



CHAYCE CRITICAL FACILITIES CLEANING

SUPERVISOR TRAINING

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Introduction

Many years ago—I was about 24 or 25— I worked for a big resort in Phoenix as part of the Food and Beverage department. My senior boss was the Director of Hospitality, a knowledgeable man born in France and transplanted in the U.S., in Arizona of all places. During a one-on-one meeting with him one day he said something which I hadn't heard yet at that point in my life. "Mr. Nicklaus," he said in his residual French accent, "the hardest part of being a manager isn't all the paperwork, inventories, and P&L statements, it's really managing people. Being a manager is about 90% managing people, about 10% other stuff."

I have since heard the same maxim a number of times but it still holds true. Anybody charged with overseeing a number of people has their greatest challenge as coping with other humans, each with their own distinct personalities, beliefs, and values, and each there for the same reason: to perform a given job and in return receive a paycheck.

For the most part supervising is a fairly manageable task of executing known tasks and giving direction where necessary—but once in a while it's like trying to walk cats and dogs at the same time. Being a perpetual student of human nature helps at times like these, but it's never a guarantee of quick or effective solutions.

Being A Supervisor Isn't Like Taking A Wedding Vow

Almost everyone is familiar with the part of a traditional wedding when the priest or judge says "if anyone has reason to believe these two should not be wed in matrimony then speak now or forever hold your peace." As a supervisor, if you fail to communicate, if you don't "speak now" then there is no perpetual peace—you will *always* have to speak later, and it usually will be under worse circumstances than if you would have addressed the issue in the first place.



COMMUNICATION

Supervising a small or large group is largely the same—a group of individuals working toward a common goal. The key word is *individuals*.



- **'Typical' Communication**

This is what we typically think of when communication is mentioned, the process of interacting with another person or group of people. In our case the groups are small and generally well connected—we don't have multiple departments—everyone is part of the same project, not just one part of the puzzle.

When we communicate—whether at work or outside of it—we are always in a process of *expression*: we express ideas, thoughts, exchange information, convey feelings and emotion. In every case something is needed by at least one of the participants, if not both. Sometimes barriers pop up, perhaps as simple as differences in language or as complex as psychological or emotional barriers. The beefiest part of your job as a supervisor is to learn to see and understand the differences and then objectively work through them with the employee or staff as a whole.

Here is something which many don't understand or realize: *Communication is roughly 70% non-verbal*. A tremendous body of research bears this out. We (myself included) rely heavily on what people say to infer meaning, but to a much greater degree it is *how they say it* and/or *how they deliver it* which carries the most meaning.



- **Non-verbal communication** ranges from facial expression to body language. Gestures, signs, and use of space are also important in non-verbal communication. Multicultural differences in body language, facial expression, use of space, and especially gestures, are enormous and too easily misinterpreted.

In any tense situation, certainly where emotions are concerned, we may often try mightily to keep our true reactions or feelings hidden, but while we might be able to control the tone of or voice or the words we use our body language—if we know what to look for—can easily give our true thoughts and feelings away. A few examples of body language to look for:

To learn the truth, watch people's feet

When people try to control their body language, they focus primarily on facial expressions, body postures, and hand/arm gestures. Since the legs and feet are left unrehearsed, they are also where the truth can most often be found. Under stress, people will often display nervousness and anxiety through increased foot movements. Feet will fidget, shuffle, and wind around each

other or around the furniture. Feet will stretch and curl to relieve tension, or even kick out in a subconscious attempt to run away

Is the smile fake? Look for crows feet

The smile, it turns out, is all about the crow's-feet around your eyes. When you're smiling joyfully, they crinkle. When you're faking it, they don't. If someone's trying to look happy but really isn't, you won't see the wrinkles.

A liar barely moves

In an attempt to avoid looking shifty-eyed, some liars will purposely hold their gaze a touch too long, so that it's slightly uncomfortable. They may also stand very still and not blink.

Scratching the nose

Nose-scratching while speaking is a warning sign, unless the person genuinely has an itchy nose. Often exhibited when recounting an event or incident.

Perhaps some pointers will help in this regard:

- Understand that people communicate on many levels. Watch their facial expressions, eye contact, posture, hand and feet movements, body movement and placement, and appearance and how they walk toward you. Every gesture is communicating something if you listen with your eyes.
- If a person is saying one thing but their physical behavior says another, often the non-verbal cues are your best clue to what's really going on below decks.
- When having a discussion with others try to remember to 'listen with your eyes'. Probing more in silence—watching non-verbal cues—may point more concretely to underlying truth or facts than their words will.
- When having a meeting looking for non-verbal cues can tell you:
 - when you've talked long enough,
 - when someone else wants to speak, and
 - the mood of the crowd and their reaction to your remarks.

One of the best indicators may very well be your *gut instinct*. Combined with your life experiences and training your "gut" may be the best detector of non-verbal communication.

All of this, while certainly informative, can be summed up in one concise sentence:

"You can't truly listen when you're running your mouth."

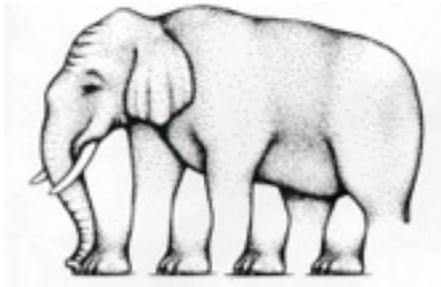
PERCEPTION

Managing perceptions is part of managing people.

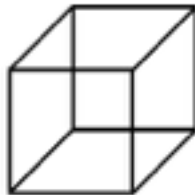
French author Gustave Flaubert wrote “*There is no truth, There is only perception.*” Almost immediately you may disagree with the statement, and **that** is the very point of it. Each of us interprets our immediate environment through our individual filters.



Do you see a duck . . . or a rabbit?



Is there something wrong with this drawing of an elephant?



Are you looking into the box from the top or the side?
Do you see a chalice or two faces?

- **There is no ‘reality’ without interpretation.** Think about that for a moment and it makes complete sense.
- **Without interpretation** one has **data** . . .
- But **data plus interpretation** results in what we perceive as reality.

Why should something so seemingly esoteric be important to a supervisor? Because it serves to illustrate *perception*. Our clients and our fellow crew members, to a person, all perceive their world around them based on a number of factors. The resulting perception may not equal your own despite the information given being exactly the same. Here’s a quick visual to illustrate the point:

Imagine a pair of twins—gender doesn't matter, only that they are genetic twins. Their environmental upbringing will be largely the same: they live in the same house, have the same parents, go to the same school, etc.

Now imagine those twins sitting on a couch and watching the same movie. Their perception of the movie, or feelings about certain scenes, may very well be different in some cases. They watched the same movie at the same time, they share the same genetic material . . . but their individual realities are unique, they don't perceive things the same way.

Every person's actions during the workday lends themselves to the perceptions of all those around them, valid or not. A client may see you on the phone twice in one day, then a few days later sees you again with your phone to your ear. You may have been talking to Rosa or another staff member, but the **perception** by that single client could be that you spend a lot of time on the phone . . . "There is no truth. There is only perception."



Another quick story: Very often high level executives of large businesses are all but invisible to the front line staff—you may know or recognize their name because it's been drilled into you how important they are in terms of their place in the corporate hierarchy. Their responsibilities are, of course, far different from the front line employees, but for those who choose to distance themselves from the lower ranks they may gain influence or acceptance within the executive ranks, but they utterly throw away any connection with the people truly making the wheels of business turn, those in actual contact with the customer or client.

At the resort I worked at, the general manager of the property was accountable for every aspect of the resort: catering services, room service, groundskeeping, the sports facility, maintenance and mechanical—everything. Yet he made a point of simply walking around the property at least a couple times a day so he was visible to all staff. Everyone knew who he was because they saw him, and many times he would, at a minimum, greet them ("Good morning," "How are you?", etc.) or even spend a moment and chat with them.

Why is this important? Because it didn't matter what he was doing or how busy he was; the *perception* by most people was that he cared not just about the property but about the staff as well. The positive effect it had was far more advantageous to business than a GM who was invisible and only handed down rules and policies from above.

This is why Rosa has always done her best to make herself available to all staff. When she travels she makes sure she interacts with everyone, not just supervisors, or the clients who pay her. Sure, you could argue the company is smaller so it's easier to do so, but it is equally as easy to put a firewall of employees in front of you and never speak to the staff.

Remain connected to your staff. It may sound cliché, but communication *really is* everything. Equally as important is to give someone your complete attention when talking to them—don't stare at your phone or perform other distracting work. Focusing your attention tells them they matter and you are acknowledging that what they have to say warrants your full attention.

Supervisor 101

Supervisors reap the fruit of the seeds they sow

As a small company we are, in business-speak, nimble, adaptable, able to scale efficiently. To us this means we can know every person in our company, know their face, their voice, and in most cases their character or personality. This is the perfect time for a reminder . . . the key is *the individual*. We all play a part in Chayce's success, but those of us who deal with the clients on a daily basis know our staff are the critical piece to everyday operations.

Being a supervisor isn't about being the boss, or being above everyone else, it's about being a number of things: a traffic cop, a chief, a leader, a confidante—such roles require significant attributes such as confidence, empathy, and even humility. If at all possible to sum up in a single word perhaps that word would be **accountable**—for yourself **and** your crew.

Doing Documentation

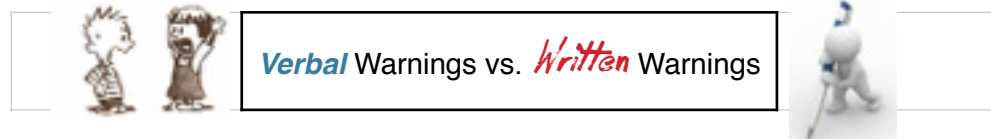
The faintest ink is better than the strongest memory — this little gem used to be on some of the paperwork we used at the resort. In the last few years I have fallen victim to my own disregard of this handy maxim. Countless times I have had a thought I wanted to use or write later and arrogantly figured I would remember it, which of course rarely ever happens. Had I simply wrote it down I would have had it later when I wanted it.

To think you can remember everything is to live in a fools paradise. Get in the habit of jotting down seemingly mundane things such as:

- requests for days off
- discussions with clients
- notes about projects
- questions or concerns you don't have immediate answers to

The list is practically infinite because the information we deal with on any given day is infinite.

This concept is especially important when it comes to handling issues or disciplinary matters with team members. It's almost a certainty that your memory of a given event will differ from theirs, especially when confronted with being reprimanded for something they perceive as minor (we'll get to the *what-about-everyone-else* thing in a bit). It's all too obvious but bears repeating: you're working with people, humans, not programmed robots.



In any organization there must be a framework so every person involved can act within a set of rules or standards. Pretty simple concept, really—doesn't matter if it's our teams at eBay, PayPal, or Facebook, or a town, a state, or a nation—rules and policies, hopefully, help keep the collective on the same path forward, moving toward a common goal. When someone strays from the path they should be given the opportunity to air their side of the story and, likewise, be ready to listen to why their action isn't acceptable.

Some infractions can be handled by simply having a private conversation with the individual and explaining what went wrong and why—always be **objective**, not *subjective* (we'll get to this shortly). Quick meetings like this should be done, whenever possible, on neutral ground and **never in front of other team members**.

Often these situations are mole hills, not mountains. That they need to be addressed implies a need to nudge back into the framework. We generally leave it up to your discretion as to what approach is best for a given situation—does it warrant a verbal discussion or something more emphatic, a *written warning*? Being mindful of a person's history can be helpful when making this decision. Above all it is important to be certain that any such communication is consistent among the entire team, meaning that everyone is held accountable for the same behavior equally.

Writing down—documenting—these seemingly minor occurrences can be a major help in producing a foundation of concrete facts later should a written warning become necessary. Making a quick note of when you talked with someone, and the subject of the conversation, helps to bolster the significance of written documentation.

Proper documentation helps protect you and the company and gives feedback to the employee. Without proper documentation we can be left open to potential lawsuits—sounds ridiculous but it is not the least bit uncommon.

Some excellent examples from Tennessee employment lawyer Anne H. Williams:
“For example, an employee who is fired for coming in late every day for three months might win her lawsuit if the supervisor never documented the fact that the employee was late.”

“Lack of consistent discipline can also come back to haunt you at trial. For example, if Maria is written up three times for tardiness and then fired, but Hank is written up six times over the same time period for tardiness, and does not receive any discipline, you can bet that Maria is going to win her sex discrimination case, even if the supervisor did not have any specific gender bias against her. It is enough that Maria was treated more harshly than her male colleague. Thus, your disciplinary procedure must be applied fairly to your employees. The best way to gauge fairness is to compare employees' files to make sure that **equal discipline is doled out for similar misconduct**.”



“When selecting a course of action in response to a problem, there are many important factors you should consider. Evaluate the *mitigating* and *aggravating* factors:

Mitigating factors are things such as long service with the company, history of satisfactory appraisals, prior commendations or awards, and defenses or excuses offered by the employee in response to the problem in question.

Aggravating factors are things such as short length of service, history of unsatisfactory performance, prior instances of performance/conduct/attendance problems, and the degree to which the employee has responded to the current problem with denials or dishonesty.”

An important final note about presenting documentation: whenever possible present it with a second, neutral party. This might very well exclude (and perhaps should exclude) other team members. Having another person present helps to tamp down emotions and provides a second set of unbiased eyes and ears for observation.

Objectivity vs. Subjectivity



Objective: not influenced by personal feelings, interpretations, or prejudice; based on facts; unbiased: intent upon or dealing with things external to the mind rather than with thoughts or feelings

Subjective: placing excessive emphasis on one's own moods, attitudes, opinions, etc.; relating to or of the nature of an object as it is known in the mind as distinct from a thing in itself.

Being objective is rarely easy when dealing with a employee issues; if we stick to the facts with no outward show of emotion or compassion we may be perceived as cold, removed, unaffected; if we become emotional we run the risk of losing support or respect due to exhibiting weakness or no backbone, not to mention partiality or favoritism.

The trick is to find the middle ground—stick to facts while remaining genuine and as supportive or understanding as possible. When having a difficult conversation with an employee, always focus on **objective** observations and avoid making accusations.

No Bueno: “Why can’t you seem to drag your butt out of bed to get here on time? You’ve been late four times in two weeks and each time I’ve had to cover for you!”

Better: “Believe me, I get that coming in early can be difficult sometimes—your eyes refuse to open, your brain keeps sending the message it wants more sleep, but there are good reasons why we come in early. When you don’t get here on time then we end up short handed and the rest of the team has to cover for you. I need you to find a way to make it here: setting your alarm earlier, or maybe setting several alarms. We need you here with everyone else so we all can get done what’s expected of us to get done.”

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for dealing with people. We’re certainly not all the same size physically, and we’re absolutely not the same psychologically or emotionally. Remember that any time you’re dealing with a personnel (not *personal*) issue, even though you may be completely fair and consistent in your handling of it, the way in which it is perceived—even listened to—will be different from one person to the next.

The Greek physician Hippocrates—from whom we get the Hippocratic oath all doctors take—believed humans had four distinct personality types or temperaments; current psychology holds there are 16—four times as many. I won’t list them all because it’s not the point, rather simply being aware that *there are* so many differences is enough.

Levels Of Personal Interaction

Often in situations where you have to explain or argue a position, you have to be very careful to not become angry or irrational. The **words** you choose, the **speed** of your phrasing, and the **volume** you use will all contribute to the outcome. Therefore, it is best to stay calm, take deep breaths, choose words and phrasing that are short and concise, and be open to having to explain the situation a few times. Using these skills will enable a speedier outcome when arguing a position.

There are four levels in which we typically interact with one another. We use them all the time without a second thought . . . it's automatic. But when you stop and consider everyday conversations they begin to make sense.

For example, how many times in a day do we walk by someone and say "What's up?" or "How are you?". Most of the time this is really nothing more than a passing acknowledgement of the other person, we don't really expect an answer. This sort of exchange is **clichéd**.

But with people we know better, or perhaps those we consider friends, we often have lengthier interactions with them based on *opinions* or *feelings*. Those relationships are more productive because we, at some point, took the time to step beyond mere acknowledgment into a more collegiate sphere.

When you think about how you interact with your own teams try to think of situations which may apply to each of the interaction types below:

Cliché: "How are you?", "Okay", "Good". These are cliched, entirely devoid of useful information. We all do this, all the time.

Fact: "How are you?" "Eh. I've been better. Think I got a cold from my kids." Now you have a fact, not just a cliché, which you'd have if they answered "Not well."

Opinion: An opinion advances ones understanding of another by the simple sharing of personal thought. Getting to this level means you're starting to makes some sense of the facts and what they mean to the other person.

"Hey, how was your son's birthday party?"

If you tell me "It was alright," you've told me nothing, a cliché.

If you say "Went pretty good, lots of kids showed up," then you've given me a fact.

But if you say "having that party reminded me there are children far more awful than my own."

Now you've given me an opinion, and a little more insight into your world and thought process.

But the best level to be at is . . .

Feeling: This is where you tell the person how their 'fact' affected you personally; until this point no one really knows you.

"How was your son's birthday party?"

"It was alright." ➡ cliché

"Having that party reminded me there are children far more awful than my own." ➡ fact

“Went pretty well until I had to drive one kid home who ate too much cake and he threw up all over the passenger side of my car.”

Now I can genuinely relate to your experience and we can exchange *feelings* about it.

“Man! I remember that happened when I was in college when I drove my buddy home from a bar. He did the same thing, but on a bigger scale. He felt really bad about it the next day.”

“Yeah, so did the kid’s parents.”

The point here is if you communicate solely on the ‘cliché’ level then an opportunity is missed to connect on a more important, potentially more productive level.

Fairness and Equality—overall consistency

Fair and *equal* are not necessarily the same thing. Employees want to be treated fairly. It’s possible to be fair and not give everyone the same thing. Recognition is a good example. Everyone enjoys being recognized but all people do not want to be recognized the same way.

Like *objective* and *subjective*, perhaps knowing the exact definition of each will help:

Fair: the state, condition, or quality of being fair, or **free from bias or injustice**; evenhandedness

Equal: like or alike in quantity, degree, value, etc.; **evenly proportioned or balanced**

Pretty easy to get confused because without conscious thought the two seem very similar. In terms of day-to-day operations both are important, to be sure. But as a supervisor, knowing the distinction can be helpful. More than once you will hear “That’s not fair!”, so you need to be aware that something may, outwardly, seem “not fair” to someone yet still be *just* because it is **equal**. Here’s a cheesy but valid example:



Manny Marlboro has a genuine smoking habit. He’s smoked since he was 12-years-old. Some people like coffee, some like doughnuts . . . Manny likes cigarettes. On the other end of the dependence spectrum is Suzy Samsung; she is certifiably addicted to her cell phone. Not being connected gives Suzy visible signs of anxiety.

Suzy has complained to her supervisor that Manny gets a number of smoke breaks but she doesn’t get the same treatment so she can attend to her habit. “It’s not fair that Manny gets all that extra time and I don’t,” she says.



Does she have a valid point?

Well, what Suzy hasn’t acknowledged is that everybody on the crew have a number of opportunities, everyday, to check their phones, but always during downtime, after a specific task

or project is completed—in that few minutes gap between the end of one task and the beginning of another, or just before breakfast or lunch. So long as Manny requests his smoke break during these same gaps or downtimes **and** returns to work when everyone else starts working, then all is good. In this case Suzy’s sense of “fairness” has selfishly overlooked the fact that the supervisor has treated them equally. The described scenario is, in fact, free of ‘injustice’ and also ‘balanced.’

Now, any deviation from that scenario would likely give Suzy a clear advantage. If one word trumps both ‘fair’ and ‘equal’ it would be **consistent**.

“What-about-everyone-else?”

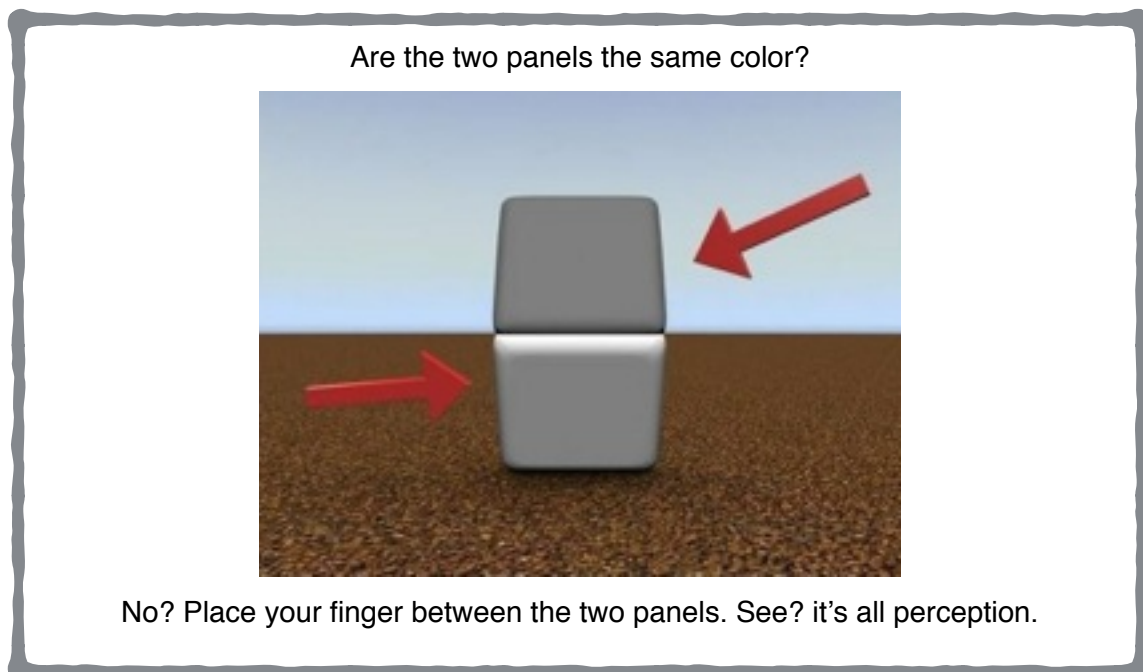
This phrase is a perennial favorite, a real “go-to” for those who feel they are being unfairly singled out for a chat, a more serious talk, or discipline. On occasion they’re right, but most often they need to be reminded that the given situation is about them and *their actions*, not everyone else’s.

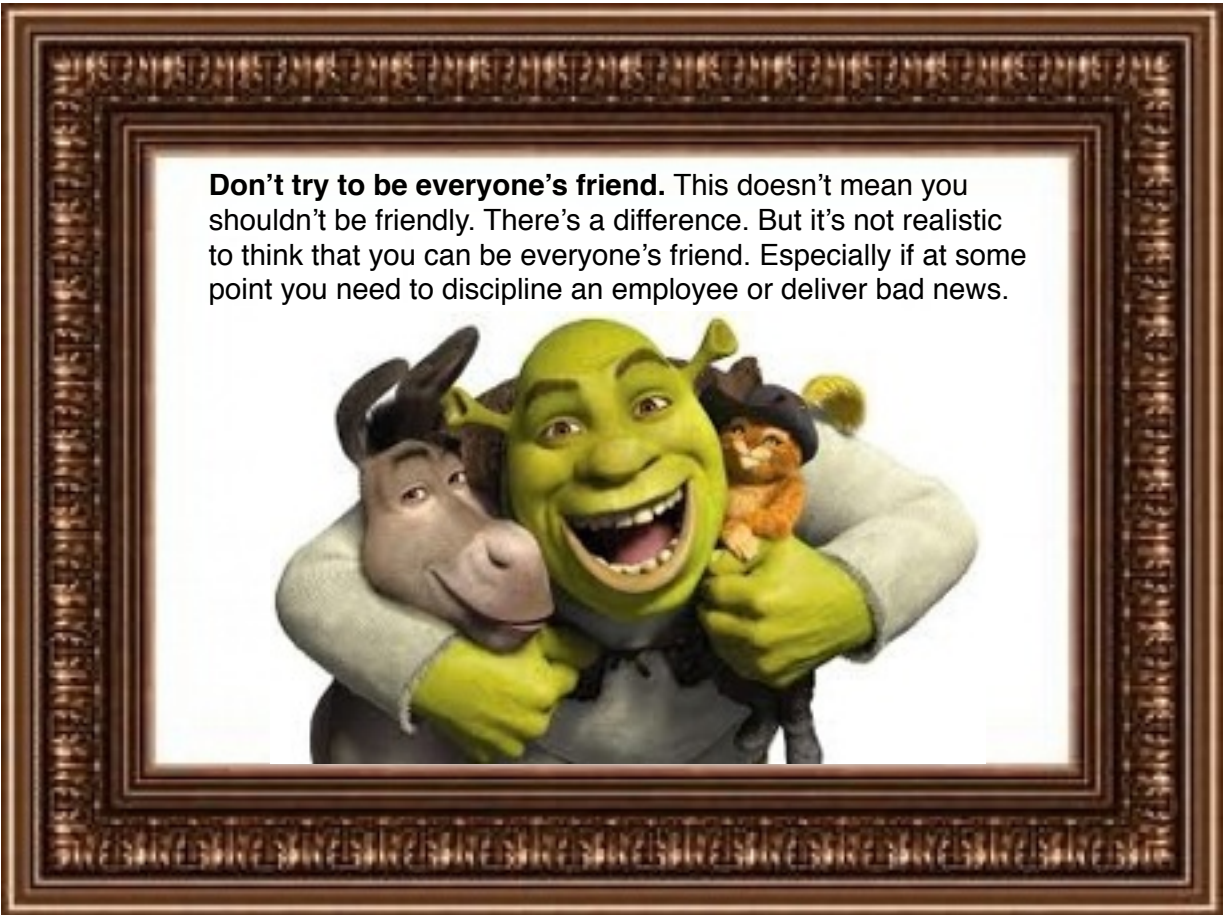
As long as consistency has been followed then this argument holds no water. **Make no mistake:** if fairness, equality, and consistency have in any way been ignored—or worse, forgotten—these four words become a real thorn in the side for the supervisor and the company, and from the employee’s point of view become a *vara* to the bull they’re fighting.

“What about everyone else?” can be a real attention getter, for everyone involved. How does a supervisor avoid this disease?

- **Always, always, always** remembering *fair, equal, and consistent*
- Also being mindful that, as is most often the case, the employee did or said something which resulted in their being counseled. As harsh as it may sound, many times it’s necessary to remind them of that fact—“This isn’t about everyone else, it’s about how *you* got here.”

Remember, “*There is no truth. There is only perception.*”





Feedback

You don't have to know everything. Ask for feedback and input. Often we put additional pressure on ourselves by assuming—incorrectly—that being a supervisor means we need to have all the answers. Being a supervisor means we should be able to *find* the answers; there's nothing wrong with saying "I don't know," but it should always be followed by "but I'll talk to someone who does and get back to you."

➤ *Feedback* is another word for effective listening

When one human being speaks to another, he or she needs to experience two very fundamental things – they need to know they've been understood, and they need to feel that what they said had some sort of value. Remove either of these aspects, and a speaker can quickly become confused, or even irritated. This very concept is where we get the English idiom "like talking to a brick wall." If you're not receiving (or giving) some kind of feedback then you're most certainly wasting two people's time.

➤ *Feedback* is not criticism

Most people's experience with feedback occurs when they're being disciplined for something, or maybe during a performance review. Even casual conversation can provide valuable information if you're paying attention. The importance of feedback cannot be overstated. Make sure you let your employees know how they are doing, whether good or bad.

Almost there . . .



There is an old saying which states “No man is an island.” No business, no company, no country can be run by any single person, try as they might. It takes the efforts of many people, a good number of which aren’t on the payroll, to make the engine go—even if you live alone and do your own laundry and cooking, you are still dependent on the city to supply water, the utility company to deliver steady power, refineries to produce all the petroleum products we use all the time, not to mention the gas to fill your tank so you can get to work.

And so it is with our small company and our teams—Rosa doesn’t make it all work, I certainly don’t, nor do the individual supervisors. **Everyone contributes**; without each member, top to bottom, performing the work then we fail to please our clients and ultimately we have no jobs.

Rosa would not have asked you to take on a supervisory role if she didn’t think you capable. We all know there is more to the job than simply giving direction or getting paid a little more than everyone else. There is more expected of supervisors and managers.

In any business or government there are always two types of clients or customers: *internal* and *external*:

- Chayce’s *internal* customers are each other. Each employee should be treated the same way we would treat the companies that pay us to take care of their facilities. We work with them every day, just as we do our clients, so why should they be treated differently?
- Our *external* customers are our clients and the vendors we work with—pretty much anyone who doesn’t get a paycheck from us but still affects our everyday operations.

The main difference between the two is we have more influence upon our internal customers—we can’t necessarily control what our external customers do or say, or how they interact with us and their customers. But we can, to a professional degree, control how we interact internally . . . and that’s where *you* come in.

You are the interface between the client and your staff, between your staff and the rest of the company. To that end you are held accountable as your role requires.

- Remember that a large percentage of **all** communication is non-verbal. When talking with your team members work on watching their body language and listening to **how** they speak as much as **what** they say.
- As in any relationship, **communication is vital** to keeping operations running smoothly. Not every conversation will be casual, unfortunately.
- Learn to listen to your instincts; when you think something may be important down the road, jot it down, or tap out a quick note on your phone. *The faintest ink is better than the strongest memory.*
- It's easy to change your clothes or change your mind, but **much more difficult to change perceptions**. Read that section again if it helps—read it as much as you need until it is sitting, ever present, in a little corner of your mind. *“There is no truth. There is only perception.”*
- Remember **objectivity over subjectivity**. Genuine facts are difficult to ignore, and emotions can be either dismissed or may escalate a situation. We cannot completely avoid emotion—we're human. But walking the incredibly fine line between objectivity and understanding is a necessary part of dealing with people.
- Strive to be **fair**—to treat everyone **equally**—to **be consistent** in your interactions.



There is one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life – reciprocity.
~ Confucius

