

Keeping Control



Supervisor/Employee Meetings

Church personnel, especially those who are responsible for managing or supervising others, get caught up in “competing” values and roles:

Compassionate Minister Vs. Effective Supervisor

A supervisor's natural inclinations toward compassion and empathy can be challenged when he or she is called upon to exercise the supervisor's role.

When a supervisory meeting is advisable due to poor performance evaluation or negative news, the competing values of **Compassionate Minister** and **Effective Manager** is the dilemma the supervisor must face. The supervisor must determine how to blend the two values to assure a gracious, just and effective solution to a problem.



WISE SAYINGS

In spite of a temporary setback in a valued relationship, we can continue to work for a common higher purpose that we both — in spite of differences — espouse. What is needed when there is this “dimming” of a relationship is straightforward dialogue which begins with:

- Honest assessment,
- Acknowledges mistakes,
- And confirms a trust and confidence that **WE** together can reach a mutually satisfying resolution to **OUR** problem.

Office of Conciliation
Archdiocese of Chicago
Post Office Box 1979
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1979
312-751-8291

Assertive Communication In The Ministry/Workplace

Staying On Track Maintaining Graceful Control



Office of Conciliation
Archdiocese of Chicago
Post Office Box 1979
Chicago, Illinois 60690-1979
312-751-8291



BLENDING VALUES

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

The sample script to the right shows how a blend of gospel values and managerial/leadership skills can achieve the dual targets of maintaining a relationship *and* exercising a just and professional supervisory style.

In the vignette, note how the supervisor accomplishes the following:

Empathic and Active Listening

Receives and acknowledges the employee's perspective before expressing his/her message.

Positive Control and Assertion

Keeps his/her agenda on track and focused on *solving the problem*.

Emotional Control

Does not get swayed by the emotions of the employee and responds charitably.

Focus on the Problem

Is assertive but not blaming.

Management of the Agenda

Is gracious but not distracted from the purpose of the meeting. Sets a time limit for the meeting and adheres to it.

Pro-Active

The supervisor may ask for a follow-up meeting to discuss other issues that may have surfaced in the meeting.

SCENARIO

You supervise the support staff in your agency/ministry. You have scheduled a meeting with an employee who has been regularly late for work due to a poorly running car. You are concerned for the employee, yet feel it's important to hold all to the same standards. This "late" employee creates an *unfair* situation for others. The fact is you have begun to hear rumblings from the employee's co-workers. You feel that a tension is developing within the staff resulting from the perception that the co-worker is the recipient of your "special consideration" or your "ignoring the obvious".

- Employee: You must agree that my car is old and unreliable.
- Supervisor: Yes, your car does seem to be running poorly. It must be a worry to you. However, it's important to me, and others, that you are here on time.
- Employee: Well, you know I want to be here on time, but I can't help it if the car won't run.
- Supervisor: I am quite certain that reporting to work on time is important to you. On the other hand, I don't feel that it is fair to the other staff members that you continue to be permitted to come late, especially when the others manage to get here on time. I'm concerned that they think you are getting special treatment from me.
- Employee: I don't get it! You insist that I be here on time when you know I travel a long distance in an old car to get here.
- Supervisor: I understand and appreciate your difficulty, and I sense your worry and frustration over the situation. I hope you can appreciate my concern for maintaining workers' morale. All employees must be treated fairly. One way for me to do this is to hold all employees accountable to the same standards.
- Employee: You are just being unreasonable! If you paid me more, I could afford a better car!
- Supervisor: Yes, I agree that it is becoming increasingly difficult for many to meet their financial needs today. I understand your frustration. However, we are discussing adhering to work place rules and your responsibility in following those rules, particularly the need for you to be on time for work.
- Employee: You don't care about my situation! Besides, what about Joe? He comes to work late, and leaves early.
- Supervisor: I regret that you feel I am unsympathetic to your situation. I am willing to talk more about that with you at a future date. As for Joe, I will speak with him directly, as I am doing with you. I do not discuss other employees with their colleagues. Right now, it is important to me that we talk about how you can begin reporting to work on time more consistently. I am open to exploring some ways to ease your difficulty with this. What do you think?...

The supervisor, with the employee, then brainstorm options for solving the problem and agree on one. They check back with one another at a scheduled future date to see how the plan is working and adjust or revise the plan if necessary.