

LEADERSHIP LEARNING GUIDE / EPISODE 6

Carol: Dress for Success

Topic: Coaching, employee voice and professional credibility
Audience: Leadership, management and organizational behavior courses

ABOUT THE EPISODE

Carol had valuable contributions to make, but she was being overlooked in leadership meetings. Pete offered private coaching to help her professional presentation support her message. The lesson goes beyond clothing: leaders must help people develop confidence and credibility while ensuring that good ideas receive a fair hearing.

Help people be heard. Then listen to what they have to say.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After watching, students should be able to:

- Explain how presentation and workplace assumptions can affect whose ideas are heard.
- Describe how to give specific, respectful coaching without judging a person's worth.
- Distinguish developing an employee from making appearance a substitute for competence.
- Identify ways a leader can create fair opportunities for every team member to contribute.

FOUR PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

1. Coach privately. Discuss the barrier with care and preserve the employee's dignity.
2. Make expectations clear. Explain relevant professional expectations and invite questions.
3. Support the person. Offer practical help and encourage the employee's own choices.
4. Make room for the message. Listen to ideas and evaluate their substance fairly.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What responsibilities did Pete have when he noticed Carol was being overlooked?
2. How could he discuss professional presentation without embarrassing or stereotyping her?
3. What should the meeting leader do when someone's contribution is ignored?
4. How can we distinguish useful coaching from pressure to conform to personal preferences?
5. What evidence would show that the coaching helped Carol's voice receive a fair hearing?

FIVE-MINUTE CLASSROOM ACTIVITY / HELP SOMEONE BE HEARD

In pairs, imagine a capable employee says, "Nobody listens when I speak in meetings." Draft a respectful opening for a private coaching conversation, two questions to understand the problem, and one action the meeting leader should take. Consider both the employee's development and the team's listening habits.

KEY TAKEAWAY

A leader develops people and removes barriers to their contribution. Professional presentation can support credibility, but competence, ideas and respectful listening remain essential.

COACH WITH RESPECT. CREATE ROOM FOR CONTRIBUTION.

WATCH EPISODE 6

https://youtu.be/9t6VWheEoqs

Scan the code to watch on YouTube.



Explore the principles behind this case in
The Lean Leader's Playbook.
Explore how respectful coaching helps employees build confidence and contribute more effectively.

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