Being HumanKind™

SPEAKER SHEET 2026

Justin Ahrens

Author of *Being HumanKind*. Keynote speaker and leadership coach. Chief Creative Officer of Rule29 and O'Neil Printing.

Show up. Speak up. Lead different.



30+ years leading creative teams. He speaks to audiences of thousands and to small groups around a table.

ABOUT JUSTIN

Kindness is a leadership skill. He has the stories to prove it.

Justin Ahrens founded Rule29 in 2000 and has spent the decades since helping startups, nonprofits and Fortune 50 brands figure out who they are and how to act like it. He now serves as Chief Creative Officer of Rule29 and O'Neil Printing.

His new book, *Being HumanKind: Choosing Courage, Compassion, and Clarity in a Distracted World*, grew out of the talks he gives to leaders and teams. On stage he mixes story, humor and honest confession, then hands the room something to do on Monday.

As co-founder of Wheels4Water, he rode across the country to fund clean water and sanitation training for more than 20,000 people in Africa. *Fast Company* named it a World Changing Idea, and it took him to the Obama White House.

WAYS TO BOOK JUSTIN

Keynotes
Conferences, annual meetings, trade shows and executive retreats.

Team workshops
Half or full day on culture, leadership, brand strategy and design thinking.

1-on-1 executive coaching
For founders and senior leaders working through change.

Ongoing advisory
Monthly check-ins for growth and accountability.

Available in person or virtually. Talks can be tailored to your theme, audience and time slot.

SIGNATURE TALKS

KEYNOTE

Being HumanKind

Choosing presence, courage and kindness in a distracted world. Built on the five States of Being from the book, with a simple practice for every attendee to take home.

Creativity as Leadership
Why creative thinking is the most underrated executive skill.

Leading ON Purpose
Turning values into daily action, for leaders and organizations.

Building Cultures of Wonder
Reigniting curiosity and imagination in your team, because innovation begins with awe.

The 4Ps of Brand™
Building brands rooted in purpose, people, process and performance.

Leading Through Uncertainty
Mindsets for staying grounded, kind and clear when everything around you is shifting.

Design Thinking in the Age of AI
How AI changes empathy, invention and creative problem solving, and how leaders keep the human side.

WHERE AUDIENCES HAVE HEARD HIM

From TEDx to the boardroom

- Adobe MAX
- TEDx
- AIGA National Design Conference
- RGD DesignThinkers
- CreativeMornings
- HOW Design Live
- Brand New Conference
- Bend Design
- Phoenix Design Week closing keynote
- Chipp Con 2025
- UCDA Design Conference
- AIGA chapters, ADFED and AMA groups
- Notre Dame and Kent State
- Corporate boards and creative teams



Reading from *Being HumanKind* in front of the You Are Beautiful wall, 2026.

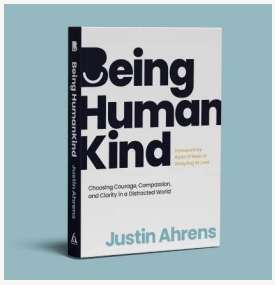
WHAT PEOPLE SAY

> *"Anyone who has heard Justin Ahrens speak wants to know more about this extraordinary human who is so utterly bursting with joy, life, and well, kindness."*
>
> **Kathy Eldon**, Author, Filmmaker, Founder of Creative Visions

> *"Justin has a rare gift. He makes you feel seen, challenged, and inspired all in the same breath."*
>
> **Hilary Ashworth**, Design Thinkers Conference

> *"Hearing Justin is a strategic reset and a heart check. He reminds teams why their work, and their humanity, matter."*
>
> **Justin Narducci**, Cure International

> *"Justin Ahrens practices what he preaches when it comes to keeping humanity at the center of his life and work."*
>
> **Mike Erwin**, CEO, Character & Leadership Center



AUTHOR AND TEACHER

- *Being HumanKind* (2026), foreword by Ryan O'Neal of Sleeping At Last
- *Life Kerning* (Wiley)
- 19 LinkedIn Learning courses, including *Design Thinking in the Age of AI*
- Host of the *Design Of* podcast and co-host of At The Table gatherings

CREDENTIALS AND RECOGNITION

- StoryBrand Certified Guide
- Level C Brand Specialist
- Chipp AI Certified Maker
- GD:USA Person to Watch and Responsible Designer to Watch
- Former AIGA National Board Member

Bring Justin to your next event.

Tell us your date, audience and theme at **behumankind.today/connect**

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