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Radical candor

Praise people publicly for their achievements and specify why they excelled, as this encourages others to emulate the behavior. However, when criticizing someone, it's better to do it privately to avoid triggering defensive reactions and ensure the person accepts responsibility and learns from their mistake. This "Public Praise / Private Criticism" rule is a guideline, not a hard-and-fast rule. It's essential to consider individual preferences and adjust your approach accordingly. Remember that Radical Candor is about showing you care personally and challenging directly, so prioritize those aspects over strict adherence to the rule of thumb. Additionally, think about group learning opportunities for both praise and criticism. Publicly acknowledging accomplishments can foster a sense of shared success and inspire others to improve. A key aspect of my management style is creating an environment where people feel comfortable admitting mistakes without fear of criticism. I encourage self-reporting, which fosters a culture of openness and accountability. Great bosses don't publicly criticize their employees, but they do invite public criticism from them as a way to demonstrate appreciation for feedback and lead by example. This practice also saves time in the long run, as it allows you to address any issues with multiple people at once, rather than having to deal with each person individually. Furthermore, praising accomplishments publicly, followed by a personal acknowledgement one-on-one, carries significant emotional weight and shows that you truly care about your employees' growth. I'd love to hear your thoughts on these exceptions and gain more insights from your own experiences with public praise and private criticism. For years, you've been taught to be professional, leaving your humanity behind. But building strong relationships requires being able to Care Personally by showing vulnerability and creating a safe space for others. This means admitting when you're having a bad day and encouraging others to do the same. You've likely been told not to speak negatively, but as a leader, it's your job to Challenge Directly by sharing your humble opinions directly. Challenging people shows that you care, but it doesn't mean you're always right. Our resources can help you overcome challenges in giving and receiving feedback. The Radical Candor approach can be tough to put into practice, so we created a simple feedback framework to guide you through difficult conversations. Understanding what isn't Radical Candor – like Obnoxious Aggression (being brutally honest without showing care), Ruinous Empathy (sparing feelings over telling the truth), or Manipulative Insincerity (flattery and criticism behind people's backs) – will help you recognize kind, clear, specific, and sincere communication. These behaviors aren't personality types; they're patterns to avoid. Use our framework as a compass to guide your conversations towards more productive outcomes. Learn how to overcome Obnoxious Aggression, Ruinous Empathy, and Manipulative Insincerity with our resources. A Candor Coach can help you develop a shared vocabulary and practice Radical Candor's order of operations: soliciting feedback, offering specific praise, and giving kind and clear criticism. Our Feedback Loop program includes a workplace comedy starring David Alan Grier to get you started on your Radical Candor journey. To foster an environment where employees can openly share their concerns without fear of retribution, organizations need to create a culture that encourages honest feedback. We acknowledge that every company has its unique challenges and would like to schedule a meeting with your team to understand the specific issues they're trying to address. One popular management approach is Radical Candor, which focuses on providing constructive guidance and feedback that's both kind and direct. In this edition of 'Thrive in 5', we delve into the concept and explore how leaders can adopt this approach to build trust with their team. Currently, most organizations fall into one of four quadrants: either radically caring and challenging directly, brutally honest but uncaring, somewhere in between, or completely disconnected. Radical Candor seeks to bridge the gap between these quadrants by offering guidance that's both specific and empathetic. To practice Radical Candor, leaders should solicit feedback from their team members and focus on providing more positive reinforcement than criticism. Radical Candor is a skill that can be developed through practice rather than being an inherent trait of a leader. It requires soliciting feedback to demonstrate vulnerability and providing constructive criticism while focusing on the positive aspects of performance. By doing so, leaders can build trust with their team members and create a more open-door culture where everyone feels comfortable sharing their concerns. Kim Scott, co-founder of Radical Candor and author of "Radical Candor", explains that effective leaders can balance constructive feedback with compassion. She shares her personal experiences as a boss and employee, highlighting the importance of recognizing that people often shift between different leadership styles throughout their careers. Kim's book focuses on two key strategies: caring personally and challenging directly, while avoiding common pitfalls like "obnoxious aggression" (ignoring empathy), "ruinous empathy" (avoiding direct confrontation), and "manipulative insincerity". A notable example from her past involves presenting to Google co-founders Sergey Brin and Eric Schmidt, who responded with kindness and support despite initial nervousness. Kim emphasizes the value of adaptability in leadership, recognizing that people may switch between different styles depending on circumstances. She initiated conversation by sharing her positive experiences, followed by gentle feedback. However, she eventually pinpointed my verbal tic - using "um" frequently - and offered to connect me with a speech coach. I brushed it off initially but became fully engaged when she straightforwardly told me that my frequent use of "um" made me sound stupid. Her harsh words were actually kind and helped me realize the importance of improving my public speaking skills. I learned that Sheryl's directness was essential, as it allowed her to tell me something crucial for my career. I started wondering why nobody had told me about this before, especially considering my successful track record in raising millions of dollars through presentations. It dawned on me that people might be hesitant to address the issue due to its sensitivity and our natural tendency to avoid hurting others' feelings. Sheryl's ability to deliver tough feedback without hesitation inspired me to explore why others rarely offered constructive criticism. CURT NICKISCH: Why do you think nobody told you earlier? KIM SCOTT: I believe it starts around 18-20 years old when we're most sensitive about our egos and personas. At that point, people often advise us to be professional, which can mean suppressing emotions and humanity. This leads to a robot-like approach at work, making it difficult for anyone to care personally. The bigger issue is the challenge directly dimension, where people struggle to provide feedback due to fear of hurting others' feelings. (Note: I've paraphrased the text in its original language.) Don't say anything nice if you've got nothing good to say - and now you're in charge. As social creatures, we've been conditioned since childhood to avoid criticism, thanks to our natural negativity bias. This fear of offending others leads us to prioritize avoiding conflict over fostering open communication. In fact, nine times out of ten, speaking your mind constructively will actually strengthen relationships, but one time out of ten it might backfire. We tend to shy away from the latter scenario, which is why we need to reevaluate our approach to feedback and criticism. Curious about this phenomenon, I thought back to my own experiences with bosses who offered constructive criticism. While some of these interactions have stuck with me, many others left me wondering what unspoken expectations or criticisms might have been implied but not explicitly stated. This is where emotional intelligence comes in - the ability to pick up on subtle cues and build our own feedback mechanisms. In "Radical Candor," I outline a clear order of operations for offering constructive criticism. First, solicit it yourself by asking for feedback from others. Only then can you offer praise and guidance to your colleagues. And remember, radical candor isn't about how you communicate, but how your message is received. To gauge this, pay close attention to the other person's reaction - what they're saying and not saying. Finally, encourage open communication between team members by fostering an environment where everyone feels safe sharing their thoughts and opinions without fear of reprisal or hierarchy getting in the way. This requires setting aside power dynamics and striving for a more equal footing with your colleagues. One effective way to do this is to ask yourself (and others) questions like, "What can I do or stop doing that would make it easier to work with me?" By prioritizing equality and constructive feedback, we can build stronger relationships and achieve greater success together. Empathy and leadership are closely tied. While empathy can be beneficial, it can also hinder decision-making. Most people tend to focus on positive interactions rather than addressing negative issues. Radical candor involves soliciting critical feedback while offering more praise than criticism. Research suggests that high-quality praise should challenge the individual to improve. However, there's a risk of overdoing positive feedback, and conversely, underusing critical feedback. Given article text here I felt a surge of shame as Bob confronted me about his feelings. He looked at me directly, his eyes filled with hurt and disappointment. "Why didn't you tell me?" he asked, his voice trembling. I was taken aback by the question, and my mind went blank as I searched for an answer. As I struggled to respond, Bob's words cut deep. He felt like I had abandoned him, like I had failed to care about his well-being. I realized that I had made a series of mistakes, not just with Bob but also in my relationships with others. I thought about all the times I had neglected to solicit feedback from Bob or other team members. I had never asked them what they were doing well or how I could improve as their leader. I had given praise that meant nothing, and criticized Bob's work without offering constructive feedback. As I reflected on my actions, I felt a sense of regret wash over me. I realized that I had created an environment where people felt uncomfortable sharing their concerns with me. I had failed to create a safe space for open communication and honest feedback. Curt Nickisch: One-on-one meetings are crucial for managers who want to challenge and support their reports. Kim Scott, can you share your approach to running these meetings? Kim Scott: For me, one-on-one meetings are about listening to my direct report and helping them clarify new ideas. It's a time to be a thought partner and help them grow. I save five minutes at the end of each meeting to solicit feedback and ask specific questions. My goal is to listen actively and understand their perspective without jumping to conclusions or becoming defensive. I think this approach can be tricky, as it requires managers to be vulnerable and open themselves up to criticism. But if we want to create a culture of trust and openness, we need to reward candor and feedback, not dismiss it with a simple "thank you." When addressing a problem, people want to ensure they've fixed it thoroughly. They may wonder if they went too far or not far enough and need reassurance their solution is effective. Kim Scott emphasizes that gender plays a role in how leaders respond to radical candor. She notes that men are often hesitant to give direct feedback to women on their teams, fearing they'll be hurt or offended. Scott encourages women to take the initiative to request feedback from their male managers and not back down from challenges. She also warns against being unfairly labeled as abrasive or aggressive if a woman is radically candid. When it comes to changing behavior as a manager, Scott suggests that people start by sharing personal stories about times when they received helpful but uncomfortable feedback. By doing so, leaders can demonstrate vulnerability, show that they don't have all the answers, and frame critical feedback as a valuable gift. Kim Scott emphasizes the importance of showing care and kindness in communication, particularly when dealing with tough or confrontational individuals. She suggests that people often believe caring requires a long-term commitment, but this can be misguided. Instead, she advocates for focusing on the good things and recognizing that praise is a more effective tool than criticism in motivating others. Scott recommends leaders focus on painting a picture of success and praising individual efforts to encourage productivity. In challenging moments with strong emotions from colleagues, Scott advises taking a moment to show care and understanding, rather than shutting down or taking it personally. Radical candor is an approach to communication that combines honesty with humanity. Developed by Kim Scott, it aims to promote open and honest communication within teams and organizations. This method involves giving direct feedback while showing genuine care for the person being communicated with. The goal is not to criticize for criticism's sake but to build trust and encourage growth. Radical candor recognizes both praise and criticism as essential for personal and professional development. The concept is represented by a quadrant model, which shows four possible positions: upper right (ideal), upper left (ruinous empathy), lower left (manipulative insincerity), and lower right (obnoxious aggression). The ideal position represents honest feedback given with respect and commitment. When care is absent but honesty is present, the result is manipulative behavior. Conversely, when care is present but honesty is lacking, it leads to unproductive relationships. In our communication style, there are two opposing sides: direct honesty and challenge on one side, and silence or avoiding confrontation on the other. When we directly challenge someone, we're talking about giving honest feedback that's intended to help them grow. This is a delicate balance between showing empathy and being straightforward. There are four types of radical candor: ideal, obnoxious aggression, manipulative insincerity, and ruins empathy. The first one is the best approach, where you give clear feedback with empathy while maintaining a good relationship. However, there's also obnoxious aggression, which involves blunt criticism without showing any commitment or care for the person receiving the feedback. Then there's manipulative insincerity, which means people avoid giving honest feedback just to keep things comfortable. This kind of behavior can lead to a toxic work environment where feedback becomes unreliable. The final type is ruins empathy, where you want to be nice but are afraid to challenge someone and give them constructive criticism. As teams foster honest and caring interactions, trust, growth, and mutual respect develop. This creates an environment where misunderstandings are addressed early, expectations are clarified, and mistakes become opportunities for learning. The result is improved cooperation, innovation, and healthier team dynamics. Organizations that embrace radical candor can adapt to change, facilitate feedback, and encourage creativity. Radical candor manifests as direct yet caring feedback, such as Kim Scott's experience with her supervisor Sheryl Sandberg. By balancing honesty with empathy, individuals provide constructive criticism that helps colleagues grow. Exercises like asking for specific areas of improvement or using the start-stop-continue model can help teams establish a culture of open communication and trust. A healthy work culture where people can grow together through honest and engaged feedback is crucial. We'd love to hear your thoughts on this approach - do you see opportunities to apply it in your own workplace? Have you had experiences with giving or receiving constructive feedback that have helped others grow? Share your tips and ideas in the comments below! For more information, check out our articles on effective communication, leadership styles, and feedback techniques. Want to explore more resources? Visit Lytfer's blog for insights on feedback and growth. Additionally, discover how Radical Openhartig is transforming relationships through direct and empathetic communication.

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