

## The New Supervisor



When the “new person” is the new supervisor as well, it can be an anxious, complex time. Whether the new person is pastor, principal, director of religious education or business manager; that new leader will need to learn and understand the staff and “culture” dynamics.

### Mutual anxieties:

The anxieties of the veteran staff are likely in mirror contrast to the supervisor’s anxieties about meeting the expectations of the staff. Having become comfortable with the style and expectations of the previous supervisor, the staff may be feeling the strain of not knowing what to expect or what effects the style of the new supervisor will have on them and their work environment, the ways they have become accustomed to “doing and being.”

### WISE SAYINGS

If we are to wield power, then let that power be rooted in the responsibility to “care for”...not “obedience to.”

We must break the paradigm of the “dominance” model of leadership. We have a choice! That choice is...the “partnership” model of leading.



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## BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL LEADER

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## Opening The Lines Of Communication

**A** new (wise) supervisor creates opportunities for timely exchanges of ideas with the staff. Most employees would like answers to questions early on in the transition to the new supervisor. The new supervisor can shape a climate where an open dialogue and professional interchange become workplace norms. Doing this sets the stage for handling future work place “problems: with grace and fairness.

### THREE BASIC AXIOMS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION ARE:

- Give staff regular opportunities to ask their questions, clarify issues, vent their anxieties, offer suggestions.
- Anticipate questions from staff members and provide a forum for dialogue.
- Communicate! Do not force people to interpret your silence or guess about your plans, ideas, motivations, etc.

## 20 (UNSPOKEN) QUESTIONS FOLKS APPRECIATE ANSWERS TO (OR ENCOURAGE) ??????

- ? What is your vision/goal for this parish, ministry, agency?
- ? What are your “career” goals?
- ? What do you expect from me?
- ? What is your number one priority?
- ? How can I tell if something is important to you?
- ? How receptive are you to new ideas?
- ? How much risk are you willing to take?
- ? Do you consider me a colleague? An employee? A “called” minister sharing your ministry?
- ? How much do you want to know about what I’m doing? How often do you want to be updated?
- ? What is your definition of a top performer?
- ? How do you plan to measure my productivity?
- ? How will I know if you do not like my performance?
- ? How much risk are you willing to let me take?
- ? Do you expect written status reports?
- ? Do you accept rough drafts, or should everything be in final form?
- ? Do you have a “negotiation” period after you make a decision?
- ? What should I do if I think you’re making a mistake?
- ? How much social interaction are you comfortable with?
- ? How do you handle conflict?
- ? What should I do if you lose your temper?

## Conveying Your Vision

**T**he new supervisor can be alert for opportunities to convey his or her vision and expectations for relationships in the workplace. Some ways to accomplish this include:

- **One On One Meetings** with individuals.
- **Open Door Invitations** — “If you have questions, suggestions, please see me.”
- **“Checking Out” Meetings** — Individual or Group. Every once in a while, especially during the first three months of the transition, ask, “How are things going? What’s going well? What’s not? What are your suggestions?”

**O**pen communication sessions work best when they are characterized by four qualities:

- Civility and grace
- Non-defensive communication
- Openness, trust, and a non-blaming attitude on everyone’s part.
- A mindset that all ideas can contribute to making things even better than they are.