

Notebook - Radical Candor: Fully Revised & Updated Edition

kindle

Scott, Kim

Page x | Highlight

the term “Radical Candor” was, perhaps, being conflated with Manipulative Insincerity and Obnoxious Aggression in the workplace.

Page x | Highlight

“The Asshole’s Journey: From Obnoxious Aggression to Manipulative Insincerity.”)

Page x | Highlight

some people were using Radical Candor as a license to behave like jerks, conflating Obnoxious Aggression and Manipulative Insincerity with Radical Candor.

Page xi | Highlight

The idea that bosses should use their power to behave like bullies is old and banal, not new and radical.

Page xi | Highlight

collaboration and innovation flourish when human relationships replace bullying and bureaucracy.

Page xii | Highlight

That is what happens in Ruinous Empathy—you’re so fixated on not hurting a person’s feelings in the moment that you don’t tell them something they’d be better off knowing in the long run.

Page xiii | Highlight

“Healthy emotional empathy makes for a more caring world. It can nurture social connection, concern, and insight. But unregulated emotional empathy can be the source of distress and

burnout; it can also lead to withdrawal and moral apathy. Empathy is not compassion. Connection, resonance, and concern might not lead to action. But empathy is a component of compassion, and a world without healthy empathy, I believe, is a world devoid of felt connection and puts us all in peril.”

Page xiii | Highlight

The Art of Happiness. It’s about the teachings of the Dalai Lama ... [who] explains it this way: picture yourself walking along a mountainous trail. You come across a person being crushed by a boulder on their chest. The empathetic response would be to feel the same sense of crushing suffocation, thus rendering you helpless. The compassionate response would be to recognize that that person is in pain and to do everything within your power to remove the boulder and alleviate their suffering. Put another way, compassion is empathy plus action.”

Page xiii | Highlight

Compassionate Candor engages the heart (care personally) and the mind (challenge directly). Unfortunately, the term “Radical Candor” doesn’t communicate that to everyone.

Page xiii | Highlight

“Relationships are core to your job. If you think that you can [fulfill your responsibilities as a manager] without strong relationships, you are kidding yourself.

Page xvi | Highlight

how we can use Radical Candor to build stamina for real conversations

Page xvi | Highlight

Because Obnoxious Aggression is more effective than Ruinous Empathy, that kind of behavior has an advantage; people who behave badly begin to win, rising in the company.

Page xvi | Highlight

a culture in which caring personally and challenging directly go hand in hand.

Page xx | Highlight

the difficult but necessary part of being a boss: telling people clearly and directly when their work wasn't good enough. I failed to create a climate in which people who weren't getting the job done were told so in time to fix it.

Page xxiii | Highlight

It didn't make any sense to label this conversation "nice" or "mean," "rude" or "polite." It was productive and collaborative. It was free. It was driving to the best answer.

Page xxiv | Highlight

"manager fix-it weeks" and carefully designed "manager feedback sessions."

Page xxiv | Highlight

"We want to defy the gravitational pull of organizational mediocrity

Page xxv | Highlight

defying "the gravitational pull of organizational mediocrity."

Page xxvi | Highlight

A colleague shared an anecdote about interviewing with Steve that illustrated why this was the case. My colleague asked Jobs several perfectly reasonable questions: "How do you envision building the team? How big will the team be?" Steve's curt response: "Well, if I knew the answer to all those questions, then I wouldn't need you, would I?"

Page xxvi | Highlight

"At Apple we hire people to tell us what to do, not the other way around."

Page xxvi | Highlight

At Apple, as at Google, a boss's ability to achieve results had a lot more to do with listening and

seeking to understand than it did with telling people what to do; more to do with debating than directing; more to do with pushing people to decide than with being the decider; more to do with persuading than with giving orders; more to do with learning than with knowing.

Page xxvi | Highlight

a video of Steve explaining his approach to giving criticism. He captured something very important: “You need to do that in a way that does not call into question your confidence in their abilities but leaves not too much room for interpretation ... and that’s a hard thing to do.” He went on to say, “I don’t mind being wrong. And I’ll admit that I’m wrong a lot. It doesn’t really matter to me too much. What matters to me is that we do the right thing.”³ Amen! Who could argue with that?

Page xxix | Highlight

no matter how supportive the environment, bosses often feel alone.

Page xxx | Highlight

It’s scary to be Radically Candid with those who look like us. It’s scarier when people look different, speak a different language, or practice a different religion. We are all more likely to be “ruinously empathetic” or “obnoxiously aggressive” or “manipulatively insincere” toward people who are different from us. Learning how to push ourselves and others past this discomfort, to relate to our shared humanity, can make a huge difference.

Page 4 | Highlight

“Is my job to build a great company,” I asked, “or am I really just some sort of emotional babysitter?” Leslie, a fiercely opinionated ex-Microsoft executive, could barely contain herself. “This is not babysitting,” she said. “It’s called management, and it is your job!”

Page 4 | Highlight

Every time I feel I have something more “important” to do than listen to people, I remember Leslie’s words: “It is your job!”

Page 4 | Highlight

We undervalue the “emotional labor” of being the boss.

Page 5 | Highlight

Regardless of who asks the questions, they tend to reveal an underlying anxiety: many people feel they aren’t as good at management as they are at the “real” part of the job. Often, they fear they are failing the people who report to them.

Page 6 | Highlight

Ultimately, though, bosses are responsible for results. They achieve these results not by doing all the work themselves but by guiding the people on their teams. Bosses guide a team to achieve results.

Page 6 | Highlight

three areas of responsibility that managers do have: guidance, team-building, and results.

Page 6 | Highlight

Guidance is often called “feedback.” People dread feedback. They dread getting it, both the praise, which can feel patronizing, and especially the criticism. They dread giving it. What if the person gets defensive? Starts to yell? Threatens to sue? Bursts into tears?

Page 6 | Highlight

Building a cohesive team means figuring out the right people for the right roles: hiring, firing, promoting. But once you’ve got the right people in the right jobs, how do you keep them motivated?

Page 6 | Highlight

Many managers are perpetually frustrated that it seems harder than it should be to get things done. We just doubled the size of the team, but the results are not twice as good. In fact, they are worse.

Page 6 | Highlight

Sometimes things move too slowly: the people who work for me would debate forever if I let them. Why can't they make a decision?

Page 7 | Highlight

the central difficulty of management that Ryan hit on: establishing a trusting relationship with each person who reports directly to you.

Page 7 | Highlight

If you lead a big organization, you can't have a relationship with everyone; but you can really get to know the people who report directly to you.

Page 7 | Highlight

three responsibilities as a manager: 1) to create a culture of guidance (praise and criticism) that will keep everyone moving in the right direction; 2) to understand what motivates each person on your team well enough to avoid burnout or boredom and keep the team cohesive; and 3) to drive results collaboratively.

Page 8 | Highlight

You strengthen your relationships by learning the best ways to get, give, and encourage guidance; by putting the right people in the right roles on your team; and by achieving results collectively that you couldn't dream of individually.

Page 9 | Highlight

The first dimension is about being more than "just professional." It's about giving a damn, sharing more than just your work self, and encouraging everyone who reports to you to do the same. It's not enough to care only about people's ability to perform a job. To have a good relationship, you have to be your whole self and care about each of the people who work for you as a human being. It's not just business; it is personal, and deeply personal. I call this dimension "Care Personally."

Page 9 | Highlight

The second dimension involves telling people when their work isn't good enough—and when it is; when they are not going to get that new role they wanted, or when you're going to hire a new boss "over" them; when the results don't justify further investment in what they're working on. Delivering hard feedback, making hard calls about who does what on a team, and holding a high bar for results— isn't that obviously the job of any manager?

Page 9 | Highlight

Challenging people generally pisses them off, and at first that doesn't seem like a good way to build a relationship or to show that you "care personally." And yet challenging people is often the best way to show them that you care when you're the boss. This dimension I call "Challenge Directly."

Page 9 | Highlight

"Radical Candor" is what happens when you put "Care Personally" and "Challenge Directly" together.

Page 9 | Highlight

It turns out that when people trust you and believe you care about them, they are much more likely to 1) accept and act on your praise and criticism; 2) tell you what they really think about what you are doing well and, more importantly, not doing so well; 3) engage in this same behavior with one another, meaning less pushing the rock up the hill again and again; 4) embrace their role on the team; and 5) focus on getting results.

Page 10 | Highlight

Implicit with candor is that you're simply offering your view of what's going on and that you expect people to offer theirs.

Page 10 | Highlight

You fear people will become angry or vindictive; instead they are usually grateful for the chance to talk it through.

Page 11 | Highlight

why some people live productively and joyfully while others feel, as Marx put it, alienated from their labor—was central to a boss’s job.

Page 12 | Highlight

Part of the reason why people fail to “care personally” is the injunction to “keep it professional.”

Page 12 | Highlight

We are all human beings, with human feelings, and, even at work, we need to be seen as such.

Page 12 | Highlight

“Bring your whole self to work.”

Page 12 | Highlight

modeling the behavior yourself by showing some vulnerability to the people who report to you—or just admitting when you’re having a bad day—and creating a safe space for others to do the same.

Page 12 | Highlight

people consciously or unconsciously begin to feel they’re better or smarter than the people who work for them. That attitude makes it impossible to be a kick-ass boss; it just makes people want to kick your ass.

Page 12 | Highlight

There are few things more damaging to human relationships than a sense of superiority.

Page 12 | Highlight

being a boss is a job, not a value judgment.

Page 13 | Highlight

Caring personally is about doing things you already know how to do. It's about acknowledging that we are all people with lives and aspirations that extend beyond those related to our shared work. It's about finding time for real conversations; about getting to know each other at a human level; about learning what's important to people; about sharing with one another what makes us want to get out of bed in the morning and go to work—and what has the opposite effect.

Page 13 | Highlight

you must also care deeply about people while being prepared to be hated in return.

Page 14 | Highlight

The source of everything respectable in man either as an intellectual or as a moral being [is] that his errors are corrigible. He is capable of rectifying his mistakes, by discussion and experience. Not by experience alone. There must be discussion, to show how experience is to be interpreted.

Page 14 | Highlight

being responsible sometimes means pissing people off.

Page 14 | Highlight

if nobody is ever mad at you, you probably aren't challenging your team enough.

Page 14 | Highlight

The key, as in any relationship, is how you handle the anger.

Page 14 | Highlight

caring personally about people even as you challenge them will build the best relationships of your career.

Page 15 | Highlight

Jerry Maguire clip. In the movie, Jerry and his client Rod get in a big argument, and the punch line features Rod telling Jerry, “See, that’s the difference between us—you think we’re fightin’, and I think we’re finally talkin’!”

Page 15 | Highlight

Challenging people directly takes real energy—not only from the people you’re challenging but from you as well. So do it only for things that really matter. A good rule of thumb for any relationship is to leave three unimportant things unsaid each day.

Page 16 | Highlight

Radical Candor is not a hierarchical thing. To be Radically Candid, you need to practice it “up,” “down,” and “sideways.”

Page 16 | Highlight

get measured at the listener’s ear, not at the speaker’s mouth.

Page 16 | Highlight

Radical Candor works only if the other person understands that your efforts at caring personally and challenging directly are delivered in good faith.

Page 18 | Highlight

be “politely persistent.”

Page 21 | Highlight

You are one of the smartest people I know, but saying ‘um’ so much makes you sound stupid.”

Page 21 | Highlight

change their approach to guidance—both praise and criticism.

Page 21 | Highlight

There are two dimensions to good guidance: care personally and challenge directly.

Page 22 | Highlight

don't personalize. The names of each quadrant refer to guidance, not to personality traits.

Page 22 | Highlight

They are not to be used to label people. Labeling hinders improvement.

Page 23 | Highlight

"It's not mean. It's clear!"

Page 23 | Highlight

Radically Candid praise "I admire that about you"

Page 24 | Highlight

Radically Candid criticism To keep winning, criticize the wins

Page 24 | Highlight

The secret to winning, he said, is to point out to great players what they could have done better, even when they have just won a game. Especially when they have just won a game.

Page 25 | Highlight

WHEN YOU CRITICIZE someone without taking even two seconds to show you care, your guidance feels obnoxiously aggressive to the recipient. I regret to say that if you can't be Radically Candid, being obnoxiously aggressive is the second best thing you can do. At least then people know what you think and where they stand, so your team can achieve results. This explains the advantage that assholes seem to have in the world.

Page 25 | Highlight

most people would rather work for a “competent asshole” than a “nice incompetent.”

Page 25 | Highlight

it’s the fear of being labeled a jerk that pushes many people toward Manipulative Insincerity or Ruinous Empathy

Page 25 | Highlight

When bosses belittle employees, embarrass them publicly, or freeze them out, their behavior falls into this quadrant.

Page 26 | Highlight

When bosses criticize others to humiliate them rather than to help them improve, or permit personalized attacks among team members, or discourage praise as “babysitting people’s egos,” their behavior feels obnoxiously aggressive to the people around him.

Page 26 | Highlight

The worst kind of Obnoxious Aggression happens when one person really understands another’s vulnerabilities and then targets them, either for sport or to assert dominance.

Page 26 | Highlight

and that peers view one another as enemy combatants. When this is the toxic culture of guidance, criticism is a weapon rather than a tool for improvement; it makes the giver feel powerful and the receiver feel awful.

Page 26 | Highlight

Obnoxiously aggressive criticism Front-stabbing

Page 26 | Highlight

Blaming people's internal essence rather than their external behavior leaves no room for change.

Page 27 | Highlight

Because I had already dismissed Ned as an asshole, and therefore deemed him not worth talking to. So I was making the fundamental attribution error, and my behavior was "manipulatively insincere."

Page 27 | Highlight

I wasn't really thinking of Larry as a human being. I saw him as a kind of demigod whom I could attack with impunity.

Page 28 | Highlight

And worst of all, I personalized. I should have been talking about the AdSense policy, but instead I attacked Larry's character, implicitly accusing him of being greedy and hypocritical.

Page 28 | Highlight

Obnoxiously aggressive praise Belittling compliments

Page 30 | Highlight

MANIPULATIVELY INSINCERE GUIDANCE happens when you don't care enough about a person to challenge directly.

Page 30 | Highlight

People give praise and criticism that is manipulatively insincere when they are too focused on being liked or think they can gain some sort of political advantage by being fake—or when they are just too tired to care or argue any more.

Page 30 | Highlight

it's an attempt to push the other person's emotional buttons in return for some personal gain.

Page 30 | Highlight

When you are overly worried about how people will perceive you, you're less willing to say what needs to be said.

Page 31 | Highlight

Manipulatively insincere praise The false apology

Page 32 | Highlight

THERE'S A RUSSIAN anecdote about a guy who has to amputate his dog's tail but loves him so much that he cuts it off an inch each day, rather than all at once.

Page 32 | Highlight

Ruinous Empathy is responsible for the vast majority of management mistakes I've seen in my career.

Page 32 | Highlight

Bosses rarely intend to ruin an employee's chance of success or to handicap the entire team by letting poor performance slide. And yet that is often the net result of Ruinous Empathy.

Page 33 | Highlight

Ruinously empathetic praise "Just trying to say something nice"

Page 33 | Highlight

when giving praise, investigate until you really understand who did what and why it was so great. Be as specific and thorough with praise as with criticism. Go deep into the details.

Page 33 | Highlight

Start by getting feedback, in other words, not by dishing it out.

Page 34 | Highlight

Start by asking for criticism, not by giving it Don't dish it out before you show you can take it

Page 34 | Highlight

out ill-conceived emails like the one I sent to Larry. Third, the more firsthand experience you have with how it feels to receive criticism, the better idea you'll have of how your own guidance lands for others.

Page 34 | Highlight

If you see somebody criticizing a peer inappropriately, say something. But if somebody criticizes you inappropriately, your job is to listen with the intent to understand and then to reward the candor.

Page 35 | Highlight

"What could I do or stop doing that would make your lives better?"

Page 35 | Highlight

Toyota's leaders painted a big red square on the assembly line floor. New employees had to stand in it at the end of their first week, and they were not allowed to leave until they had criticized at least three things on the line.

Page 35 | Highlight

Balance praise and criticism Worry more about praise, less about criticism—but above all be sincere

Page 35 | Highlight

We learn more from our mistakes than our successes, more from criticism than from praise.

Page 36 | Highlight

the notion of a “right” ratio between praise and criticism is dangerous, because it can lead you to say things that are unnatural, insincere, or just plain ridiculous

Page 36 | Highlight

Other people just aren't in the habit of giving praise. If I'm not firing you, it means you're doing fine.

Page 36 | Highlight

When I am criticizing, I try to be less nervous, and focus on “just saying it.” If I think too much about how to say it I'm likely to wimp out and say nothing. And when I am praising, I try to be at least aware of how praise can go wrong, and put more energy into thinking about how to say it.

Page 36 | Highlight

“How long do you spend making sure you have all the facts right before you criticize somebody? How long do you spend making sure you have all the facts right before you praise somebody?”

Page 36 | Highlight

Understand the perilous border between Obnoxious Aggression and Radical Candor “Your work is shit”

Page 37 | Highlight

The most important thing I think you can do for somebody who's really good and who's really being counted on is to point out to them when they're not—when their work isn't good enough. And to do it very clearly and to articulate why ... and to get them back on track.

Page 38 | Highlight

“to do it very clearly and to articulate why ... and to get them back on track.”

Page 38 | Highlight

You need to do that in a way that does not call into question your confidence in their abilities but leaves not too much room for interpretation ... and that's a hard thing to do.

Page 38 | Highlight

Second, it might be the case, particularly when you're dealing with highly accomplished people, that you have to go to some extremes to break through their tendency to filter out critical messages.

Page 39 | Highlight

Everyone must find their own way to criticize people without discouraging them.

Page 39 | Highlight

JOB: I don't mind being wrong. And I'll admit that I'm wrong a lot. It doesn't really matter to me too much. What matters to me is that we do the right thing.

Page 39 | Highlight

Think of a simple example “Your fly is down”

Page 39 | Highlight

When you're faced with telling a person something that will be extremely hard to hear, pretend you're just saying, “Your fly is down,” or “You have spinach in your teeth.”

Page 41 | Highlight

That's why Kim Vorrath, a leader on the iOS team at Apple that built the software for the iPhone, gave this simple advice about criticism: “Just say it!”

Page 41 | Highlight

When confronted with somebody who is really upset, really angry, or shutting down, most people retreat to Ruinous Empathy.

Page 41 | Highlight

From the moment you learned to speak, you started to challenge those around you. Then you were told some version of “If you don’t have anything nice to say, don’t say anything at all.” Well, now it’s your job to say it. And if you are a boss or a person in a position of some authority, it’s not just your job. It’s your moral obligation. Just say it!

Page 43 | Highlight

In order to build a great team, you need to understand how each person’s job fits into their life goals. You need to get to know each person who reports directly to you, to have real, human relationships—relationships that change as people change.

Page 43 | Highlight

When putting the right people in the right roles on your team, you’ll also have to challenge people even more directly than you did with guidance—and in a way that will impact not just their feelings but also their income, their career growth, and their ability to get what they want out of life. Building a team is hard.

Page 44 | Highlight

Rock stars are solid as a rock. Think the Rock of Gibraltar, not Bruce Springsteen. The rock stars love their work. They have found their groove. They don’t want the next job if it will take them away from their craft.

Page 44 | Highlight

Superstars, on the other hand, need to be challenged and given new opportunities to grow constantly.

Page 45 | Highlight

Unfortunately, for too long I believed that pushing everybody to grow super-fast was simply “best practice” for building a high-performing team. I was always looking for the best, the brightest, the brashest, and the most ambitious.

Page 46 | Highlight

Instead of asking an implicitly judgmental question like, “Is this a person with high or low potential?” we encouraged managers to ask themselves questions like, “What growth trajectory does each person on my team want to be on right now?”

Page 46 | Highlight

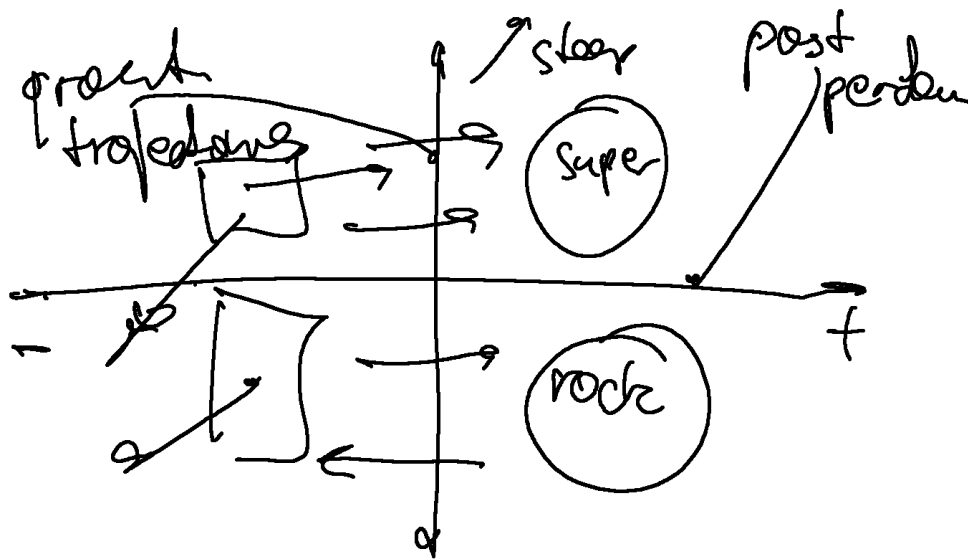
This set of questions around growth trajectory can help you discover what motivates each person much better than a set of questions around “potential” or “talent” could.

Page 47 | Highlight

SHIFTING FROM A traditional “talent management” mind-set to one of “growth management” will help you make sure everyone on your team is moving in the direction of their dreams, ensuring that your team collectively improves over time. Creativity flourishes, efficiency improves, people enjoy working together.

Page 47 | Highlight

manage the two different types of high performers—those on a steep growth trajectory and those on a more gradual growth trajectory—differently.

**Page 48 | Highlight**

understand what growth trajectory each person wants to be on at a given time and whether that matches the needs and opportunities of the team.

Page 48 | Highlight

The axes of this framework are past performance and future growth trajectories.

Page 48 | Highlight

Rock stars are just as important to a team's performance as superstars. Stability is just as important as growth.

Page 48 | Highlight

useful to consider both their results and more intangible things like "teamwork."

Page 48 | Highlight

Performance is not a permanent label. No person is always an "excellent performer." They just

| performed excellently last quarter.

Page 48 | Highlight

| The past is much easier to understand than the future. The future is best described by each person's current "growth trajectory."

Page 48 | Highlight

| TO BE SUCCESSFUL at growth management, you need to find out what motivates each person on your team.

Page 48 | Highlight

| Only when you get to know your direct reports well enough to know why they care about their work, what they hope to get out of their careers, and where they are in the present moment in time can you put the right people in the right roles and assign the right projects to the right people.

Page 49 | Highlight

| Nor should steep growth be thought of as narrowly as "promotion." It's about having an increased impact over time.

Page 49 | Highlight

| Gradual growth is characterized by stability. People on a gradual growth trajectory, who perform well, have generally mastered their work and are making incremental rather than sudden, dramatic improvements. Some roles may be better suited to a rock star because they require steadiness, accumulated knowledge, and an attention to detail that someone in a superstar phase might not have the focus or patience for.

Page 49 | Highlight

| People in a superstar phase are bad at rock star roles, and people in a rock star phase will hate a superstar role.

Page 49 | Highlight

it's important not to put a permanent label on people.

Page 51 | Highlight

your job is not to provide purpose but instead to get to know each of your direct reports well enough to understand how each one derives meaning from their work.

Page 51 | Highlight

listen, to recognize the significance of what he heard, and to create working conditions that allowed everybody to find meaning in their own way.

Page 52 | Highlight

Be a partner, not an absentee manager or a micromanager

Page 52 | Highlight

If you don't take the time to get to know the people who get the best results, you can't understand how they want and need to be growing in their jobs at that particular moment in their lives.

Page 53 | Highlight

you want to be a partner—that is, you must take the time to help the people doing the best work overcome obstacles and make their good work even better. This is time-consuming because it requires that you know enough about the details of the person's work to understand the nuances. It often requires you to help do the work, rather than just advising. It requires that you ask a lot of questions and challenge people—that you roll up your own sleeves.

Page 53 | Highlight

Recognize, reward, but don't promote

Page 56 | Highlight

For too many bosses, “recognition” means “promotion.” But in most cases, this is a big mistake. Promotion often puts these people in roles they are not as well-suited for or don’t want.

Page 56 | Highlight

It may be a bonus or a raise.

Page 56 | Highlight

In addition to top ratings, a great way to recognize people in a rock star phase is to designate them as “gurus,” or “go-to” experts.

Page 57 | Highlight

Too many companies hire people for training whom they would never hire to do the actual job. Or, worse, rather than fire people who are not performing well in a particular role, they send them off to teach others how to do it.

Page 57 | Highlight

Generally, people who are great at a job enjoy teaching it to others; giving them this role can not only improve the performance of the whole team but also give the rock stars a different sort of recognition.

Page 59 | Highlight

PART OF BUILDING a cohesive team is to create a culture that recognizes and rewards the rock stars. I’m afraid for most of my career I treated them like second-class citizens. I’m grateful that my experiences at Apple set me straight.

Page 61 | Highlight

Keep them challenged (and figure out who’ll replace them when they move on)

Page 63 | Highlight

This points to another problem with the language used in the traditional performance-potential matrix. Often the matrix is not just analyzing “potential” but “leadership potential.” The unintended consequence of this is that whole armies of people systematically cap the careers of others who are on a steep growth trajectory but who don’t want to become managers.

Page 63 | Highlight

When management is the only path to higher compensation, the quality of management suffers, and the lives of the people who work for these reluctant managers become miserable.

Page 64 | Highlight

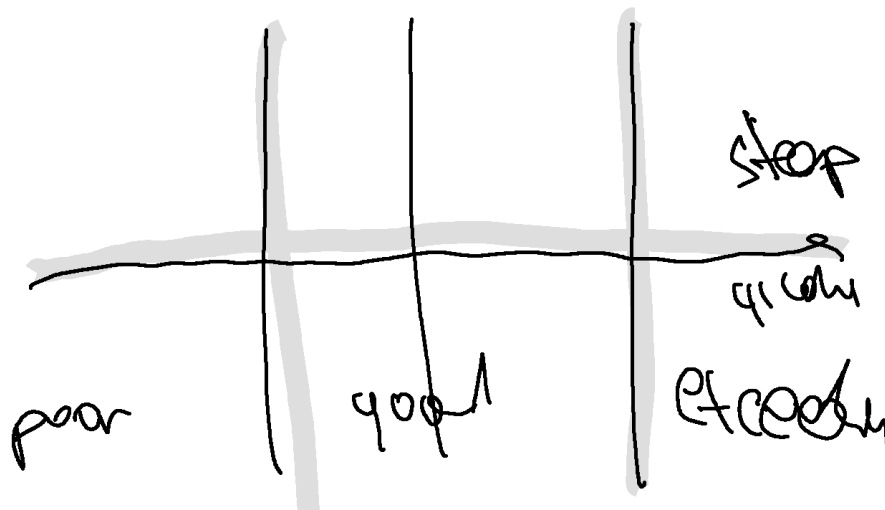
Raise the bar—there’s no such thing as a B-player

Page 64 | Highlight

I do not believe there is any such thing as a “B-player” or a mediocre human being. Everyone can be excellent at something. That’s very different from saying anyone can be good at anything—definitely not true. And this brings me to the people who just aren’t that good at a job, or are treading water.

Page 64 | Highlight

Sadly, lots of people never find work they are truly excellent at because they stay in the wrong job so long that any change would require a step or two backward.

**Page 65 | Highlight**

I believed that everyone can be exceptional somewhere and that it was my job to help them find that role.

Page 65 | Highlight

your job as the boss is to set and uphold a quality bar.

Page 65 | Highlight

Accepting mediocrity isn't good for anybody.

Page 67 | Highlight

So you need to approach firing thoughtfully and deliberately.

Page 67 | Highlight

Let's say that someone on your team, "Peggy," is terrible at her job, not getting any better, or even getting worse. Is it time to fire her? There's no absolute answer to that question, but here are three

questions to consider: have you given her Radically Candid guidance, do you understand the impact of Peggy's performance on her colleagues, and have you sought advice from others?

Page 67 | Highlight

Have you given Radically Candid guidance? Have you demonstrated to Peggy that you care personally about her work and her life, and have you been crystal clear when you have challenged her to improve? Has your praise been substantive and specific about what she has done right, rather than simply a salve to her ego? Have you been humble as well as direct in your criticism, offering to help her find solutions rather than attacking her as a person? And have you done these things on multiple occasions over the course of time?

Page 67 | Highlight

Have you sought out a second opinion, spoken to someone whom you trust and with whom you can talk the problem through? Sometimes you may think you've been clear when you haven't been.

Page 68 | Highlight

Managers almost always wait too long to fire people.

Page 69 | Highlight

Part of getting a good job is leaving a bad one, or one that's bad for you.

Page 70 | Highlight

I also try to reframe the problem, for both me and the person I'm firing: it's not the person who sucks, it's the job that sucks—at least for this person.

Page 70 | Highlight

Wrong role Sometimes you will put a great person into the wrong job. That is why I call this the "look at yourself in the mirror" quadrant—if you put somebody in the wrong role, their poor performance is actually your fault. When this is the case, you want to put the person in a better role.

Page 72 | Highlight

New to role; too much too fast Obviously when you hire someone who has never done a job before and they have to learn it from scratch, they sometimes take longer than expected to progress. If the person gives you reason to believe they can be great in the role, if they show signs of “spiking,” it’s worth investing more. But sometimes it isn’t that obvious.

Page 72 | Highlight

are expectations clear enough? Is the training good enough? If the problem is that you have not explained the role or the expectations clearly enough, you should invest more time to do so if you think the person can become a kick-ass employee.

Page 73 | Highlight

Other times, managers map their own capacity onto the people who work for them.

Page 73 | Highlight

Personal problems Sometimes people who have been on a tear in their careers suddenly stop performing well because they are having a personal issue.

Page 73 | Highlight

Poor fit Sometimes a person seems to be in the perfect role, given their experience and expertise, but just can’t get traction at a particular company or on a team because there is a misalignment between the culture of the group and the individual’s personality.

Page 73 | Highlight

You generally can’t fix a cultural-fit issue.

Page 73 | Highlight

People change, and you have to change with them

Page 74 | Highlight

with the performance ratings “off quarter,” “solid quarter,” and “exceptional quarter.”

Page 74 | Highlight

Care personally; don't put people in boxes and leave them there.

Page 75 | Highlight

TELLING PEOPLE WHAT TO DO DIDN'T WORK AT GOOGLE

Page 75 | Highlight

achieve collaboratively what you could never achieve individually,

Page 76 | Highlight

If you want your team to achieve something bigger than you could achieve alone, if you want to “burst the bounds of your brain,” you have to care about the people you are working with. You'll get more done if you take the time to incorporate their thinking into yours, and yours into theirs.

Page 76 | Highlight

when the numbers went in the wrong direction there was a collective sense of guilt, rather than a clear plan to fix the problem, since nobody was accountable for any one thing.

Page 76 | Highlight

operated less like a soccer team of seven-year-olds: all of us chasing the ball, none of us in position.

Page 79 | Highlight

proud of having built a team that would stand up to him.

Page 79 | Highlight

“I didn’t say Steve is always right. I said he always gets it right. Like anyone, he is wrong sometimes, but he insists, and not gently either, that people tell him when he’s wrong, so he always gets it right in the end.”

Page 80 | Highlight

“But this was your idea,” said my colleague. “Yes, and it was your job to convince me I was wrong,” Steve replied, “and you failed!”

Page 81 | Highlight

the “Get Stuff Done” (GSD) wheel,

Page 81 | Highlight

avoid the impulse to dive right in, as I did

Page 81 | Highlight

lay the groundwork for collaboration.

Page 81 | Highlight

listen to the ideas that people on your team have and create a culture in which they listen to each other.

Page 81 | Highlight

create space in which ideas can be sharpened and clarified, to make sure these ideas don’t get crushed before everyone fully understands their potential usefulness.

Page 81 | Highlight

debate ideas and test them more rigorously.

Page 81 | Highlight

decide—quickly, but not too quickly. Since not everyone will have been involved in the listen-clarify-debate-decide part of the cycle for every idea, the next step is to bring the broader team along. You have to persuade those who weren't involved in a decision that it was a good one, so that everyone can execute it effectively. Then, having executed, you have to learn from the results, whether or not you did the right thing, and start the whole process over again.

Page 82 | Highlight

LISTEN “Give the quiet ones a voice.” —JONY IVE

Page 82 | Highlight

a manager's most important role is to “give the quiet ones a voice.”

Page 83 | Highlight

You have to find a way to listen that fits your personal style, and then create a culture in which everyone listens to each other, so that all the burden of listening doesn't fall on you.

Page 83 | Highlight

Quiet listening Tim Cook, Apple's CEO, is the master of silence. Before I interviewed at Apple, a friend warned me that Tim tended to allow long silences and that I shouldn't let it unnerve me or feel the need to fill them.

Page 84 | Highlight

Loud listening If quiet listening involves being silent to give people room to talk, loud listening is about saying things intended to get a reaction out of them. This was the way Steve Jobs listened. He would put a strong point of view on the table and insist on a response. Why do I call this listening, instead of talking, or even yelling? Because Steve didn't just challenge others; he insisted that they challenge him back.

Page 85 | Highlight

“strong opinions, weakly held.”

Page 85 | Highlight

expressing strong, some might say outrageous, positions with others is a good way to get to a better answer, or at least to have a more interesting conversation.

Page 85 | Highlight

“Please poke holes in this idea—I know it may be terrible. So tell me all the reasons we should not do that.”

Page 86 | Highlight

Create a culture of listening

Page 86 | Highlight

I circulated an article from Harvard Business Review (HBR) that explained how a culture that captures thousands of “small” innovations can create benefits for customers that are impossible for competitors to imitate. One big idea is pretty easy to copy, but thousands of tweaks are impossible to see from the outside, let alone imitate.³

Page 87 | Highlight

the HBR article showing how competitive advantage tends to come not from one great idea but the combination of hundreds of smaller ones.

Page 88 | Highlight

It’s so easy to lose “small” ideas in big organizations, and if you do you kill incremental innovation.

Page 88 | Highlight

Sometimes creating a culture of listening is simply a matter of managing meetings the right way.

Page 88 | Highlight

| part of my job was to constantly figure out new ways to “give the quiet ones a voice.”

Page 89 | Highlight

| a culture of listening,

Page 89 | Highlight

| As the boss, you are the editor, not the author.

Page 90 | Highlight

| while ideas ultimately can be so powerful, they begin as fragile, barely formed thoughts, so easily missed, so easily compromised, so easily just squished.”

Page 90 | Highlight

| Take the time to help your direct reports explain what they mean,

Page 90 | Highlight

| push the people on your team to clarify their thinking and ideas

Page 91 | Highlight

| when companies help people develop new ideas by creating the space and time to clarify their thinking, innovation flourishes.

Page 92 | Highlight

| you shouldn't judge the ideas but rather help your direct reports clarify their thinking.

Page 92 | Highlight

| “Whose fault was it? FDR's for not understanding, or Keynes's for not explaining it well?”

Page 93 | Highlight

Choosing what to select, what to eliminate, and what to emphasize depends not only on the idea but on the audience.

Page 93 | Highlight

The point of spending all that time in clarification mode was just to get the idea ready for a debate.

Page 93 | Highlight

If you skip the debate phase, you'll make worse decisions, you'll be unable to persuade everyone who needs to execute, and you'll ultimately slow down or grind to a halt.

Page 94 | Highlight

Keep the conversation focused on ideas not egos

Page 94 | Highlight

Nothing is a bigger time-sucker or blocker to getting it right than ego.

Page 94 | Highlight

Remind people what the goal is: to get to the best answer, as a team.

Page 95 | Highlight

Create an obligation to dissent

Page 95 | Highlight

There are times when people are just too tired, burnt out, or emotionally charged up to engage in productive debate.

Page 95 | Highlight

Your job is to intervene and call a time-out.

Page 95 | Highlight

Use humor and have fun

Page 96 | Highlight

separate debate meetings and decision meetings

Page 97 | Highlight

But a boss's job is often to keep the debate going rather than to resolve it with a decision. It's the debates at work that help individuals grow and help the team work better collectively to come up with the best answer.

Page 97 | Highlight

DECIDE Push decisions into the facts, or pull the facts into the decisions, but keep ego out

Page 99 | Highlight

he'd skipped the important steps of "listen," "clarify," "debate," and "decide" and instead gone straight to "persuade" mode.

Page 99 | Highlight

"garbage can decision-making" occurs when the people who happen to be around the table are the deciders rather than the people with the best information.

Page 99 | Highlight

most cultures tend to favor either the most senior people or the people with the kinds of personalities that insist on sitting around the table. The bad decisions that result are among the biggest drivers of organizational mediocrity and employee dissatisfaction.

Page 99 | Highlight

-ass bosses often do not decide themselves, but rather create a clear decision-making process that empowers people closest to the facts to make as many decisions as possible.

Page 100 | Highlight

The decider should get facts, not recommendations

Page 100 | Highlight

Also, when you are the decider, it's really important to go to the source of the facts. This is especially true when you're a "manager of managers."

Page 101 | Highlight

YOU'VE MANAGED TO drive your team to a decision, but there are still people who don't agree with it—the same people who will be responsible for helping to implement it.

Page 101 | Highlight

But expecting others to execute on a decision without being persuaded that it's the right thing to do is a recipe for terrible results.

Page 101 | Highlight

Even explaining the decision is not enough, because that addresses only the logic; you have to address your listener's emotions as well.

Page 101 | Highlight

Authoritarian bosses tend to be particularly weak persuaders; they don't feel a need to explain the decision or their logic—"Just do it, don't question me!" And, because they usually don't know or care how the people on the broader team feel, they don't address their emotions. They fail to establish their credibility because they expect people to do what they say simply because they're the boss.

Page 102 | Highlight

fail to be persuasive because they don't want to come across as manipulative,

Page 102 | Highlight

Aristotle's elements of rhetoric—pathos, logos, and ethos,

Page 102 | Highlight

Emotion The listener's emotions, not the speaker's

Page 104 | Highlight

Bragging doesn't work, but neither does false humility.

Page 105 | Highlight

When Steve Jobs had an idea, he wouldn't just describe the idea; he'd share how he got to it. He showed his work.

Page 105 | Highlight

EXECUTE Minimize the collaboration tax

Page 105 | Highlight

AS THE BOSS, part of your job is to take a lot of the "collaboration tax" on yourself so that your team can spend more time executing.

Page 105 | Highlight

Don't waste your team's time; Keep the "dirt under your fingernails"; and Block time to execute.

Page 105 | Highlight

She expected us to come to our 1:1s with a list of problems she could help us resolve. She'd listen,

make sure she understood, and then she was like a sapper, an explosives expert. She defused some political situations that could have blown up in my face and she dispensed with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. No unnecessary meetings, no unnecessary analysis.

Page 106 | Highlight

you need to stay connected to the actual work that is being done—not just by observing others executing but by executing yourself. If you become a conductor, you need to keep playing your instrument.

Page 106 | Highlight

you need to learn to toggle between leading and executing personally.

Page 106 | Highlight

If you get too far away from the work your team is doing, you won't understand their ideas well enough to help them clarify, to participate in debates, to know which decisions to push them to make, to teach them to be more persuasive.

Page 108 | Highlight

Drew has probably read and reread every book on management ever written.

Page 108 | Highlight

In his book Denial, Richard Tedlow writes about dozens of painful failures that have resulted when otherwise brilliant and successful people refused to see, let alone admit to, their mistakes.

Page 108 | Highlight

there were two enormous pressures that tempted me to quit learning. Pressure to be consistent. We are often told that changing our position makes us a “flip-flopper” or “erratic” or “lacking principles.” I prefer John Maynard Keynes's idea that “When the facts change, I change my mind.” The key, of course, is communication.

Page 108 | Highlight

Burnout Sometimes we're overwhelmed by our work and personal lives, and these are the moments when it is hardest to learn from our results and to start the whole cycle over again.

Page 110 | Highlight

block two hours of think-time on his calendar every day.

Page 111 | Highlight

too many good people become bad bosses, and bad bosses are a major source of unhappiness in our world and dysfunction in our workplace.

Page 111 | Highlight

relationships don't scale, culture does.

Page 112 | Highlight

There are few greater joys than doing work you love with people you care about and achieving great results.

Page 113 | Highlight

staying centered myself,

Page 113 | Highlight

Only when I was centered and my relationships were strong could I fulfill my responsibilities as a manager to guide my team to achieve the best results.

Page 114 | Highlight

STAY CENTERED You can't give a damn about others if you don't give a damn about yourself

Page 114 | Highlight

| What we bring to work depends on our own health and well-being.

Page 114 | Highlight

| managers who create a stable foundation for themselves are invariably more effective at building teams on which people can do the best work of their lives.

Page 114 | Highlight

| Hard times are made much harder when you're not at your best.

Page 114 | Highlight

| You're too busy dealing with your own suffering.

Page 115 | Highlight

| You can't give a damn about others if you don't take care of yourself. And when you don't care about yourself or those around you, everything else—including your results—gets out of whack.

Page 115 | Highlight

| Be relentlessly insistent on bringing your fullest and best self to work—and taking it back home again.

Page 115 | Highlight

| think of it as work-life integration.

Page 115 | Highlight

| Figure out your "recipe" to stay centered and stick to it

Page 115 | Highlight

It's even more important to focus on making time for whatever keeps you centered when you are stressed and busy than when things are relatively calm.

Page 116 | Highlight

Show up for yourself Don't blow off those meetings with yourself or let others schedule over them any more than you would a meeting with your boss.

Page 116 | Highlight

there can only be real trust when people feel free at work.

Page 116 | Highlight

power and control are illusory and won't get you where you really want to go. Relationships are more effective, and more satisfying.

Page 116 | Highlight

"If you have to use someone else's name or authority to get a point across, there is little merit to the point (you might not believe it yourself). If you believe something to be correct, focus on showing your work to prove it. Authority derives naturally from merit, not the other way around."

Page 117 | Highlight

you're not "getting it out of them"; you're creating the conditions for them to bring it out of themselves.

Page 117 | Highlight

In anarchy, bullies get away with optimizing for their narrow self-interest and the overall results are often nonexistent.

Page 117 | Highlight

Competing on the Edge: Strategy as Structured Chaos

Page 118 | Highlight

Sometimes even just a tiny bit of unilateral authority is enough to make people behave badly.

Page 118 | Highlight

You have to guide your team to achieve results, and to do that you're going to have to break ties and make tough decisions, often unpopular ones.

Page 119 | Highlight

open yourself up and show you care.

Page 119 | Highlight

You already spend a lot of hours every day with your colleagues and direct reports. Use that time to build relationships. For the most part, it's better to use the time after work to keep yourself centered than to socialize with work colleagues.

Page 119 | Highlight

When you do organize a social event at work, bear these warnings in mind: even non-mandatory events can feel mandatory. And booze can land you in dangerous territory.

Page 119 | Highlight

Even non-mandatory events can feel mandatory

Page 119 | Highlight

if you organize it, the social pressure will drag some people into situations they'd rather avoid.

Page 119 | Highlight

avoid those ironic moments when attempts to team-build and improve morale actually make things worse.

Page 119 | Highlight

At their off-site retreat, work-life balance was on the agenda—at 9 P.M. at night, after riding go-carts.

Page 120 | Highlight

Booze A drink or two can be a social lubricant. But it can also backfire, and badly.

Page 120 | Highlight

Building trust Building trust in any relationship takes time because trust is built on a consistent pattern of acting in good faith.

Page 121 | Highlight

Holding regular 1:1s in which your direct report sets the agenda and you ask questions is a good way to begin building trust. (See “1:1 Conversations,” chapter eight.) The way you ask for criticism and react when you get it goes a long way toward building trust—or destroying it. (See “Soliciting Impromptu Guidance,” chapter six.) Having annual “career conversations” is also an excellent way to strengthen your relationship with each person who reports directly to you (see chapter seven).

Page 121 | Highlight

The important thing to do is to stay in touch with your personal values, and to demonstrate them in how you manage your team, not by writing down things like “hard work,” “honesty,” and “innovation” on a piece of paper. Live your values. Don’t try to list them like an HR exercise from the show *The Office*.

Page 122 | Highlight

Demonstrating openness

Page 122 | Highlight

an important part of Radically Candid relationships is opening yourself to the possibility of connecting with people who have different worldviews or whose lives involve behavior that you don't understand or that may even conflict with a core belief of yours. It's possible to care personally about a person who disagrees with your views on abortion or guns or God.

Page 122 | Highlight

eliminate the phrase "you guys" from his vocabulary.

Page 123 | Highlight

spent real energy training himself to say "you all" instead of "you guys."

Page 124 | Highlight

"Interesting fact: to be most effective at optimizing the flow of the chemicals oxytocin and serotonin—which boost mood and promote bonding—hold a hug for at least six seconds."

Page 125 | Highlight

Recognizing your own emotions

Page 125 | Highlight

"I know what kind of day I'm gonna have by the kind of mood you're in when you walk in the door," Russ told me one morning when we worked together at Google. I've rarely felt so ashamed.

Page 125 | Highlight

Everybody notices what kind of mood the boss is in. We have to. It's adaptive."

Page 125 | Highlight

You can't successfully hide how you feel from people who work closely with you. You don't want to take your bad days out on your team, but nor can you hide the fact you're not at your best. The

best you can do is to own up to how you feel and what's going on in the rest of your life, so others don't feel your mood is their fault.

Page 125 | Highlight

Master your reactions to others' emotions

Page 125 | Highlight

Many people cross a dangerous emotional boundary when they become the boss. They try to manage other people's emotions. This is a big overstep. All people, including the people who report to you, are responsible for their own emotional lives.

Page 126 | Note

Acknowledge emotions:
→ also relevant for the
5/8 simple rules
page

Page 126 | Highlight

Acknowledge emotions. Emotional reactions can offer important clues to help you better understand what's really going on with the people you manage. They can offer you a shortcut to the heart of the matter.

Page 126 | Highlight

Don't try to mitigate them by saying things like, "It's not personal," or "Let's be professional." Instead say, "I can see you're mad/frustrated/elated/____"

Page 126 | Highlight

Ask questions.

Page 126 | Highlight

Adding your guilt to other people's difficult emotions doesn't make them feel better. People I've managed or coached have often come to me distraught after they gave guidance to somebody who started crying. "What should I have done differently?" they ask. Maybe they handled the situation perfectly. Just because somebody is crying or yelling doesn't mean you've done anything wrong; it just means they are upset. If you feel guilty about the fact that they are upset, you're more likely to have a defensive reaction than a compassionate one.

Page 127 | Highlight

Telling other people how to feel will backfire. Here are some of the most counterproductive words you can utter: "Don't be sad"; "Don't be mad"; "No offense, but."

Page 127 | Highlight

If you really can't handle emotional outbursts, forgive yourself.

Page 127 | Highlight

Keep tissues a short walk away from your desk.

Page 127 | Highlight

If he saw somebody start to tear up, he'd excuse himself to leave the office and go get Kleenex.

Page 127 | Highlight

Keep some closed bottles of water at your desk. Another good piece of advice I heard from an HR business partner was to have some unopened bottles of water at hand. If you see

Page 128 | Highlight

Walk, don't sit. When planning a difficult conversation, try taking a walk instead of sitting and talking. When you're walking, the emotions are less on display and less likely to start resonating in a destructive way. Also, walking and looking in the same direction often feels more collaborative than sitting across a table and staring each other down.

Page 128 | Highlight

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH your direct reports takes time and real energy. Sometimes, especially when things are not going well, this will be the most depleting part of your job. Remembering that it is central to your job will help. And if you can power through these times, you may find as I have that these relationships give your work meaning far beyond the results that you achieve together.

Page 129 | Highlight

Guidance is the "atomic building block" of management,

Page 129 | Highlight

you need to get, give, and encourage both praise and criticism.

Page 130 | Highlight

SOLICITING IMPROMPTU GUIDANCE Embrace the discomfort

Page 130 | Highlight

the minute you assume the role of boss you'll be fighting preconceptions.

Page 131 | Highlight

If, on the other hand, you can listen to the criticism and react well to it, both trust and respect will follow.

Page 131 | Highlight

You are the exception to the “criticize in private” rule of thumb.

Page 131 | Highlight

‘Here is where I’m good, and here is where I’m not doing so well.’ I’ll even tell the whole company and say, ‘Here is where I want your help.’ That makes it a bit safer for other people to do the same, and you can build trust.”

Page 131 | Highlight

“What about ‘criticize in private’?” But when you are the boss, that rule doesn’t apply to you.

Page 131 | Highlight

Airing it in public has another benefit as well: it saves you from having to hear the same thing over and over.

Page 132 | Note

What could I do or stop doing that would make it easier to work with me?

Page 132 | Highlight

To help, I adopted a go-to question that Fred Kofman, author of *Conscious Business* and my coach at Google, suggested. “What could I do or stop doing that would make it easier to work with me?”

Page 133 | Highlight

“Then why are you folding your arms and hunching down in your seat? Come on, tell me what you’re really thinking!”

Page 133 | Highlight

Listen with the intent to understand, not to respond.

Page 133 | Highlight

don’t start criticizing the criticism.

Page 133 | Highlight

Listen to and clarify the criticism—but don’t debate it. Try saying, “So what I hear you saying is...”

Page 133 | Highlight

Reward criticism to get more of it.

Page 134 | Highlight

It is never enough to simply acknowledge the other person’s feelings—that invariably feels passive-aggressive and insincere.

Page 134 | Highlight

It’s essential that you do get back to it. The key then is to explain exactly why you disagree. If you can’t make a change, giving the employee a thoughtful, respectful explanation of why not, is the best reward you can offer for their Radical Candor.

Page 134 | Highlight

| Gauge the guidance you get.

Page 134 | Highlight

| If it's all praise and no criticism, beware!

Page 134 | Highlight

| Tell them you'd welcome Radical Candor, but you'd prefer Obnoxious Aggression to silence.

Page 135 | Highlight

| ORANGE BOX Make it not just safe but natural to criticize you

Page 135 | Highlight

| JOHNSON & JOHNSON'S ORIGINAL credo had an interesting line: "Employees should have an organized system for suggestions and complaints."

Page 135 | Highlight

| it's not just safe but expected to make suggestions and complaints. You have to organize a system. But it needn't be elaborate.

Page 136 | Highlight

| a system was created where people could log annoying management issues. If, for example, it took too long to get expense reports approved, you could file a management "bug." And you could do the same if performance reviews always seemed to take place at the worst possible time of year, or if the last employee survey took too long to fill out, or if the promotion system seemed unfair, and so on.

Page 136 | Highlight

| The management bug tracking system was public, so people could vote to set priorities.

Page 137 | Highlight

a common concern that people raise about giving feedback is “What if I’m wrong?” My answer is that you may very well be wrong. And telling somebody what you think gives them the opportunity to tell you if you are. A huge part of what makes giving guidance so valuable is that misperceptions on both sides of the equation get corrected.

Page 137 | Note

Situation
Behavior
Impact

Page 137 | Highlight

Situation, behavior, impact. The Center for Creative Leadership, an executive-education company, developed a technique called “situation behavior impact” to help leaders be more precise and therefore less arrogant when giving feedback.

Page 137 | Highlight

describe three things when giving feedback: 1) the situation you saw, 2) the behavior (i.e., what the person did, either good or bad), and 3) the impact you observed. This helps you avoid making judgments about the person’s intelligence, common sense, innate goodness, or other personal attributes. When you pass blanket judgments, your guidance sounds arrogant.

Page 138 | Highlight

Left-hand column.

Page 138 | Highlight

“Ontological Humility.”

Page 138 | Highlight

when you are mindful that your subjective experience is not objective truth, it can help you challenge others in a way that invites a reciprocal challenge.

Page 139 | Highlight

Be helpful

Page 139 | Highlight

Stating your intention to be helpful can lower defenses. When you tell somebody that you aren’t trying to bust their chops—that you really want to help—it can go a long way toward making them receptive to what you’re saying.

Page 139 | Highlight

“I’m going to describe a problem I see; I may be wrong, and if I am I hope you’ll tell me; if I’m not I hope my bringing it up will help you fix it.”

Page 139 | Highlight

Show, don’t tell. It’s the best advice I’ve ever gotten for story-telling, but it also applies to guidance. The more clearly you show exactly what is good or bad, the more helpful your guidance will be.

Page 139 | Highlight

By explicitly describing what was good or what was bad, you are helping a person do more of what’

Page 139 | Highlight Continued

| s good and less of what's bad—and to see the difference.

Page 140 | Highlight

| Finding help is better than offering it yourself.

Page 140 | Highlight

| Guidance is a gift, not a whip or a carrot.

Page 140 | Highlight

| Adopting the mindset that guidance is a gift will ensure that your guidance is helpful even when you can't offer actual assistance, solutions, or an introduction to someone who can help.

Page 140 | Highlight

| Give feedback immediately

Page 140 | Highlight

| Giving guidance as quickly and as informally as possible is an essential part of Radical Candor, but it takes discipline—both because of our natural inclination to delay/avoid confrontation and because our days are busy enough as it is.

Page 141 | Highlight

| Say it in 2–3 minutes between meetings.

Page 141 | Highlight

| They think of it like a root canal. Try thinking of it as brushing your teeth instead. Don't write it in your calendar; just do it consistently, and maybe you won't ever have to get a root canal.

Page 142 | Highlight

Keep slack time in your calendar, or be willing to be late.

Page 142 | Highlight

Don't "save up" guidance for a 1:1 or a performance review.

Page 142 | Highlight

Don't use performance reviews as an excuse not to give impromptu in-person feedback.

Page 142 | Highlight

Guidance has a short half-life.

Page 142 | Highlight

Unspoken criticism explodes like a dirty bomb.

Page 142 | Highlight

Just as in your personal life, remaining silent at work for too long about something that angers or frustrates you makes it more likely that you will eventually blow up in a way that makes you look irrational, harms your relationship, or both.

Page 142 | Highlight

Avoid black holes.

Page 143 | Highlight

In person (if possible)

Page 143 | Highlight

the clarity of your guidance gets measured at the other person's ear, not at your mouth.

Page 143 | Highlight

If somebody is upset, this gives you an opportunity to show compassion—to go up on the “care personally” dimension of the Radical Candor framework.

Page 143 | Highlight

Immediate vs. in person. If the person is in another city and giving guidance in person means waiting more than a few days, then optimize for immediacy unless what you’re talking about is a big deal.

Page 144 | Highlight

Hierarchy of modes. A video call, if you have high-speed internet access, is second best.

Page 144 | Highlight

Email and text should be avoided if at all possible. It always feels faster to fire off an email or text, but when I think about all the times I had to spend hours clearing up a misunderstanding that arose from an email that was misunderstood, I realize that it’s actually faster to walk down the hall or if the person is remote pick up the phone.

Page 144 | Highlight

Multiple modes. I found that praising people at a public all-hands meeting was a great way to share significant accomplishments. However, I often found that following up in person at a 1:1 carried more emotional weight, and following up with an email to the whole team carried more lasting weight.

Page 144 | Highlight

Reply All do’s and don’ts. If you must criticize or correct somebody over email, do not Reply All. Never.

Page 144 | Highlight

Being in a remote office is hard. If you are in a remote office, or if you are managing people in remote offices, it’s really important to have quick, frequent interactions.

Page 145 | Highlight

Praise in public, criticize in private

Page 145 | Highlight

A good rule of thumb for guidance is praise in public, criticize in private. Public criticism tends to trigger a defensive reaction and make it much harder for a person to accept they've made a mistake and to learn from it. Public praise tends to lend more weight to the praise, and it encourages others to emulate whatever was great.

Page 145 | Highlight

Corrections, factual observations, disagreements, and debates are different from criticism.

Page 145 | Highlight

Adapt to an individual's preferences.

Page 145 | Highlight

Group learning.

Page 146 | Highlight

Don't personalize There is a big difference between caring personally and personalizing when giving praise and criticism. Caring personally is good. Personalizing is bad.

Page 146 | Highlight

The "fundamental attribution error" will harm the effectiveness of your guidance.

Page 146 | Highlight

Making a fundamental attribution error is using perceived personality attributes—"You're stupid, lazy, greedy, hypocritical, an asshole," etc.—to explain someone else's behavior rather than considering one's own behavior and/or the situational factors that were probably the real cause of

Page 146 | Highlight Continued

| the other person's behavior.

Page 146 | Highlight

| it renders an otherwise solvable problem really hard to fix since changing core personality attributes is so very difficult and time-consuming.

Page 146 | Highlight

| Try to catch yourself when you think or say, "You are ____." Use situation, behavior, impact,

Page 146 | Highlight

| Say "that's wrong" not "you're wrong."

Page 147 | Highlight

| He stopped saying, "You're wrong," and instead learned to say, "I think that's wrong." "I think" was humbler, and saying "that" instead of "you" didn't personalize. People started to be more receptive to his criticism.

Page 147 | Highlight

| The phrase "don't take it personally" is worse than useless.

Page 147 | Highlight

| Work is a part of who we are, and so it is personal.

Page 147 | Highlight

| How not to personalize even when it really is personal.

Page 149 | Highlight

most bosses fear being jerks but employees fear their bosses are not shooting straight.

Page 150 | Highlight

Once you're used to brushing your teeth, though, not brushing your teeth feels gross. You can't bear to go to sleep or leave the house in the morning if you haven't brushed.

Page 150 | Highlight

The most important thing is figuring out how others experience your guidance.

Page 152 | Highlight

here is a slight modification if you're talking to your boss instead of your employee—ask permission to give guidance. Say something like, "Would it be helpful if I told you what I thought of X?"

Page 152 | Highlight

you often wind up responsible for executing decisions that you disagree with. This can feel like a Catch-22. If you tell your team you do agree with the decisions, you feel like a liar—or at the very least, inauthentic. If you tell your team that you don't agree with the decisions, you look weak, insubordinate, or both.

Page 152 | Highlight

Listen, Challenge, Commit. A strong leader has the humility to listen, the confidence to challenge, and the wisdom to know when to quit arguing and to get on board.

Page 153 | Highlight

Why Radical Candor may be harder for men managing women Most men are trained from birth to be "gentler" with women than with men.

Page 153 | Highlight

Criticism is a gift, and you need to give it in equal measure to your male and female direct reports.

Page 155 | Highlight

the pervasive atmosphere of anxiety around gender issues has everybody walking on eggshells and avoiding important truths.

Page 155 | Highlight

Gender bias makes it difficult for women to be Radically Candid with both men and women. One common bias women often fall prey to: the “Abrasive Trap.”

Page 155 | Highlight

the more competent a woman is, the less her colleagues tend to like her.

Page 155 | Highlight

Rather than asking these people to re-evaluate their attitudes, he asked me to work on my “likeability.”

Page 156 | Highlight

when women challenge directly—which they must do to be successful—they get penalized for being “abrasive.”

Page 156 | Highlight

The “abrasive” label gets placed on women by other women as well as by men.

Page 156 | Highlight

many stories of being called abrasive, or of being disliked for being too competent—and of paying the price emotionally and professionally.

Page 156 | Highlight

selection for promotion and leadership roles depend heavily on “likeability.”

Page 158 | Highlight

decided it’s not worth the risk to talk about anything remotely related to gender.

Page 158 | Highlight

other men who stir the pot in an effort to use gender issues to advance their careers. It sometimes comes from an overzealous HR department. It sometimes comes from the law, which can so often be absurdly inappropriate in a specific instance. It sometimes comes from the pressures of social media, or a one-sided story in the press—these stories are too often low-hanging fruit for reporters looking for something sensational.

Page 158 | Highlight

Try explaining the Radical Candor framework, and then when you’re giving feedback simply say, “I’m trying to be Radically Candid, and I want to check in with you to see how my feedback is landing for you.” Ask her to gauge your praise and criticism.

Page 159 | Highlight

“abrasive,” “shrill,” “screechy,” or “bossy,” that are rarely used to describe a man?

Page 159 | Highlight

Never just say, “Be more likeable.” Make sure you address the situation by giving women specific suggestions for changing their behavior and becoming more effective.

Page 159 | Highlight

it’s your job as the boss not to advise women how to navigate around it, but instead to help your entire team recognize and eliminate it

Page 160 | Highlight

Never stop challenging directly.

Page 160 | Highlight

Care personally—but kill the angel in the office.

Page 161 | Highlight

IT'S SAFE TO say that performance reviews rank up there with root canals, though in this analogy, they're probably just as painful for the dentist as for the patient.

Page 162 | Highlight

No surprises. There should never be any surprises in a formal performance review, and if you've been diligent about offering regular impromptu guidance, you'll lower the odds of this happening considerably.

Page 162 | Highlight

Don't rely on your unilateral judgment. Even if your company doesn't require a 360 process so that you learn what other people think of your direct report's performance, you can still do a sanity check.

Page 162 | Highlight

One manager I know does this by simply asking each person on the team to give their peers a ✓ – , ✓, ✓ +.

Page 162 | Highlight

This takes about five minutes out of everyone's 1:1 time twice a year, right before performance reviews, and offers him a great sanity check to make sure he's being fair and seeing a broader perspective.

Page 162 | Highlight

Solicit feedback on yourself first.

Page 163 | Highlight

Write it down. Writing is painstaking and time-consuming, and so a lot of companies don't require written performance reviews. But it's happened to me dozens of times that writing things down changes the review. I think I know what I want to say during a review, and then when I start to write it down, I realize that the situation is much more nuanced, upon reflection. Taking the time to articulate your thinking on paper beforehand can spare you the awkwardness of having to backpedal in the middle of a review, or after you've delivered it.

Page 163 | Highlight

If I've explicitly made note of an important criticism beforehand, I'm already one step closer to Radical Candor.

Page 163 | Highlight

Make a conscious decision about when to give the written review.

Page 164 | Highlight

Schedule at least fifty minutes in person, and don't do reviews back-to-back.

Page 164 | Highlight

These conversations are often emotionally draining, and I always needed more than a ten-minute break between them.

Page 164 | Highlight

Spend half the time looking back (diagnosis), half the time looking forward (plan).

Page 164 | Highlight

Focusing on what each person plans to do differently as a result of the review is also a great way to check for understanding—I often thought I had been clear and realized the person hadn't understood me only when I heard the plans they were formulating as a result of the review.

Page 164 | Highlight

Schedule regular check-ins to assess how the plan is working.

Page 164 | Highlight

Deliver the rating/compensation news after the performance review.

Page 165 | Highlight

PREVENT BACKSTABBING You are a boss, not a diplomat. Shuttle diplomacy won't work for you.

Page 165 | Highlight

never let one person on your team talk to you about another behind their back.

Page 165 | Highlight

insist that they talk directly to each other, without you.

Page 166 | Highlight

Dan Woods, who was CTO at a start-up where I worked in the 1990s, developed the lowest-tech, cheapest, most effective system for encouraging praise and criticism on a team that I've seen. It involved two stuffed animals: a whale and a monkey.

Page 167 | Highlight

As long as the pilots hadn't been careless or reckless, they were granted immunity for their mistakes.

Page 167 | Highlight

What if, instead of suing doctors who made honest mistakes we gave them immunity, collected and shared the information, and came up with ways to help other doctors avoid making the same mistakes?

Page 167 | Highlight

“skip level meetings.” In these meetings, which need to happen only once a year to be effective, you will meet with the people who work for your direct reports, without your direct reports in the room, and ask what they could do or stop doing to be better bosses.

Page 168 | Highlight

and it must be clear that you aren't automatically presuming that the boss, your direct report, is guilty, or that you're unwilling to hear any criticism of your direct report. The intent of these sessions is to be supportive of the managers who report to you, not to undermine them.

Page 168 | Highlight

Explain it. Show it. Explain it again. Explain to each of your direct reports that you have two goals: 1) to help each of them become better bosses and 2) to make sure people on their team feel comfortable giving them feedback directly.

Page 168 | Highlight

Never have a skip level meeting without prior consent of your direct report.

Page 168 | Highlight

It's vital that everyone understands that the meeting with you is in support of, not an attack on, their boss.

Page 168 | Highlight

Remind people that the goal is to create a culture where everyone always feels comfortable giving guidance, especially criticism, directly to their bosses—and that this meeting is a step in that direction, not a substitute for that goal.

Page 169 | Highlight

this is a routine process undertaken for anyone who has direct reports.

Page 169 | Highlight

Ensure the meeting is “not for attribution.” Ensure everyone understands that, while the goal is to get everyone comfortable giving feedback directly to their boss, this is a “not for attribution” meeting. In other words, everything of import will be shared with their boss, but not who said it.

Page 169 | Highlight

Take notes and project them.

Page 169 | Highlight

Kick-start the conversation.

Page 169 | Highlight

Generally, it’s easiest to start with praise to get people talking, “What is your manager doing well?” Then, “What could your manager be doing better?” Then, “What really sucks?”

Page 169 | Highlight

You are failing only if it is all sweetness and light.

Page 169 | Highlight

Prioritize issues. Once things get flowing, remind people that often far more issues will get raised than will get fixed. The goal is to make things better—making them perfect is unrealistic.

Page 169 | Highlight

Share notes right after the meeting.

Page 170 | Highlight

Ensure that your directs make and communicate changes.

Page 170 | Highlight

Encourage each of your direct reports to send an email out to their teams explaining what they have learned and what they are going to do differently as a result, and to cc you on the note.

Page 170 | Highlight

Have these meetings once a year for each of your direct reports.

Page 171 | Highlight

Skip level meeting FAQs

Page 171 | Highlight

What if it becomes clear that an entire team has lost faith in their manager?

Page 171 | Highlight

What if people won't talk?

Page 171 | Highlight

"If you could change one thing..."

Page 171 | Highlight

How do you strike the right balance between being supportive of the boss you're hearing about and being open to the team's thoughts?

Page 171 | Highlight

not to judge or defend the manager about whom you are soliciting feedback.

Page 171 | Highlight

| your role is not to judge but to pass along the feedback.

Page 171 | Highlight

| Do not judge anything on the spot.

Page 172 | Highlight

| THE KEY TO success when implementing any of these suggestions is to return to core principles, rather than following step-by-step instructions.

Page 172 | Highlight

| Even when you have particular criticisms, that level of attention is implicitly complimentary.

Page 172 | Highlight

| Whenever you feel yourself getting lost in the weeds, simply return to these two questions: “Am I showing my team that I care personally?” and “Am I challenging each person directly?”

Page 173 | Highlight

| put the right people in the right roles, avoiding both boredom and burn-out.

Page 173 | Highlight

| you want a balance, so that you have both people who push for change and those who offer stability.

Page 174 | Highlight

| CAREER CONVERSATIONS Understand people’s motivations and ambitions to help them take a step in the direction of their dreams

Page 175 | Highlight

“career growth”. “You need a long-term vision and an eighteen-month plan,”

Page 177 | Highlight

Conversation one: life story The first conversation is designed to learn what motivates each person who reports directly to you. Russ suggested a simple opening to these conversations. “Starting with kindergarten, tell me about your life.”

Page 179 | Highlight

The second conversation: dreams The second conversation moves from understanding what motivates people to understanding the person’s dreams—what they want to achieve at the apex of their career, how they imagine life at its best to feel.

Page 180 | Highlight

Russ recommends that you begin these conversations with, “What do you want the pinnacle of your career to look like?” Because most people don’t really know what they want to do when they “grow up,” Russ suggests encouraging people to come up with three to five different dreams for the future.

Page 180 | Highlight

Ask each direct report to create a document with three to five columns; title each with the names of the dreams they described in the last conversation. Then, list the skills needed as rows.

Page 180 | Highlight

The final part of Russ’s second conversation involves making sure that the person’s dreams are aligned with the values they have expressed.

Page 181 | Highlight

Conversation three: eighteen-month plan

Page 181 | Highlight

“What do I need to learn in order to move in the direction of my dreams?”

Page 181 | Highlight

How should I prioritize the things I need to learn? Whom can I learn from?” How can I change my role to learn it?

Page 182 | Highlight

GROWTH MANAGEMENT Figure out who needs what types of opportunities, and how you’re going to provide them

Page 182 | Highlight

Put names in boxes (temporarily!) The first step is to identify your rock stars and superstars. Write their names in the correct boxes. Next, identify the people on your team who are doing good, but not exceptional, work. This will probably be the majority of people.

Page 183 | Highlight

Then, identify the people who are performing poorly but whom you believe should do much better, either because they are demonstrating signs that they can improve or because their skills and ambitions suggest improvement is possible. Finally—and this is usually the hardest part—identify the people who are not doing good work and not getting any better. Don’t obsess—spend twenty minutes, maximum, doing this exercise. Think fast.

Page 183 | Highlight

get an outside perspective.

Page 183 | Highlight

Write growth plans Next, come up with a three- to five-bullet-point growth plan for each person.

If you are regularly thinking about personal growth, as you should be, you shouldn't need to spend more than five to fifteen minutes per direct report jotting down growth plans.