Deer Oaks EAP | 2020-05-04 1400 2020 Deer Oaks Supervisor Excellence_Advanced Communication Skills - Successful Approaches to Difficult Employee

Hello, everyone. Welcome to Successful Approaches to Difficult Employee Conversations. This is the second topic in the Deer Oaks 2020 Supervisor Excellence webinar series. Our focus this year, of course, is on advanced communication skills. Glad that you've joined us today. We've got a great turnout.

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

Thank you, folks. Looks like we're good to go technology-wise. In addition, I want to remind you that during the educational presentations brought to you by Deer Oaks EAP Services, participants are in Listen-Only mode which means, of course, you won't be able to audibly ask questions during the content portion of the presentation today. And the content portion of the presentation really will last about 30 minutes, give or take.

But your questions are important to me. And so, at the end of the content portion of the presentation, we will have a question and answer session. At that point, if you have questions, please type them into the Question box in the GoToWebinar software, again in the upper right-hand corner of your screen.

Let's go ahead and get started.

One of my favorite all-time psychologists, Dr. Henry Cloud, had a wonderful quote, and I just I think it's a great place to begin our conversation today, just talking about how normal conflict is in relationships. And his quote was, "If two of you are in relationship, and there isn't any conflict, one of you isn't necessary." And that, of course, makes me smile, but but it's true. I mean, we're all different.

In every relationship, there's going to be disagreements, there's going to be misunderstandings, and, at times, there's going to be conflict. It would be impossible for there not to be because every-- you take any two individuals, and even if they seem like they have a lot of similarities, you're going to find a lot of differences. People not only are, you know, different from a cultural standpoint, oftentimes a personality standpoint. They grow up in different generations.

But that's just the beginning of diversity, right? Then you've got all kinds of interpersonal differences, psychological differences. People have different perspectives, different opinions, different agendas. And so, just like Dr. Cloud said, I mean, any-- if you put any two people in a relationship together, and if they're being honest with each other, at some point in time, they're going to have conflict. They're going to have disagreement. They're going to have miscommunication.

So the important thing, like we're going to talk about today, is how do we approach having conversations with people when there is misunderstanding, when there is conflict, when there is disagreement? And this is particularly important when the person that we're talking about, here, is someone that's on your team, someone that's a colleague, or someone that reports to you as a supervisor. I mean, of course, we need to have great relationships with those folks, and how we handle miscommunication disagreements and conflict is really important.

So what are the reasons why there is typically miscommunication disagreement, I think part of it, most of you would probably agree, in addition to the diversity that I mentioned earlier and the fact that we're all so different, part of it's the stress level. The world, nowadays, is a very stressful place, and and this is even before the pandemic which, of course, has really increased everyone's stress level as we're all thinking about staying safe and keeping our families safe. But even before the pandemic, the world was a very stressful place.

The pace of life is probably faster and more frenetic than ever before. And in a lot of that's technology-driven, right? I mean, we're tethered to our devices, and people are connected 24/7. You know, many, many to most of us get our work emails on our personal cell phones. And so there's a temptation to stay connected to work, even after-hours and on weekends.

But if you just look at everything that's coming at us, the 24-hour news cycle, and any anytime you're in a public health crisis like we are now, I mean, all the information and the stories and, you know, the negative news, and a lot of it's important for us to know, but there's a lot. There's a lot coming at us, and it's coming at us 24 hours a day, you know, probably more so than ever before, and some of it is stressful.

Psychologists actually recommend that you minimize the amount of news that you take in every day because the 24-hour news cycle can be stressful. There's a lot of disturbing news stories, a lot of stressful news stories. And so, certainly, we need to stay informed, but you can overdo it as well.

And so you-- and then we have social media. Social media, of course, has a lot of benefit, but it can also keep us very distracted. It can keep us feeling like there's just trying to stay on top of everything. So it's-- think about this, that the term of being overwhelmed, you know, what that term means, of course, is you're only one person. You know, you're doing what you're doing in a day, and you have all this stuff on your plate. You have a to-do list. You've got personal responsibilities. You've got family responsibilities, chances are.

And then we're trying to keep up with everything else. We're trying to keep up with the media. We're trying to keep up with our emails. We're trying to keep up with our deadlines. There's just a lot going on in people's lives.

And everyone has agendas. We all have things that we're trying to accomplish. And, sometimes, so sometimes, disagreement and miscommunication happens because people are just moving too fast. Then they're just being insensitive to what, you know, to maybe the speed at which they're traveling or maybe not being sensitive enough to what the other person is dealing with.

Sometimes, it's because we're so different. Sometimes, it's because we're trying to accomplish one thing with our agenda, and the other person is trying to accomplish something different, and our agendas or goals in that conversation are at odds with each other. In addition, there's lots of different categories where we can have difficult, stressful conversations with our employees.

Some of it could be-- We could be discussing the work, and we could have some disagreement over how the work is going to be accomplished. Sometimes, an employee might feel threatened or a supervisor feel like, may feel like, an employee's not being respectful. Other times, an employee's, you know, may not feel comfortable talking to their boss. Some employees get all uptight when they're around their boss.

Other times, things are pretty emotional. You get, again, competing priorities, differences of opinion, and sometimes it's turf issues. Sometimes, people don't like someone looking over their shoulder, and they feel like, why don't you trust me? So there's a lot of reasons-- and I know I'm preaching to the choir-- there's a lot of reasons why supervisors and employees can have misunderstandings, miscommunication, disagreements, and even conflict, and so which which means we have to have some difficult conversations.

All right, so let's spend the rest of our time talking about how to have difficult conversations more successfully. And so I want to talk about-- I've got seven points I want to make today. The first three are prerequisites. So the first three would be what I would call preparing to have a great conversation, even if the stakes are high, even if the content is difficult, even if people are emotional. So let's-- but let's get prepared to have the best difficult conversation possible. OK?

I think most of us recognize the goal is when you have a difficult conversation or you have a stressful topic to talk about, the goal would be to have that conversation in a cordial, in as cordial away as possible, in as a respectful a way as possible so that you can come out of that conversation with the relationship still intact and maybe seeing more eye to eye than you did when you went into the conversation. And so, I mean, the goal is to have a successful difficult conversation.

And with the right skills and with the right preparation, we can have more successful conversations when they're hard. All right, so prerequisite number one is choose the right time and place, and I think most of us know this is important. And so the location needs to be comfortable for both individuals. And what I mean by comfortable, sometimes, if you're the supervisor, calling someone into your office may not be the most comfortable place for the employee. Sometimes, if an employee gets called into the boss's office, it can feel like they're being called into the principal's office when they were in school, back in the day. And so, sometimes, it might be might be more comfortable for the employee for you to go find a neutral place to have your conversation.

The other thing that's important is to make sure that you're not in a hurry when you're having difficult conversations. I have a rule of thumb, nowadays, after making a lot of mistakes over the years. Right, I mean, a lot of what I'm talking to you about today, I've learned from best practices and experience, but I've also learned from trial and error. I've made plenty of mistakes having these conversations over the years, and I've had to make adjustments and learn from those mistakes. So one of the things I want to recommend is make sure that neither party is rushed.

I want to recommend what I call a 15-minute rule. So if the topic of what you need to talk to one of your employees about is at all uncomfortable, if it's at all-- if the stakes are high at all, if it could be emotional, if it could be in some way stressful or sensitive, make sure you're not rushed. Make sure that you have, you know, you're giving enough time to talk it through with the employee, and so I recommend a 15-minute rule.

I have had a lot of very quick, very brief, ineffective conversations with people over the years where I just didn't give it enough time. And you know what happens when two people passing in the hallway and say, hey, you know, remember about that situation I wanted to catch up with you about this? And, now, if what you're going to talk to this person about or the employee about is, again, sensitive, controversial, stressful, and you start to talk about it and you're in a hurry, that's going to compromise the quality of that interaction.

You're probably not going to be as patient as you could be as you're talking with the employee. You're probably not going to listen as well as you might otherwise, and they're probably not going to be as prepared to listen patiently. And it really takes giving yourself some space and some time so that you can both pay full attention to the situation, whenever the conversation is difficult. And so make sure neither party is rushed.

I'll give you a great example of, in my personal life, one of the-- and I'll never forget this because it was a mistake I made as a dad when my daughter was a teenager. I don't mind sharing I'm a Baby Boomer so my-- she's an adult, now. But when my daughter was a teenager, she was running out the door, one night. She had a friend. She was in high school, I'm thinking she was probably a junior in high school, if I'm remembering right, but she was running out the door. It was a classic example of not having a sensitive conversation when someone's in a hurry.

And I didn't like the way she was dressed. It wasn't horrible, but it, you know, I didn't feel like she was dressed as conservatively as I thought she should, without getting into detail, right. It wasn't horrible. It wasn't like-- I mean, it wasn't out of the question. It was just I was uncomfortable. As a dad, I would have liked for her to dress more conservatively.

My problem was, I had every right to share that with here, right, as her father, but the problem was she came running down the stairs, her girlfriend was waiting in the driveway with the car running, and she went to say goodbye to her mother and I, and she was running out the door and I said, wait a second, young lady. Where you think you're going dressed like that?

Right, and then, all of the sudden, we had like very tense words for about 60 seconds or 90 seconds. And at the end of that conversation, I mean, she was really upset and took off, you know, jumps into her friend's car and they left, but she was really upset. Now, I realized, in retrospect, I had every right to talk to her about the conversation, but I should've waited until we had some time to sit down and talk about it, you know, to have an honest respectful conversation.

You should never catch someone running out the door to talk about something that that's going to be controversial or that's going to be stressful for you either or both of the participants. And so I recognized that was my mistake. My mistake was I didn't pick the right time and place to have the conversation.

Yes, as her dad, I had every right to have the conversation, but not when she's running out the door. That, it just, that was a mistake on my-- it was poor timing on my part. It would've gone a lot better if I would've waited till the next day or when we could sit down and talk about it calmly.

Right, now, step number two, prerequisite step number two, of course, is make sure you're in a good place mentally and emotionally when you go in. And so if you're, again, if you're in a bad place, don't have that conversation. I want to share another mistake that I made. This is about 20 years ago. It was probably one of the worst interactions I've ever had at work over the years, and again it was just bad timing on my part.

But there was a woman that reported to me, at the time, and she did something that really upset me. One of the buttons that I can-- that can get pushed in me is disrespect. If I feel like someone's disrespecting me, I tend to get upset. Right?

And so if I shared with all of you what she did that day, that I heard about when I got back to the office that afternoon, most of you would have been upset as well. What she did I really feel like was disrespectful, but that's not the point here. The point is how I handled it.

So when I heard what she did, I was really, really angry. And so rather than waiting until I was calmed down or in a good place to have a rational conversation with her, I just, you know, I took off and went found her at that moment. And I pulled-- and I asked her to come into an office with me, and we had a very heated conversation.

And the problem was, I was really angry when I started the conversation. So as soon as I started to say what I was-- tell her what I was angry about, she started getting defensive, and it turned out to be an argument. And it was probably only lasted about 45 seconds, but it probably was one of the worst professional conversations I've ever had.

Now, thankfully, I learned from it, and I've not made that same mistake since. But the sad part about that was our relationship never-- was never repaired after that. She was so angry with me. Even though what she did was disrespectful, she was so angry at me coming at her in an angry-- with an angry tone. You know, she just stayed away from me from that point forward till she left that organization. And so, and it's a shame.

And, at first, I was mad at her, right, because of what she did that was disrespectful. But I came to realize that, wait a minute, I made a-- I've made a serious mistake in handling that. I went into a conversation with an employee, very angry. And I think most of you would probably recommend that, from an emotional intelligence standpoint, when we have strong emotions, it's really important that we calm ourselves before we go and talk to someone, particularly someone, you know, a direct report, a colleague, your boss.

It's really important that we maintain emotional intelligence. I know most of you know this. Emotional intelligence is about recognizing how we feel and managing how we feel so that it doesn't-- that anger, that resentment, or hurt doesn't spill over into the conversation or hurt the relationship or cause you to say something you regret later.

And so, now, I did, I learned from that. But, again, I should have waited till I was calmed down before I had the conversation. All I had to do, really, was just wait a little bit, wait a few hours till I calmed down, or I could have even, you know, I could have called my wife and got some advice. She's talked me down so many times over the years.

I could have-- the HR director at that company, at the time, and I were good friends. I could have gone and talked with her. She would have helped me. But I didn't think about it. I was so angry, I just went in and confronted her out of anger, and obviously the result wasn't good.

And so make sure when you're going to have an important conversation, a stressful conversation, a difficult conversation, make sure you're in a good place emotionally and you have a positive attitude going in. And if you're going in trying to put someone in their place, tell them off, or something along those lines, that's not-- I think most of you would agree-- that's not a good mindset. We need to, if you're not ready to go in and seek a win-win outcome and have a respectful conversation and have an open mind to listen to what-- where the other person's coming from, you're not ready to have a successful difficult conversation. So we need to train ourselves to calm ourselves and get ourselves in the right mindset and get our emotions under control before we start the conversation.

And the third piece says we need to be sensitive to where the employee is at that point in time. Sometimes, we may be calm, but when you walk up to the employee or the employee comes in your office, maybe you sense, boy, the employee's really bent out of shape. They're really upset, right now.

And so the other part of emotional intelligence, most of you know, is the first part is being sensitive to how we feel in managing our feelings. The other side of that coin, though, is being sensitive to how others are feeling and, you know, then-- and being open to working with their emotions.

And so if you, like, for example, if you're-- a good example would be if you're walking up to an employee, and you're about to talk to them about critiquing their work. Maybe they did something that you feel like needs to be critiqued or needs to be improved. And you're walking up to the employee's workstation, and you notice, as you're getting closer to their desk, the employee seems really upset or really stressed out.

Emotion, you know, someone with an emotional sensitivity to the needs of others or the feelings of others might, at that point in time, hold off talking to the employee about their performance and save the critique for when the employee's in a better place and shift into a support mode and say, hey, is everything OK? Anything I can do to help?

And so let's just be sensitive. Let's be sensitive to how we're feeling. Make sure we're in the right place mentally and emotionally to have a difficult conversation. And then, also, of course, be sensitive to where the employee's at.

And be quick to suggest another time, if necessary. Over the years, now, as I've been learning these lessons, I've learned to put conversations off. I've even rescheduled conversations because either myself or the other person I was going to be talking with wasn't in the right, wasn't in a good place. And so if you're going to have a difficult or a stressful conversation, if there's been a disagreement, there's been miscommunication, or you're even in the middle of a conflict, again, make sure you're in a good place and the employees in a good place before you have that conversation, if at all possible.

All right, so now let me spend the rest of our time with some tips and techniques for having a stressful conversation more effectively or more successfully. All right, so first and foremost, and I think this is something people really need to remember-- I've had to really teach myself this over the years-- I used to feel like if I was right, I could just say it however I wanted to because I was right. I would feel like, you know, earlier in my life, that that justified me confronting someone like I did with that young lady 20 years ago in the example I give you a moment ago. But I realized, no, there's never-- there's, if you think about this, to be an effective leader, to be an effective supervisor, the number one thing that people want from us is respect.

There's a lot of research that says if an employee believes their supervisor respects them, cares about them as a person, that that employee is much more likely to be engaged and productive and less likely to leave the organization. And so, as supervisors, we have to remember that. And so I've come to realize that what the most important part of my day, now, is talking to my team.

And when I interact with my team, whether it's writing a text, writing an email, having a conversation, a phone call, or meeting face-to-face-- when it's safe, right, remembering we're in a pandemic, right now-- the number one goal, my number one goal is to have a respectful interaction with the employee. So I'm double-checked my emails before I send them. I double-checked-- I proof texts before I send them. I make sure I'm in a good place before I pick up the phone and call somebody. And so, again, it's important that we go into a situation in a good place so we can have an effective conversation.

So, again, it's not the words you say. It's how you say it. I want to share some new research with you. There's new research that says, within six days after a conversation, individuals forget 80% to 90% of the words that were said by the other person. Isn't that interesting?

So, after six days-- we're all busy people, we're all on information overload-- but we forget most of what's said to us, 80% to 90% on average. But what people never forget is how that other person made them feel. And so it's really important to remember it's not what you say. The words you choose are important, but they're not the most important part.

The most important part is how you say it. Did you say it in a respectful tone of voice? Did you say it with patients? Did you say it, you know, civilly. Did you-- you know, were you courteous as you were speaking? And it's really important for us to remember that, and the goal would be to always remain respectful.

I've come to realize, when someone gets done reading an email or a text from me, when they hang up the phone with me, or when they're done meeting with me, then, my number-one goal is for them to feel like I respected them. They may-- I may have had to give them bad news. They may not have gotten what they wanted from the conversation itself, but I always-- my goal, nowadays, is to make sure that that person feels like I treated them respectfully. And so I think that's important for us, is to interact in a way where the other person knows that even if you don't agree, you're always going to be respectful.

And this last piece, I think it's important to use common courtesy and kindness. And most of us know the old saying, you get more with honey than with vinegar. And so even if you don't agree with the other person, just be nice. I think we need to remember to treat each other right.

All right, number two, I'm going to quote Stephen Covey. Many of you remember Stephen Covey's famous book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.* I love this. So of his seven habits was, seek first to understand the other person. Then be understood. So his point was, let the other person go first. If you're talking to someone, use common courtesy. Let the other person go first, and then express how you feel.

I wanted to share a wonderful story that illustrates this beautifully. Rams have been programmed by nature to coexist together on, you know, up in mountains, right. And, you know, we're talking about way up in the Himalayan Mountains. And this was a true story. And so you had a mountain guide that had a bunch of folks that were on a-- they were on a little bit of a-- an excursion. Safari wouldn't be the right term, but he was walking them-- he was walking them up the mountain.

And as they were going up the mountain, what he realized as he was taking this party up this mountain is they were down over a cliff. They looked down. There was ravine, and across the way, there was another cliff with a thin mountain pass. And what you had, what was going on there, is you had an adult ram, a very large animal with the full horns, going up this thin mountain pass. And then you had a second adult ram going down the thin mountain pass, and they were almost certainly going to have a collision.

And so, as he stopped his party he was leading, so watch this, this phenomena, most of the folks in that party were fully expecting the two rams to lock horns and maybe one or both fall to their death because it was a very slippery slope they were on. But the most interesting thing was, when the ram going up the mountain pass reached the ram coming down the mountain pass, he got down onto all fours, you know, prostate, right, he got down on all fours and allowed the ram coming down the mountain pass to step over him and then go on down his merry way. And then ram that that had knelt before his counterpart stood up and then went, continued on up the mountain pass.

And so I thought was amazing that nature has programmed these rams to stay alive on thin mountain passes by not having unnecessary conflict, by teaching the one going up to defer to the one going down. And I think that really expresses Stephen Covey's point beautifully.

I gotta tell you, I get along so much better in the world in the last 15 or 20 years since I've learned some of these lessons. I used to be very focused on getting my point across. You can probably tell I'm an extrovert, so part of my problem is I talk too much, and I know I do. But I've come to a place where I realize it's better to let the other person go first.

So if I'm having a conversation with someone about something significant, I try to start by saying-- I try to go in listening. I try to start by saying, what do you think? Here's what I need to talk to about. What do you think?

It's helped me in my marriage, a ton. My wife would tell you, if she was on the call with us today, I'm much easier to talk to now than I used to be when I was always wanting to share my opinion first. But, now, I'm much quicker to say, Honey, what do you think? Or when I'm talking to an employee, I'm much quicker to say, here's what's going on. What do you think we should do solve this problem?

And let them go first. Then you can express your opinion. But, like in the ram story, if you defer to the other person, you know, everyone's going to get along better. Right?

All right, the next thing is to make sure you're taking a positive approach. And so what I mean by a positive approach is what your goal going in needs to be positive. OK, and what I mean by goal going in, if you're trying to win, trying to put the other person in their place, trying to vent, I mean, that's not a good goal for a conversation. Certainly, you can express how you feel, right, cordially, civilly.

But if you're going in trying to win the point or just put that person in their place or get your way, I want us to see that that's not a positive motive for entering into a difficult conversation. We should go in open and willing to accept the other person's viewpoint, even if it's different than the one that we have, even if we don't agree. So we should go in being open and not critical or judgmental.

One of the things that starts arguments more than anything else-- I want you to see there is a continuum of misunderstandings. It starts from misunderstanding to disagreement to conflict to argument. OK, I mean, it just it-- that's going-- and it can rapidly go downhill if people are not treating each other right as they're interacting together. So go in positive. Give the other person the benefit of the doubt. Be willing to be willing to respect their opinion, even if you don't agree. Be willing to hear them out. Don't be critical.

Look to collaborate. Look to come to some kind of a compromise, or agree to disagree if you can. But, you know, go in in a positive way. The goal is, in every difficult conversation, the bottom-line goal is to maintain the quality of the relationship. And so let's not go in trying to win because, then, you might end up getting an argument and say something that you disagree because your goal was to win the point and not to maintain the relationship.

That's why I lost the relationship with that young woman colleague 20 years ago because my goal was to put her in her place. My goal was not to have a civil conversation with her. Even though what she did was wrong, the way I responded to it was wrong as well, and two wrongs don't make a right. And so I learned from that. It wasn't worth losing the relationship with that employee just to, you know, go in there and tell her off. That was-- it was ineffective, and I learned from it.

So try to be as positive as you can, going in. The goal, again, is to maintain the quality of the relationship afterwards, rather than trying to win the point or put the other person in their place.

And then last, but not least, and I think it's really, really important, again, to maintain the quality of a relationship, to disagree agreeably. There's a lot of research in the field of marriage counseling. And if you think about this, if an employee quits like that employee went away because she didn't like working for me anymore, back then, if an employee quits, it's almost like a divorce. It's almost like someone walking out of a relationship going, I don't want to be with you anymore.

And so it was interesting, the marriage conflict research that I want to-- I wanted to share with you folks is psychologists have put people in a room and simulated disagreements and arguments. And based on how the couple disagreed, not the fact that they did disagree because everyone disagrees and has conflict like we talked about at the beginning today, but how they disagreed would help the psychologist predict with a 95% accuracy in a longitudinal study which of those marriages would last for the long term versus which would end up in divorce.

The ones that they could predict would almost always end up in divorce, was when people got into disagreements in a negative way. They were disrespectful to each other. They were yelling at each other. They were calling names. They wouldn't listen to one another. They just were, you know, they were argumentative, defensive. And so based on the way that people argue, that's the key.

And so that's one of the biggest areas that I think I've practiced over the years, now, and I haven't arrived there. I mean, I'm still human, and sometimes I get upset and i have to struggle to manage my emotions. But one of the areas that I've been able to practice more over the years is when I'm upset, staying aware of when I'm upset and going into a conversation, just being careful to be respectful. Even though, right now, I feel like bite my tongue, right, because, you know, I'm feeling strong emotion, but to just go in and be careful and manage my emotions.

And so, again, the bottom line, always be respectful, even if you don't agree. I mean, the goal is you want that employee coming out of that conversation with you, even if they didn't get what they wanted, even if you had to say no or you had to correct their performance, whatever the case may be. Because we're going to have difficult conversations with employees, sometimes. It comes with the territory. But you want the employee going away saying, I don't like what the boss had to say, but they treated me respectfully. That's the bottom line. We want to maintain the quality of that relationship after that.

And show that the employee some empathy. Remember, the other half of emotional intelligence, not only do we want to manage our own emotions so it doesn't get in our way in a conversation, but we want to be sensitive to how other people are feeling. And if someone's walking away upset, tell them. You know, I'm-- I can understand how you're feeling, I know you didn't get the answer you wanted to hear today, and I can tell that that you're upset by that, and I want you to know that I understand and I don't blame you for feeling that way and I'm sorry I couldn't give you a different answer. But show, you know, show empathy. Show the employee that you care about-- you care about the fact that they're struggling or they're or they're having hard feelings or whatever the case may be.

All right, folks, now I know we've covered a lot in a very short period of time. There's a couple of books I want to recommend, Henry Cloud and John Townsend. Henry Cloud is the psychologist I quoted at the beginning, has a great book called *Boundaries.* And then *Crucial Conversations* by Kerry Patterson and several other authors is another great book about having difficult conversations more successfully.

But let's go ahead, folks, let me go ahead and open it up for questions. If you have any questions, feel free to type your questions into the Question box in the GoToWebinar software. And we've got about 10 minutes or so for questions, this afternoon.

All right, here's someone saying that they missed a chunk of the presentation for a phone call they had to take-- I understand, no problem at all-- and wanting to know if the could hear this again. By all means. We recorded this presentation, and the PowerPoint slides are also available.

So if you'd like the link to the recording to listen to it again, or if you'd like a copy of the PowerPoint slides, please feel free to hit Reply to your GoToWebinar invitation for today. And then just tell our staff that you'd like a copy the slides for the-- link or where the PowerPoint slides. We'd be happy to send them to you.

All right, next question is? All right, as managers, our charge is to get work achieved through others. I totally agree. If keeping positive and maintaining the goal of a positive relationship, how do you navigate the requirement to get the work done when being nice gives room for the employees to dissent or continued bad behavior?

I can absolutely understand you asking this question, for sure. And I've had these same thoughts, myself. Let me take a step back and redefine nice. I'm not necessarily making-- talking about making nice or, you know, being nice nice or those kind of-- terms that we use about someone trying to just make nice in a conversation, don't have conflict, make nice, I'm not really-- I'm talking about something a little bit different than that.

What I'm talking about is being respectful when you have hard conversations. So if someone's performing badly, be honest that their performance is not up to snuff. But there's a difference between calling someone in and being really terse with them to say you know this report's unacceptable. And I think we've all been talked to by an authority figure in that way at one point or another. This is unacceptable, and you need to take this back, and you need to do this, this, and this, and I need it on my desk by tomorrow.

That would be going in with some-- with an edge or with some anger. That wouldn't be necessarily going in respectful. If you say that same thing using a more respectful tone, to say-- bring the person in and to say, hey, you know, I've got a concern I have to share with you, the quality of the report you turned in this month is not up to par, and most of your reports are usually pretty good, pretty high quality, so I was surprised. What happened?

And, again, giving the employee the benefit the doubt, maybe they're busy, maybe something's going on at home. Then let's say the employee says, you know what? I'm sorry. I just couldn't spend as much time this month. I had too much on my plate.

And then what I would say again, calmly and respectfully is, I understand that, and I've had months like that too when I got too much on my plate, but these reports are still important. And so I need you to take this back and get it back up to the level that you normally turn these reports in. You have to understand, these reports also go to my boss, and so they have to be high quality. They're very important to her as well. And so, if I give you another day, can-- you know, would you be able to get the report back up or what could you do to get the report back up to the level that you normally turn in?

So, again, you're still holding the person accountable, but it's, again, it's not what you're saying, it's how you're saying it. You're saying it in a way that, hopefully, they receive as respectful, so I hope that helps.

All right, next question. That was a great question. Thank you.

Someone asked for me to go back to the bibliography, which I just did. Let's see.

I've got a couple more questions here, folks. I'm trying to read through. Thank you for your patience. Oh, here's a good question.

All right, what do you do when you have an employee that really does not treat you with respect, and you don't have the authority to deliver strong consequences? That's a good question. There was actually two questions here, but I'm going to just-- I'm going to address the first part of this because I want to be clear about this because it's a great question. Thank you for asking it.

All right, so again, what do you do when you have an employee who really when an employee really does not treat you with respect, but you don't have the authority to deliver strong consequences? That's great. That's a great question

So, again, when we have a difficult conversation, so if someone's disrespecting you, let me give you the example. Let me go back and share how I should have handled that difficult conversation with that young employee 20 years ago. OK. So she did something very disrespectful. Again, it doesn't matter what, but if she had spoken about me, you know, to a third party, and it was very disrespectful. And I was her direct supervisor, and I think most of you would agree, we shouldn't be saying speaking disrespectfully about our boss to other people. If you have an issue with your boss, you should go and talk to your boss. I think we'd all probably agree with that.

And, so, you know, I really felt like she was being disrespectful to me. But because I went in angry, it just, it wasn't received. And so what I needed to have done was to go have a calm conversation with her, so first of all, waiting till I was calmer.

But I needed to be honest with her, that the way you treated me here by, you know, by talking about me to someone else, I mean that's not respectful. I mean, and I don't, and I don't appreciate that, and I need to know why. Why would you feel like you could go and say some negative things about me to you know to one of my colleagues? Why would you do that? I want to understand. I want to have a good relationship with you, would be the way I would approach something like that.

And so, in your situation, if I'm reading this question right, is if you feel like this person doesn't treat you with respect, and they've done something that makes you-- that upsets you, I still-- I would still, I would say you have every right, whether or not you have the authority to apply consequences, you have every right to have a conversation with that person to share that this is what I've heard or, no, this is how you've been treating me, and I don't feel like it's respectful.

And I'm uncomfortable with it. Can I ask, why? We should always give people the benefit of the doubt and ask them why. Why are you treating me that way? It feels very disrespectful, and I'm upset about it. But remember, do it in a calm way. It's not what you say, it's how you say it.

And then let's say the employee comes back and says, well, you know, I don't really feel like I report to you. Yeah, you're a supervisor, but I feel like I really report to the department head, and I don't feel like I owe you that same respect that I owe him.

I'll say to that person, all right, I understand how you feel, but the supervisor, the department head has made me responsible, you know, to oversee your deliverables, and you know that. And so, you know, even though you don't, you may not respect that that's a responsibility he's given me, it-- I mean, I have to carry this out.

I've got the directive from the department head. I need to review your work before it gets submitted. I know you don't like it, it's obvious, but talk to me for a minute. What? You know, he's not going to change his mind. I just talked to him about it again today. He wants me to review your work before you submit it.

So what could we do in the way we interact together that would enable you to respect that I need to do this, that this is a directive from our department head? I need to do this. You know, how could you get-- I mean, is there any way you could get comfortable with that? I know it's not your choice, but, I mean, I've got to carry this out. And so I need to know that I can count on you to help me to carry this out. It's a directive from the department head.

And so, sometimes, it's just a matter of having a calm conversation that's direct with someone, and give them an opportunity to, you know, we never want to tell them how to fix it, but you have every right to confront someone calmly, right, to say, I felt like you disrespected me or I felt, when you did this, I felt that that was not appropriate or I felt like the work is not up to par. And what can you do to get it back up to that level, or what can you do? What could you do next time to be more respectful to me when you've got strong feelings like this?

I think it's real. I mean, it's always appropriate to have the conversation. But, again, it comes down to how we have those conversations. They're hard to have, and it takes practice. Nowadays, I'm a lot better at it, and I haven't arrived yet. I still struggle, you know, when I'm upset about something because I still have emotions like everyone else does. But I've gotten better at practicing calming myself down, going in, being honest about how I feel, as calmly as possible, and giving the employee an opportunity to explain why they acted the way they acted, and then to be clear that this needs to change, and then ask them, what could you do to change that.

I mean, that's sort of a process. That's an effective way to have that conversation, you know, in a way that the employee should be more responsive to. Thank you for that. We've got time, folks, for one last question.

All right, here's another really good one. I like this. You guys are asking great questions today. How do you respond to employees who never let you finish, and always want to interrupt you constantly before you even finish? That's a great question. And that, again, is-- you know, that's a-- the other-- that's how, again, an example of how we need to handle an employee who's interacting in a disrespectful way.

Someone interrupting you is, that's disrespectful behavior. And so, again, is I would stay really calm, and let's say I'm trying to explain something to the employee, and employee cuts me off. I'd stay really calm, and I'd try to explain again. Let's say they cut me off a second time.

Now, what I'm going to say the employee is, now, please, I've tried to finish my sentence twice, now, and you've interrupted me both times. And I just-- and I just want to share with you, I'm not comfortable with you interrupting me. I mean, it's-- I'm not interrupting you. I need you to let me finish. I mean, I'm perfectly willing to hear you out, you know, once you let me finish my statement. I definitely want to hear your thought about that. But, please, I need you to be respectful here and to hear me out. Please let me finish.

And so, again, it's a matter of staying calm and a matter of putting up a boundary like that, and, you know, just trying to manage to it. It's not easy. These are tough things to do, particularly when we're upset. The most-- the wild card in difficult conversations is our emotion. If we're upset, if we're angry, if we're really resentful, really upset, feeling really hurt, it's hard to stay calm and talk through this in some of the ways that I've been suggesting when you're really, really upset.

That's why it's important to try to calm yourself as best as you can before you have those conversations. If you can go in calmer, you have a better chance to be able to have the interaction in a way that-- that's going to-- where the words are going to flow in a way that the other person's more willing to accept it, and hopefully willing to work with you on it.

Because, of course, we can't control how they respond to us. We can only control how we present the information, so, and how we treat them. But as long as we're taking the high road and being respectful to the other person, oftentimes, the other will calm down a little bit and get respectful back. Not always, but sometimes.

All right, folks, I know we covered a lot in a very short period of time. I do want to remind you again that Deer Oaks EAP Services, we are the Employee Assistance Program for all of you on the call today. And so EAP Services is now, during this pandemic, of course, we still are providing great EAP services. Our help line's still being answered 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year.

We can still provide counseling services, even though we're not providing face-to-face counseling, right now, because it's not safe to do so, we can still provide counseling to you and your family members telephonically, via video chat, and so that we still have ways that we can provide support. And then we also do a lot of-- can provide a lot of other resources for you and your family, financial consultations, and all those kinds of things. And so if you need to know how to reach your EAP program, reach out your HR team, and ask them for the 24-hour help line for Deer Oaks EAP Program .

All right, folks, again, I want to thank you for being with me today. I appreciate your time very much. Please continue to stay safe and healthy out there, and I'm looking forward to hopefully being with you on another webinar here in the near future. Thanks, everybody. Have a great rest of the day.