, which states that servant leadership “enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations, and ultimately creates a more just and caring world” (as cited in Anwar et al, 2021, p. 190). He studied what had been done at Southwest Airlines, and he implemented these ten principles of servant leadership:

1. Put others’ needs first
2. Be humble and practice gratitude
3. Do not ask others to do something you are not willing to do
4. Assume good intent
5. Look for the good in others and find the weakness in yourself
6. Respond instead of reacting
7. Know that power does not equal leadership
8. Take care of others
9. Inclusion and belonging begin with servant leadership
10. Change starts with you (pp. 192-204)

When concluding their view of servant leadership, the authors state, “There will be a lot of work involved...there will be a lot of responsibility to shoulder...but the sacrifices, the tough times, and the difficulties you go through as a leader will show results-and eventually, your efforts will be noticed” (p. 206).

*We are better together.* In this section, the authors present a solid look at why teams work better than individuals and why the synergy created by teams furthers the organizational goals. They list five traits of high-performing teams including being autonomous, having a six-pillar culture, being outcomes oriented, accepting that failure happens, and understanding that “we” is always greater than “I.” What struck me most out of this section of the book was the discussion of failure. Resilience is so critical to success, and as you begin to accept failure as a part of success, you open the door for your employees to be more creative, more innovative, and more adaptable. The authors also discuss creating an environment that is psychologically safe and giving both positive and negative feedback, relating it back to the Platinum Rule.

*Humanity required.* In this section of the book, the authors discuss how bringing humanity back to work is truly the answer to the bottom line. They believe that finding the right people is about “hiring with love,” which will bring more diverse teams (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 241). They state that once they began pursuing love as a hiring strategy, their teams became much more diverse as the door was opened for all with the same goals, no matter their ethnicity or background. The authors state, “Don’t recruit as if you were painting by numbers. Be open to what someone’s



background and life experience might bring to the table” (p. 241). They discuss changing their system of granting raises from what they call a “fish market negotiation” to granting “spot raises,” giving feedback all year round instead of annually (p. 243). This allowed them to grant raises whenever a person deserved a raise, whether it was every week, every month, or every year. It is also in this section where they discuss making every day feel like Friday. When a new employee starts, they start on a Friday. “These days, every Softway team member’s first day is always on a Friday. From the moment they arrive, they’re greeted personally and taken to their desk—where a basket of treats awaits,” a lesson Anwar clearly learned from his Indian team members (p. 247).

**Systems: People, processes and technology.** Next the authors tackle the topic of systems, including people, processes, and technology. They share that before their cultural transformation, they had a culture of mistrust, even to the point of having installed a biometric tracking system in their Bengaluru, India, office. They had told their employees that this system was purely for security and confidentiality, but the reality was they used it to track tardy employees, track them down, and punish them. This system was “dehumanizing and marginalizing” employees, even to the point of docking their pay when they took legitimate vacation time only because they did not formally submit the request to human resources (p. 251). He learned the hard way that any system such as this was the opposite of a culture of love. That has changed. “These days, it doesn’t matter how technical the process or mundane the system. Every policy decision we make is approached through a lens of love” (p. 252).

**Lovin’ those business outcomes.** Softway is a business, and as we all know, businesses need to make a profit to stay in business. So how are business outcomes related to this culture of love they purport? In 2015, when they had their darkest day and laid off one-third of their workforce, they were near bankruptcy. They had a negative fifteen percent EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization). The culture of love was adopted in 2016, and between the years of 2016 through 2019, their bottom line results speak for themselves:

- Revenue increased by 300%
- EBITDA increased by 43%
- Average project size increased by 750%
- Average account size increased by 985%
- Client retention rate grew from 60-90%
- Revenue per employee increased by 269%
- Attrition went from 30% to just 12% (p. 260)

And that really is the bottom line. Creating a culture of love works. It is hard work, it is complex, and it takes an

investment of time, energy, and dedication. But it works, from a people perspective and from the bottom line. “So, when people ask us if going all-in on a culture of love really improves business outcomes, we point to ourselves as example number one” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 259).

**Waiting on the world to change.** Change is hard because “as it turns out, everyone wants change but no one wants to change” (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 286). According to research by Lewis (2019), almost 84% of digital and organizational transformations fail. That may seem daunting, but the authors share their advice for changing. They suggest organizations start with vision and values and communicate the change they want to implement through their actions, not words. Make failure part of the process, make it about the people in your company, and be transparent (pp. 297-299). The authors conclude the book by discussing all of the doubts the readers may feel and listing all of the excuses they may be using to not change to a culture of love. Then they reference one of my favorite authors and speakers, Simon Sinek, “Know Your Why” and then begin to change through making micro-commitments to change (p. 319). They remind the readers that it can be done, and the time to start creating a culture of love is now.

#### **THE IMPLICATIONS FOR INTEGRATING LOVE AS A BUSINESS STRATEGY IN THE ACADEMIC CURRICULUM**

I started using the book *Love as a Business Strategy* in the fall of 2019 when I designed a new course called Introduction to Business and Community at Heidelberg University. I had a great introduction to business textbook, but I wanted to add a market book that would discuss culture, resiliency, servant leadership, and their positive impact on the bottom line. Little did I know that choosing this book was the beginning of a new adventure working with the authors and my students to explore this connection even more deeply. In January of 2022, Anwar, noticing that I had downloaded some resources for the book from their website, emailed me and asked for a meeting. I was slightly in shock and found myself wondering what the catch was. Why would an author of a bestselling book want to talk to me? Why would he care that I was using his book in my class?

Then I met Anwar, and the answer became crystal clear. All four authors are so passionate about this message that they want to support my teaching of it in the classroom. I was able to interview all four authors via Zoom and fell in love with their culture of love as well as all their passion for what they were doing. Anwar and Ma attended one of my classes live via Zoom to allow the students reading their

book to ask them anything. I loved seeing my students get excited to ask them about their reasons, their beliefs, and their strategies for handling organizational tasks. One student even asked them if other companies viewed Softway as weak because of their culture of love. (The answer was no, of course, because vulnerability is strength). I was a guest on their podcast in March of 2022, and all four authors flew from Texas to Ohio at their own expense to spend two days with our MBA students sharing all they know. Talk about impact!

### Implications for Educators

Integrating a market book into the college curriculum has always been a passion of mine because it is through stories that we learn deeply. I wanted my students to have that opportunity. Integrating this particular book into the academic curriculum provides so many opportunities to not only discuss values, vision, culture, and resiliency, it opens the door to bring faith into the discussion on how businesses should be led. Our students are learning the facts about business in the classroom, but what are we doing to prepare them for the life of the organization? From Elton Mayo's Hawthorne Studies through Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, how are we truly running organizations? How are we treating people? As Christian universities, how are we preparing our students to become business leaders unafraid of change and strong enough to be vulnerable and resilient? If you teach at a faith-based university, maybe you are already working on this. But the reality is the majority of our graduates will not work for a faith-based organization. Rather they will work for a secular organization where it will be even more difficult to bring their faith into the workplace. Teaching our students about a culture of love will give them one more tool in their toolbox to become the leaders we want them to be, to create the organizations that treat people with the love of Christ. Even though *Love as a Business Strategy* is not a faith-based book, it couldn't be more connected to biblical truths. What an opportunity to teach this to our students.

### Using *Love as a Business Strategy* at Faith-Based Universities

Though this book is not a faith-based book, the essence of a culture of love and what is shared in the book is directly connected to Christian living and to teaching our students to be followers of Jesus in their lives and work. The only time Christian faith is mentioned in the book is in the section on forgiveness where the authors state "In Christianity, there's an axiom that God forgives, putting the bad things people have done as far from them as the east is from the

west. In Western culture, this idea is often expressed as "forgive and forget" (Anwar et al., 2021, p. 176). Then they discuss that humans are not very good at either, especially forgetting. I would state that this could spark a great discussion of why we, as Christians, should live differently, even at work. It could also lead to a deep discussion of what it means to forgive and forget. In further analysis of the book, there are numerous connections that can be made in the Christian university classroom.

#### *Biblical connections to the first pillar of love: Inclusion.*

Inclusion can be seen throughout the Bible. Galatians 3:28 tells us, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." God reminds us that we are all parts of one body in Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). And most of all, God tells us to love one another. "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another" (John 13:34). All of these verses, and many more, can be connected to the pillar of inclusion to make the connection between the culture of love and God's Word.

*Biblical connections to the second pillar of love: Empathy.* God wants us to love one another and that means we should "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15). As followers of Jesus, we are called to be kind and loving to others and forgive others as Christ forgave us (Ephesians 4:32). Empathy is not just about feeling bad for others but feeling what they feel. God wants us to "[b]ear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2), and we should suffer with our friends when they suffer and rejoice with them when they rejoice (1 Corinthians 12:26). Empathy is a part of our faith, and should be reflected in our actions. All of these verses, and many more, can be connected to the pillar of empathy to make the connection between the culture of love and God's Word.

*Biblical connections to the third pillar of love: Vulnerability.* Being vulnerable is difficult as we all want to look good to the world. But God always sees our heart, and God loves us even though He knows all of our faults. God's Word reminds us that His grace "is sufficient for you" and that His power is made perfect in our own weakness. It is through that weakness that we are made strong through Christ (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). We are also told that we are like jars of clay and that God is the potter, not us (2 Corinthians 4:7). So, we have to trust in Jesus and allow Him to form us through all of our failures and challenges. "But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of

Christ may rest upon me” (2 Corinthians 12:9). All of these verses, and many more, can be connected to the pillar of vulnerability to make the connection between the culture of love and God’s Word.

***Biblical connections to the fourth pillar of love: Trust.***

Trust is difficult, especially when we have been wounded in our past. But God wants us to first and foremost trust in Him. Proverbs 3:5 states, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” We are also told that when we are fearful, we should put our trust in God and that in doing so our fear dissipates because if we have God, what can humans do to us? (Psalm 56:3-4). Our trust in God is rooted in what Christ did for us on the cross. In Jeremiah 29:11, we are told, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” Also, 1 John 4:18 tells us, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love.” Finally, God tells us not to lean on our own understanding and rather trust the Lord with all our heart (Proverbs 3:5-6). All of these verses, and many more, can be connected to the pillar of trust to make the connection between the culture of love and God’s Word.

***Biblical connections to the fifth pillar of love: Empowerment.***

Empowerment is about setting others up for success, according to the authors. Faith in Christ is about being empowered by God to let the Holy Spirit direct, lead, and guide our lives in godly ways. We are told in 1 John 4:4 that the God who is in us is greater than humans who are in the world. God wants us to know that we can do all things through him who strengthens us (Philippians 4:13), and He calls on us to be strong and courageous, not frightened nor dismayed because God is with us wherever we go (Joshua 1:9). God empowers us every step of the way in our walk of faith, and it is only through Him that we are truly free. All of these verses, and many more, can be connected to the pillar of empowerment to make the connection between the culture of love and God’s Word.

***Biblical connections to the sixth pillar of love: Forgiveness.***

Forgiveness is key to faith in Christ. God wants us to forgive others as He has forgiven us (Matthew 6:15). This is easier said than done many times, and it is a pillar I struggle with myself. I think I forgive someone, and then the pain and hurt creeps up again, and I find that I have not truly forgiven them. In Ephesians 4:32, we are told, “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” We, ourselves need forgiveness every day, and yet, we hold onto our own anger and lack forgiveness many times. However, when we pray, God’s Word tells us, “[F]orgive, if you have anything against anyone, so

that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses” (Mark 11:25). In fact, God even tells us that we are to forgive seventy-seven times (Matthew 18:21-22). In other words, we are to forgive, forgive, and forgive again, even when it is difficult, even if it seems impossible. All of these verses, and many more, can be connected to the pillar of forgiveness to make the connection between the culture of love and God’s Word.

## CONCLUSION

When I decided to integrate the book *Love as a Business Strategy* into the curriculum in my business courses, I had no idea the rabbit hole I was diving into. I knew that I wanted something that incorporated servant leadership, inclusion, empowerment, and resiliency, but I had no idea the doors God would open for me and for my students to explore what a culture of love truly means. As Christians, shouldn’t we all want to create a culture of love? At work, in our lives, and in our families? As a university professor, I now have the goal of creating a culture of love in my classroom, too. I was always trying to do that, but I had never put the words and the vision together before this. Like Mr. Rogers, as a Presbyterian minister, presented the gospel of Jesus Christ through a secular PBS television show never mentioning God by name, so I can present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to my students through integrating a culture of love in my classroom. And when God opens the door for the words to be spoken, I will be ready for that, too.

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APPENDIX

Figure 1: The “Secret Sauce” to Softway’s Culture of Love

