

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to How to Be an Effective Manager. This is part of Deer Oaks EAP Services 2020 Leadership Certificate Webinar Series. This is the second installment in the four-part series. The first one was back in January. It was How to Build a Strong Team, and after today's presentation, there's two more, one in April and one in July. April's presentation is Presentation Skills for Supervisors.

We'll have one in July, which will be Emotional Intelligence for Supervisors. No, I apologize. Forgive me. The July presentation will be Presentation Skills for Supervisors, and then the October presentation will be Emotional Intelligence for Supervisors.

And the reason that I'm sharing that the entire schedule with you right now is, as many of you are probably aware, if you take part in all four of these programs this year, all four of these webinars, either live or view the recording after the fact on demand at the website, you will receive, at the end of 2020, the Deer Oaks Leadership Certificate.

And so if you're interested in more information about the leadership certificate webinar series, including the links to sign up for the last two programs, or if you missed the January program, How to Build a Strong Team, if you want the recording link sent to you, by all means, please hit Reply to your GoToWebinar invitation for today, and our staff will be more than happy to send you whatever you need. Thank you for joining us today.

I do want to remind you that during these educational presentations provided by Deer Oaks, attendees are in listen only mode, which means, of course, that you won't be able to audibly ask questions during the content portion of the presentation, which really won't last any longer than 30 minutes, give or take. But your questions are important to us. And so after the content portion of the presentation, we will have some time for questions.

And so at that point, if you could please type in the questions that you have into the question box in the GoToWebinar software in the upper right hand corner of your screen, we'll address as many questions as we have time this afternoon. So looking forward to that Q&A session coming up.

In addition, folks, before we get started, I want to make sure that our technology is working for us today. If you could please locate the Raise Hand icon in the GoToWebinar software on the upper right hand corner of your screen, and if you can hear my voice clearly, and if you can see the slides clearly, could you please click on that Raise Hand icon now?

Thank you, folks. Looks like we're good to go technology wise. Let's go ahead and get started.

I have three objectives for our brief time together today. Number one, to review the core management and leadership skills necessary to succeed in a supervisory role. Number two, to discuss many of the communication skills necessary to really engage and motivate your team. And then last but not least, to identify a few key processes that you can implement as a manager that'll help to maximize employee productivity.

I've got four parts to our conversation today. Let me please give you an overview. Part One is self-management. Part Two is communication skills, which really is the key piece to today's conversation. Part Three is team management. And Part Four is managing productivity.

Let's get started with Part One, self-management. Now this is a prerequisite, folks. These are three skills that I want to share. Being a manager, being a supervisor is-- it's a challenging position. It's a rewarding position. It's an important position, but it has a lot of challenges. And I know I'm preaching to the choir here. And so managing ourselves on a day to day basis, to put us in a good place to effectively lead our team is a real key to being successful.

And so let me talk about three pieces to that-- being positive, practicing emotional intelligence, and managing your stress well. Let me start with being positive. So I think most of us know that employees are looking to their leaders to set the tone. Just like children look to the parents in a home to set the tone, employees look to their leaders to set the tone every day.

And so I mean this has been-- I mean we're wired for this. Every human being, you know, grows up in a hierarchical society where when we go to school, we look up to our teachers. When we're little, we look up to our parents and our relatives. When we're playing sports, we look up to coaches. And when we get into the workplace, we look up to who our supervisors are.

And so it's so important that leaders take the-- that they embrace the responsibility to set a positive tone. And so when they walk in the door every day, they have to realize, it's showtime. I talked to a very, very seasoned leader at a local municipality a couple years ago, and she gave me some great advice. She said, being a human being, I have my good days and bad days. Some nights, I sleep well. Some nights, I don't. I have personal problems. I'm like anybody else.

She said, but when I walk into city hall every day, I realize my employees need me to put a smile on my face and set a positive tone. So she touches the wall-- she touches the outside wall of city hall before she walks in and says, I'm checking my baggage at the door, she says to herself. Then she walks in, puts a smile on her face, and says, it's showtime. I love that. I mean, she really helped me with that, with that visual, because think about this.

We're human beings as leaders. I mean we're going to have bad moods sometimes. We're going to not feel like smiling some days. We're going to not feel like being optimistic sometimes. But our people need us. They need us to set a positive tone. In the book, *The Leadership Challenge*, by Kouzes and Posner. It's a great book. I'm going to say it again, in case you're interested--*The Leadership Challenge* by Kouzes and Posner. It's a great leadership book.

They talk a lot about one of the core things that people want from their leaders is to know that there's hope for the future, that when the team is going through a challenge or a difficulty or some sort of a situation that that's making them have to-- you know, that's creating adversity in their lives, that they need a boss that says, guys, we're going to get through this. And even if it can't be changed, they need leaders that are going to say, you know what? Even though I don't like this either, I'm with you, and we're going to get through this together. I got your back.

And so we've got to be as positive as possible to set that tone. Of course, employees are going to be much more apt to come and talk to us if they perceive us as positive. Think about this. If you're a negative person who's critical, who doesn't smile-- and we've all had leaders like that from time to time. People-- I mean that's not welcoming to people.

If you're not in a-- you know, if you're usually in a bad mood-- and I know we're all human. We're all going to have our good days and bad days, but if you don't put a smile on your face, if you're not-- if you're not opening, if you're not having an open door policy where you're welcoming people to come to you and to say, hey, come to me when you need me, I'm here for you, people are going to hesitate to come forward.

But when leaders are safe to be around, because they're always positive, if they're not overly critical, certainly we can get constructive feedback if we do it tactfully and with respect. But I mean people are-- and if we're mostly supportive, people are going to-- they won't hesitate to come to us for guidance and support. So it's really important, folks, that we maintain an optimistic attitude, that we stay supportive and encouraging and keep a smile on our face as best we can.

Number two, we need to practice emotional intelligence. Again, we're human beings as leaders. I've personally been in leadership now for over 25 years, and I've blown this at times. OK, I'm getting better at it, but I've blown it at times. I just want to be honest about that. We have to manage our emotions. What people-- in addition to wanting positive leaders, people want stable leaders. They want people that when the storms of life come, when the problems occur, when the challenges occur, they need to know that we can handle it.

We're there for them. You know, we're going to guide them through it. And if we get all upset and vent anger all the time, and I'm not saying be perfect and be stoic and not be real-- not at all. But I'm saying if we're up and down emotionally all the time, if we allow our frustrations and our anger and being upset to spill over into the quality of our conversations with our employees, I mean that's going to hurt the employees' confidence in us. We need to be stable. We need to practice emotional intelligence.

Now emotional intelligence, I think most of us know, is really two things. It's the ability to manage our emotions so that we don't allow our emotions to spill over into our conversations, into our decision making, and also to be sensitive to the emotions of others. We need to have empathy and be sensitive to the emotions of our team and others that we work with. And so if we practice emotional intelligence, we will be viewed by our staff and others as the leaders that they can count on, that are stable, that are there for them.

Last but not least, we need to recognize that when leaders are not managing their emotions well, poorly managed emotions can lead to ineffective leadership behavior, such as being really directive or micromanaging. You know, a lot of times if someone's anxious, and they're concerned something's not going to get done right, that leader or that manager might hover and look over that person's shoulders and micromanage that person. And of course, that's not a comfortable way for people to be led. And so again, we need to practice emotional intelligence, so the best in our leadership skills can come out.

The third piece of managing ourselves is managing our stress well. Obviously, being a supervisor, being a manager is stressful. It's a lot of responsibility. And so we need to recognize that, because it comes with the territory, that I think it's prerequisite for all leaders to have some relatively good stress management skills, the ability to cope with problems and difficulty.

I mean that's-- it comes with the territory. When you're managing a team, when you're managing a department, I mean it's going to be stressful. You're going to have situations that you're going to have to handle that are difficult. There's going to be stressful times.

And if we don't manage our stress well, if we allow the stress to overwhelm us, to make us become impatient with others, or to create-- or to make us respond in a negative way, that can impact the relationship with others. It can impact the way our team looks at us. They won't have as much confidence in us if they see us stressing out every time things are rough.

Again, people are looking up to us. They need to know that their leaders are going to be able to handle whatever comes their way, and we don't have to be perfect, but that we can handle it, and that we're going to guide them through whatever situations occur, as difficult as they may be.

And again, poorly managed stress, just like poorly managed emotions, can impact the quality of our relationships with our employees. And so we need to make sure that we're managing our stress so that when we interact with employees, we can have high quality interactions. We can be supportive, be patient, and so on and so forth. And when leaders are stressed out, of course, we're not able-- we're not typically able to use our best interpersonal skills. I know, for me, when I'm feeling stressed out, I'm not as good of a listener. I'm not as patient.

And so it's really-- that's why it's important for leaders. The last thing I want to share about this is it's important for leaders to practice good stress management skills. And what I mean by that is take your lunch breaks.

Don't work through lunch every day. Pace yourself. Don't overcommit-- don't overschedule yourself every day. The reason being is if you can manage a better pace through the day and take some breaks to recharge your batteries, typically, you'll be in a better place to deal with the difficult things that happened during that day, and you'll be able to be there for your people.

Part Two is the most important piece that we're talking about today, which is communication skills. It really is the tipping point. Regardless of what leadership books you read, I mentioned *The Leadership Challenge*, Kouzes and Posner say in *The Leadership Challenge* right up front that leadership is relationship, that it's about the relationship and the communication that the leader has with the people that report to them.

Bob Nelson, another leadership guru, has one of the most famous quotes, at least one of the ones that had the most impact on my life as a manager. He says, "An employee's motivation is a direct result of the sum of interaction they have with his or her manager."

I want to say that again. "An individual employee's motivation is a direct result of the sum of interactions they have with his or her manager." And so how we interact with our employees every day really is a key-- it's a key to employee motivation. It's a key to employee engagement and employee productivity.

And so this is important. So number one, we need to prioritize people over tasks. And what I mean by that is we all have a to-do list. And earlier in my management career, I made the mistake of focusing too much on tasks and not enough on people and having quality interactions with people. I was listening, soliciting input, and so as I got better training, I realized that spending time with our employees is more important than our to-do list. We need to see spending quality time with our people as an investment.

When we maintain good connections with our people, when we're supportive, when we regularly show an interest in their opinions and want their input, they're going to be more motivated to do the tasks well. And so let's put people first. Certainly, the tasks need to get done, but let's make sure that our number one goal every day is to spend time with our people.

And while we're doing that, let's foster great relationships. Now it's really interesting that this is not being done very well across the country based on exit interview research. A recent study-- again, it was a Gallup study. A recent study said that during exit interviews, 74% of employees that were leaving their organization cited being unhappy with their supervisor as a reason for leaving. So obviously, a lot of us are not doing a great job or have not been doing a great job in building those relationships.

And so if that's important-- and I would-- you know what? 20 years ago, folks, I would have been in that research study. I would have been one of the ones that employees leaving my organization would have said they weren't happy with. I was not doing a good job of building relationships with employees. Having a strong relationship with your supervisor, it's just-- it's a key.

It's interesting. The Gallup research further goes into-- and some of the books they've written like *First Break All the Rules*, they really cite that-- the tipping point between an engaged, productive employee and one that's not is the quality of their relationship with their boss. And so it's really important that we focus a lot of time here, and there's no shortcut. You've got to spend time with people. You've got to get to know them as individuals. Ask them about their lives. Find out what's important to them.

Now I'm not talking about prying into their personal business, of course. But people want to know that you care about them as a human being. There's a great study from the Carnegie Training Company that says, the number one reason that employees get engaged to give 100% on the job is because they believe their boss cares about them as a person.

The best way to show that is to spend time with people and ask about their lives. You know, find out what's of interest to them, and ask about that. If they talk about their kids a lot, ask about their family from time to time. They'll appreciate it.

Again, I'm not talking about asking about anything personal that someone's not willing to talk about. But you know as you get to know people and spend time with them, you know what's important to them, because they'll share those things. You'll know who their favorite football team is, what their hobbies are, how old their kids are. They'll share those things-- what their career goals are.

You know, drill down in terms of the professional. Ask them what types of tasks and projects that they really enjoy and don't enjoy, so later on, when you're assigning work, you can assign work in areas that you know are motivating and interesting to them. And that can help increase their engagement. But let's remember, to maintain strong bonds, relationships need to be regularly nurtured. I'm a big advocate nowadays of the farming analogy for building relationships that you plant seeds and you water those seeds.

And so-- and people need to stay in touch with their boss regularly. Let's think about this, folks. On the short list of people that an individual employee thinks about most-- their family, their relative, their parents, their relatives, their best friends, and their boss. Your supervisor's on the short list of people that you think a lot about.

And so if your supervisor is not spending a lot of time with you and not taking the time to show an interest in you, there's going to be a gap there. So we need-- if you truly want your employees to be as motivated as possible and as productive as possible, make sure that you spend a lot of time with them, and make sure that they know you care about them.

And then last but not least, in terms of how you communicate-- and this is really important as well-- most of you probably know that employees want respect. I mean that's-- I mean that's the bottom line. According to SHRM, the Society for Human Resources Management, the most important motivator for an American employee is being treated respectfully at work, which means when their boss is communicating with them, if we're talking down to our employees, if we're always micromanaging them, telling them what to do and how to do it, if we don't show an interest in soliciting their input, getting their ideas as to how they think things should go, how they think that work should be accomplished, how they think the problem should be solved, even if there's a performance issue, if we don't ask them, what do you think we should do to turn this around, folks are not going to be-- they're not going to feel as respected, and they're not going to be as motivated to give you their best work.

And nowadays, with-- I mean, folks, we need to face it. The workforce is becoming really young nowadays. Within the next five years, roughly 70% of all American employees are going to be either a Millennial or a Generation Z, and so these are going to be the folks between 21 and 39 at that point, or not between-- because Millennials will be a little older by then-- between the ages of about 21 and early 40s. I mean, and so it's funny. Younger generations are very collaborative. They've been online, connected to others their whole lives.

And so if you're not someone that wants to work with them and collaborate and brainstorm with them, they're not going to respond as well to being told what to do all the time. I mean no one likes that, but the younger generation, in particular, is not going to be as responsive to that. And so we need to become good at being a collaborative communicator. And how you do that, folks, is you ask people a lot of questions. Ask their opinion a lot. Ask for their ideas a lot. Show an interest in what they think and what they think we should do.

All right, Part Three, team management. This is really important as well. So here's the benefits of team building, and this, again, I'm going to quote again *The Leadership Challenge* by Kouzes and Posner. There's a great study in there that says, the teams that develop a strong sense of family, where the people really get to know each other and bond with each other and care about each other, they can actually be 70%-- they have remarkably higher productivity. They can be 70% more productive than teams that are casual about their relationships and just see each other as colleagues but don't necessarily connect with each other.

And so leaders-- it really behooves leaders to take some time, helping the team to bond together to facilitate a tight knit team that cares about each other. And think about this. A core need of every human being is a sense of belonging. Most of you probably remember Maslow's hierarchy of needs. One of our core human needs is to belong.

And if you work on a work team that's really well bonded, where everyone cares about each other and has each other's back, I mean that's a-- you'll have a true sense of belonging. I'm really fortunate here at Deer Oaks on my team. We have a very close team, and we've spent a long time working together. We've been fortunate to be together as a team for years, and we're really well bonded.

And I have such a sense of belonging, I feel like I'm a significant part of that team, that I belong. And everyone needs that. And so-- but supervisors need to facilitate that happening. It won't just happen automatically. If you put a bunch of people in a room together and say, OK, you're now a team, sometimes there's jealousy, competitiveness, turf battles, cliques will form. It really takes a skillful manager to build a good team.

So here's some thoughts about how to make that happen at least, or how to enhance having that happen for your team. First and foremost, we need to make sure the team is treating each other respectfully. And so I'm a big advocate of every six months or so, getting the team together at a team meeting and having a rules of engagement conversation to say, hey, guys, we spend more time together during the week than we spend with our own families, at least of our waking hours during the week, working full time.

So how should we be treating each other? Let's set up a rules of engagement. How should we be treating each other during the week when we're here together? And the kinds of things they come up with respect and good communication, have my back, but it's a wonderful conversation to have to keep people thinking, because a lot of people will, naturally, when they come to work, be focused on their own agenda. We need to keep people remembering that, yes, the tasks in our agenda need to be accomplished, but we need to treat each other well. We need to create a comfortable environment for everybody.

And so here's-- let's remember, guys, this is how we all agreed we would treat each other. That's important to do from time to time. And to maintain a consistent communications structure-- it's a best practice to have one on one meetings with all of your direct reports periodically. Now if you have a small team, you can do it weekly. A bigger team, maybe every other week or once a month. But we also need to have regular team meetings, where you're creating opportunities for bonding.

This is really important. We want to create an environment that encourages people to get to know each other and visit with each other. We need to just remember that, and so-- and you can do that in team meetings. And one of the best ways to do that, to me, is to do ice breakers at the beginning of team meetings before you get down to business. It's a wonderful practice to do ice breakers.

We've done some fun ice breakers with our team recently, like one time we did-- we went around the room and said, everyone talk about the best concert you've ever attended and why. We had a lot of laughs just learning what kind of music each other liked. And there were some surprises that came up. We had some people that were into heavy metal. We never would have thought that person would have been into heavy metal music. It was funny.

But it was fun. We really rolled our sleeves up and got to know each other, let our hair down, so to speak. Another time, we did an ice breaker around, go around the room and say if there was a movie made about your life, what genre would it be, and what actor would play you? It was a fun exercise. So do some things that can create opportunities for informal bonding, and then schedule. I think every leader ought to have a regular schedule of formal team meetings, and I recommend at least once a month having a full team meeting.

Even if you're virtual, you can still do virtual team meetings. You can do a Zoom meeting, Go To Teams meeting or whatever, or even a conference call meeting. We do those at Deer Oaks, or you can do formal team building meetings. Once a year or so, we get together as a team at Deer Oaks, and we go off site and do something that's more of an informal team building activity. Like we went to the bowling alley once, and we went out to a restaurant another time together and so those kinds of things.

So it's really important that you proactively make sure the team is getting together and getting to know each other better. It really pays off. I saw a great article that said, small talk is not small. But we have to facilitate it as leaders and encourage people to spend time together.

Part Four, manage productivity. So this is the last piece before I open it up for questions, but obviously, getting the job done is the bottom line. So we need to be managing productivity well. And so number one, think strategically when you assign tasks and projects.

One of the reasons I mentioned earlier that it's important is you're getting to know your employees to really understand what kind of work they like to do and what kind of work they don't like to do. And as often as you can, strategically assign tasks and projects to people in the areas that they're interested in. You'll never get a more motivated and engaged employee than when you give them an opportunity to do work that they love to do.

Like, I went to my boss several years ago and said-- because I've been a trainer for years, and I also do business development for Deer Oaks. I went to my boss, and I said, I'd like to also be the director of training for our team. And we talked about it, and she agreed and enabled me to do, which is enabled me to do a lot of this education that I love as part of my job. I mean this is my favorite thing to do. Hopefully, my enthusiasm is coming through today, but I love to do this.

And I was able to-- with my boss's sponsorship, I was able to just get an opportunity in my job to do more of this, which really gives me more job satisfaction and fulfillment. I love teaching and training. And so look for opportunities.

There was a guy looking for a-- working for a local municipality. It was really funny. He was about 60, I believe, and he was sort of biding his time to retirement. His boss did something really creative. He knew the guy loved baseball, and so basically, he said-- because they had one premier ballpark in this town. He said to him, I'll tell you what. How would you like to be the head groundskeeper for this ballpark from spring to summer?

You'd have thought the guy got a \$10,000 raise. I mean he was so excited. He said that put bounce in his step. He says, I got five more good years out of him all by assigning him that one project for four months out of the year. He went from being a sort of a biding your time kind of a person, just sort of floating along, not giving a lot, to being a motivated employee again, because he got to do something he loved.

And so be thinking about that. Last but not least, when you assign someone work, make sure they understand the significance or the meaning of it. Again, particularly, it's important to everybody, but particularly important to younger workers. The Millennial generation and the Gen Z generation-- both of those generations want to do meaningful work. And I mean my hat's off to them. I think that's incredible. I'm a baby boomer, so I think it's great that younger people want to do things with meaning.

And so make sure if you're assigning a spreadsheet or some sort of a rote task, take the time to explain, yes, this is just a spreadsheet, but here's the significance of your contribution to the roll-up into the bigger picture. And so make sure you take a few minutes to let people know the importance of the work that they're doing.

Last but not least, when you assign work, have a consistent performance management follow-up process. Now this-- I'm going to give you a three-step process that's right out of the world of project management. It works really, really well. I want to let you know ahead of time, though, it's not for a one-off task.

If you're going to assign someone like, go write an email for me, or go over here and fix this one tree bed, that's not what this is for. That would be task management. This is more like project management, so this would be for a significant task or project.

Let me give an example. Let's say that one of my direct reports right now at Deer Oaks, I was assigning to her that she needs to develop a new report, that we're going to summarize the senior management in certain activities. And so this would be-- and it's a 30-day process. And so she would have 30 days to get it done.

So step number one is you want to make sure, of course, as I mentioned before that I don't tell her what to do and how to do it. That would be directive-- that I collaborate with her on, here's the project. Here's the scope. Here's what I'm looking for from the project. But then ask her, what do you think we should do to get this done? And give her input into the work plan, into the resources necessary.

And then at the end of that collaboration conversation, this is a key piece for follow-through and holding people accountable. If it's a significant project or task, have a follow-up step along the way to make sure the work is progressing the way it needs to.

A lot of times, when work isn't done properly, it's because there was no follow-up step from assignment to submission. And so that middle piece is really important where you can check in and assess the progress, make course corrections if the employee got off track, or you guys aren't on the same page anymore.

And so at the end of my collaboration conversation, when I'm giving her the assignment, I'm basically going to say, since this is due in 30 days, do you mind if we touch base two weeks from Friday? We might have to touch base just for a few minutes, just for you to give me a status update, so I can just stay on the same page with you, which gives you that opportunity again.

So now you can let go. The process itself is going to lend itself to accountability, because she knows she's going to have to have progress made to report to in two weeks, and it can let you let go as a supervisor and not feel like you have to look over her shoulder, because you can trust you have a process in place to make sure the work's getting done right. And you have an opportunity to make course corrections if it's not.

And then last but not least, you can do an evaluation at the end or a debrief. I find those really helpful, and it was interesting. An article in *Forbes* magazine a couple of years ago said-- it was entitled, "The Debrief--" "The Post-Project Debrief: The Missing Piece of American Quality Assurance." It basically said, in today's world, so many deliverables are submitted to supervisors electronically, and so often, conversations aren't even had afterwards, that no feedback is given, and we're all moving on to the next thing.

And so it's important, if we're going to assign someone significant work, when they turn it in, we need to schedule some time to discuss it together. Even if you have to do it electronically, but schedule a time or over the telephone, if you're not in the same location together, to go over the work together. And I would suggest three things.

Number one, give them a lot of recognition. Give them recognition for effort. Even if you don't like everything about the deliverable, make sure you let them know you appreciate how hard they worked on it-- number one.

Number two, before you talk about any constructive criticism, ask them for any lessons learned. Ask them, if you had a chance to do this over again with what you learned on this project, what would you do differently? And sometimes it won't be anything, which is fine. But at least you have an opportunity to talk about lessons learned, if there are any. And then at the end, you can give some constructive feedback, whatever you need to say.

All right, folks. I know we covered a lot in a very short period of time today. Let me go back to the initial slide. Let me open it up for questions, folks. If you have any questions, please type them into the question box in GoToWebinar software in the upper right hand corner of your screen. We've got time for several questions.

Here's a good one. Earlier, you mentioned the person who said, showtime before entering your office. How would you recommend being balanced with authenticity in order to relate to colleagues for building rapport and family style connection?

Well, I would say first and foremost is be yourself. I'm not saying be someone you're not. So if you're an introvert, which is fine-- I mean we all have the personality that we have. And every personality has its strength.

Whether you're more introverted, maybe-- because you can probably tell I'm an extrovert, so for me, it's normal to go in and just have small talk with people. But if that's not your style, still, you can put a smile on your face. You can go in and say good morning. And you can set up one on one meetings periodically to stay connected to the team.

So I'm not suggesting going in and putting a fake smile on your face and pretending the whole-- be Pollyanna, and pretend everything's perfect. Not at all. What I'm suggesting is that you put a smile on your face, and within your personality, go in and be as supportive and encouraging to the team as you can be.

You know, and be as optimistic when you're discussing issues as you can be. You can be constructive. You can talk about things that need to be fixed, of course. Part of our role as a supervisor, but let's be constructive. Let's be as optimistic, and use optimistic language like, we'll get through this, and you know what? I know this is hard, and I don't like it either, but it's not the end of the world. We'll figure it out.

People who are encouraging like that and are real supportive of supervisors, employees really feel uplifted. It really keeps them going.

Next question. Here's a good one. I'm a Millennial, 35, and I manage a team. I'm curious to see how many other participating are Millennials. Are any managing people in the Gen X or boomer age range? Any tips on managing those in older age ranges? That's a great question. Let me share something with you about that.

My first-- I'm a baby boomer, like I shared, so I don't mind sharing that I'm 60. OK, so I'm a younger baby boomer, but I'm 60. I've been doing this for a long time. But my first management job was when I was 26, and so I was promoted to my first supervisor [INAUDIBLE] eight direct reports. And I struggled a little bit.

And I had several people on that team, as you might imagine, that were older than me. And for the first few management positions I had, I was managing older people. And so really, up until my 40s, I was typically managing older people. And so I would have people who were 10 years older than me, 20-- I had a few people that were 20 years older than me over the years. And the number one thing I learned when you're managing people that are older is to show them respect for their-- that people love that.

Sometimes-- I think most of you know. Sometimes folks that are older might tend to look down on someone who's younger, feeling like they don't have as much experience. And that can be hard. If you have to report to someone who's your supervisor now, who's a lot younger than you, you might have some negative feelings thinking that, why are they my supervisor? I've been around a lot longer than they have, and maybe I know more, is what might be going on inside of your mind.

And so a younger supervisor can mitigate some of that and build a good bond with the older worker by showing a lot of respect for their experience. Go to that older worker regularly and say, hey, I know that you've been in the workforce a lot longer than I have. And if you don't mind, I'd like to pick-- you know, I'm still learning. If you don't mind, I'd like to pick your brain from time to time, or I'd like to consult with you from time to time. That approach can go a long way towards getting respect from that older worker and keeping them engaged.

Next question is, is it possible to get slides for the presentation? It absolutely is. All you have to do is hit Reply to your GoToWebinar invitation for today, and just request the slides. We'd be happy to send them to you.

Here's another one. Here's another question about the showtime idea. Particularly, this question is coming from one of your colleagues. And I think this is a really appropriate question. I appreciate you asking it. Particularly during a pandemic, is showtime really a good strategy?

Again, I'm not talking about being over the top positive-- not at all. I'm just saying, setting a positive realistic tone. Like, for example, when someone says to me right now, because I take this situation, the difficulty that a lot of Americans are experiencing, my family included, very seriously. And when someone says to me, did you have a good weekend, how I'm answering that to be appropriate and considerate for how hard it is right now in the world, I say, under the circumstances, yes.

I want people to know that I'm aware of how hard things are right now. So you might have to temper your enthusiasm when you walk into the office right now or when you do a Zoom meeting, because a lot of people are working from home right now or using one of the virtual platform. You might have to temper your enthusiasm a little bit to account for the difficulty that a lot of people are having. And I respect that.

You can still be positive, but do it in a more constructive, respectful way. You want to encourage people that I'm here for you during this difficult time. That's still positive. Just maybe you're not going to do as much of the-- as much of the optimism or the blatant optimism right now, because it is-- we need to acknowledge to people that this is a tough time for a lot of us.

But I think it's still important for us to say to each other, I'm here for you. If you need anything, I'm here for you during this difficult time. I hope you and your family are doing OK. If you need anything, just let me know.

And I think that's the kind of-- that's another expression of positivity I think that's very appropriate during this difficult time. All right, folks, got time for two more questions.

Trying to find questions that'd be most appropriate for our conversation today. OK, here. OK, here's a really, really good question. Tell you what-- I'm actually going-- this is going to take a little bit, so I'm actually going to just have time for one last question today. And I do appreciate people's thoughtful questions. This is an important one.

So your colleague is writing, optimism is important, but that should not be confused as always being happy. I totally agree. We're going to talk about that. Supervisors needed help their employees navigate the emotions of change, which can feel negative. What suggestions do you have to help employees navigate their negative feelings?

That's a great question. You're right. Part of being supportive is letting employees express how they feel. That's a really important part of being supportive. And so when people want to come in and talk-- now I'm not talking about becoming their counselor, because that's not our role as a supervisor, but to be supportive, we need to hear people out.

So people are upset about changes that they're dealing with, upset about what's going on with the pandemic, upset about something that they're not happy about at the office, whatever the case may be. We need to respectfully listen to their advice-- or excuse me. We need to respectfully listen to their feelings.

If someone gets really, really upset to the point where it's getting in the way of their ability to cope effectively, that's when you could ask if they knew-- if they know about Deer Oaks EAP program that they have. And I don't advocate telling someone, you need to go to EAP, because someone could take that-- could be offended by that. What I'm saying is, if someone's really struggling, if they're really upset to the point where it's really getting in the way of their lives, you could say something about, I can tell how upset you are. I can tell this situation is really weighing on you, and I don't blame you at all.

Are you aware that we do have an employee assistance program through Deer Oaks that has free counseling services? Were you aware of that? Just to throw it out there as a potential resource, so that that's how I would handle the more extreme, if you find someone's really, really upset, and they could really maybe need some or could use some professional support.

But for the most part, when people want to express how they feel to their boss, they want to share, and that's part of knowing that my boss has my back and my boss cares about me. So as a supervisor, we want to hear. We want to be able to listen. I'm not talking about allowing the employee to come in for half an hour and just vent negativity.

That's not constructive. But I think it's very appropriate to let someone come into your office or call you on the phone or whatever the case may be or do a Zoom meeting, whatever, and share with you, I want to-- can I share something that's really frustrating me right now?

And to give them some time to attend to that and say, hey, I hear you. I understand. It's important. What people want-- what they really want from people that are important to them when they're upset is they want someone to hear them, and they want to feel like they're heard and understood.

That's a really important part. So we need to allow people to share those feelings, but we need to then steer it towards something constructive. What I mean by that is to ask the employee, how could you go forward from this?

I can tell-- sometimes people just want to share how they feel, and there's nothing that can be done. And you'll recognize those times. Other times, sometimes as a good leader, you can help facilitate someone thinking about what they could do about this to make any-- or to deal with it, to cope with it, or to move forward and say, I can tell you're really upset about this, and I don't blame you at all. This is a difficult situation.

Now can I ask, have you started to think about alternatives or steps that you could take to move forward? And you could be there to help them sort of think through some of those things. That would be a constructive way to try to move forward after they express their emotion.

Thank you. That was a very important question and a very thoughtful question. Thank you so much. All right, folks, so we've gotten to the end of the time that we have for questions. I want to apologize that we don't have more time for questions today. But I do want to thank you for being so thoughtful on the ones that you submitted.

Again, I'm Greg Brannan from Deer Oaks EAP Services. We are your EAP program provider. If you need to get a hold of our 24-hour help line, please reach out to your human resources department. They'd be happy to give you that contact information. We're here for you. Even during the pandemic, we're still doing counseling. We're not doing face to face right now for safety reasons, of course, but we're doing telephonic and video chat counseling sessions, so you can still get counseling.

I mean we have lots of other resources to support you and your family that you could receive from Deer Oaks. Again, if you want any information about the Deer Oaks 2020 Leadership Certificate Webinar series that this was part two of, feel free to hit Reply to your GoToWebinar invitation for today, and ask our staff. They'd be happy to send you the registration links or the recording links to the other programs.

And last but not least, I hope you all continue to stay safe and healthy. And hopefully, I'll be with you again on another webinar in the near future. Thanks, everybody. Have a great rest of the day. Take care.