LEADERSHIP DYNAMICS

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Influence a *Culture* of *Respect* in the Workplace

Ask anyone in your workplace what treatment they most want from their bosses and coworkers at work. They will top their list with the desire for employer and coworkers to treat them with respect, courteousness, fairness, and value their individual differences with dignity and civility.

Respect is when you feel admiration and deep regard for an individual. You believe that the person is worthy of your admiration because of the qualities and capabilities they bring to the workplace.

Respecting individuals demonstrates you are aware of your colleagues as people who deserve respect. As such, you recognize that they have rights, opinions, wishes, experience, and competence.

Actions that Influence a Culture of Respect and Civility in the Workplace:

1. Focus on others' needs and consider how your words and actions will impact others before you speak or act. Approach each interaction with respect, regardless of whether you believe that the other person's behaviors "earn" or even elicit that respect.

2. Be intentional in your communications. Plan to listen to the other person without interruption and practice effective listening skills. Develop an awareness of the respect that you display in all areas of your communications, including what you say, how you say it, your voice tone, and the body language that you demonstrate.

3. Become a bridge builder and act in a manner that creates an inclusive work environment. Look for various ways to have diversity in work teams and committees as well as in individual associations. Be aware of the downsides caused by labeling and stereotyping others. Replace these behaviors with respect for individual differences.

4. Appreciate the value of diverse opinions in developing approaches to varying situations. Recognize that it does not equate to agreement if you listen, clarify what was said, and ask questions to gain an understanding of others' opinions. In situations where disagreement results, learn to "agree to disagree" respectfully.

5. Understand that conflicts will occur in the workplace and take responsibility for your actions, regardless of the situation. Take time to understand your triggers or "hot buttons." Knowing what makes you angry and frustrated will enable you to manage your reactions and respond in a more appropriate manner. Practice self-restraint and focus on your overall objectives in responding to potential conflicts.



6. Guard against acting impulsively based on negative assumptions about another's intent, as that can lead to damaged relationships. Take time to analyze relevant facts and to reconsider your assumptions.

7. Avoid tendencies to become caught up in gossip, complaining, or other forms of negativity in day-to-day interactions. Recognize that your actions will influence how others perceive you.

8. Be supportive of your organization in your communications both inside and outside of the workplace. Ensure that any comments that you make place the organization (including departments and individuals) in a positive yet realistic light.

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