



## THE Learning Advantage

### Mobley's Musings: No regrets

In the last few months, several friends and I have lost loved ones. In many cases, it was sudden and unexpected. One friend said how grateful he was to have told his wife how much he loved her. Another person mentioned how she had wished she had shared her caring feelings more often with her loved one. She assumed her feelings were known but isn't sure now.

For several weeks I had been meaning to reach out to a friend, only to learn that she had passed away. We think we have time to call, visit, and say we care, but maybe we don't. This is a sad reminder to take every opportunity to connect with the people you love.

In the same vein, if you have an unresolved issue with a friend or family member, make the time to build a bridge. When we think about the things that had upset us, they seem rather trivial compared to the relationship. You're unlikely to regret reaching out to a loved one, but failing to connect may be one of life's biggest regrets.

Sandy



### Ask Sandy

#### Working for a Know-It-All

Several clients are feeling demotivated by bosses who always find something to criticize in any work they and their teams do. Demoralized, my clients wonder why they should bother working hard when nothing they do is good enough. They avoid taking initiative when they see something that needs to be addressed, preferring to wait to be told what to do rather than risk their boss's criticism.

Because you're unlikely to be able to change a boss's tendency to be excessively critical, you're better off figuring out how to deal with it. It may be difficult, but start by assuming positive intent. Maybe your boss has years of experience in the business or industry and wants to share his expertise so your work can be as good as possible. Consider his criticism as an opportunity to learn. Thank your boss!

But maybe your boss doesn't have your best interests at heart. Perhaps he is a contrarian or sees his role as devil's advocate, taking the opposite stance to everything anyone proposes. He will always find something to disagree with. In that case, try presenting your ideas in a negative: "I don't think this will work, but what if we were to . . . ?" A contrarian boss may take the bait and insist, "Of course, it will work."

**Learning for Leaders:** Building a relationship with your boss is key to enjoying your work and being successful. Spend time figuring out how to make that relationship strong.

**Coaches Corner:** Ask your clients about their relationships with their boss. Help them build stronger ones.

If you have questions, you'd like Sandy to address in future newsletters, email them to [sandy@learningadvantageinc.com](mailto:sandy@learningadvantageinc.com)



### Strength Development: Growth that Feels Good

All too often, employee development can feel like a search and destroy mission. Organizations train managers to identify, target and extinguish employees' deficiencies. And since everyone has weaknesses to some degree, any search is certain to turn up areas for improvement. But in our zeal to identify and correct deficiencies, we may neglect the opportunity to recognize strengths and build on them. Whether you are thinking about this as a manager or for your own career building on strengths is motivating and effective.

Development shouldn't only be about fixing the negative; in fact, I'd suggest that building on the positive is more important for creating an engaged, productive team than working on a deficiency. Employees have more motivation to develop and deploy a skill that aligns with their career interests and their best selves. The payoff for leveraging strengths is higher for the organization and the employee.

Take Eric. He works for an international consulting firm that wants its people to be 'triple threats': great at selling business, developing teams, and implementing the work. Most people don't naturally fit that model, so the firm's professional development process is left to create them.

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