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Practical Management or Practical Magic: A Conversation with Julene Jones and Nyama Reed. Difficult Conversations with Those You Supervise

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Repository Citation

Jones, Julene L., "Practical Management or Practical Magic: A Conversation with Julene Jones and Nyama Reed. Difficult Conversations with Those You Supervise" (2018). *Library Presentations*. 189.
https://uknowledge.uky.edu/libraries_present/189

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Practical Management or Practical Magic

A CONVERSATION WITH JULENE JONES AND NYAMA REED

5/17/2018

Practical Management or Practical Magic

- Today's topic: Difficult conversations with those you supervise
- Possible future topics:
 - Coaching
 - Tips for Training
 - Change Management
 - Corrective Action
 - Budgets

About us



Julene Jones, chair, LLAMA
Mentoring Committee
and Head of Database Integrity,
University of Kentucky Libraries



Nyama Reed, Library Director,
Whitefish Bay Public Library, WI

Process

Before the conversation

- Identify the real issue
- Prepare documentation
- Contact your supervisor, HR
- Plan and practice

During conversation

- Describe behavior and its impact
- Be sincere and direct
- Practice active listening
- Goals: improvement, relationship-building, clarifying expectations

After the conversation

- Document
- Follow up

8 tips for difficult conversations

1. Have the conversation at a location and time where everyone can be calm and respectful
2. Confronting issues builds relationships
3. Goal of conversation: improvement, not micromanagement or blame
4. You cannot manage other people's thoughts or feelings
5. Don't apologize for holding people accountable
6. Use "I" statements: critique performance, not the person
7. If people are repeatedly untrustworthy, believe them
8. Not everyone is emotionally healthy or rational

Sample phrases to use

- What you did breaks the rules about _____. Are you aware of that?
- I disagree but tell me more. or I thought I heard you say _____. Is that right?
- I want to hear what you have to say but I can't concentrate when you _____. I expect you to _____.
- You interrupted me.
- I've decided _____. or In order to continue here, I need _____.
- _____ is not acceptable. I will do whatever is necessary and appropriate in this situation. I expect immediate and sustained improvement.

Resources we recommend

Ask a Manager blog (<http://askamanager.org>)

Effective Difficult Conversations: a step-by-step guide, by Catherine B. Soehner and Ann Darling (2017)

Four Tendencies, by Gretchen Rubin (2017)

How to Use Power Phrases to Say What You Mean, Mean What You Say, and Get What You Want, by Meryl Runion (2003)

Coaching for Improved Work Performance, by Ferdinand Fournies (1999)

Questions submitted in the LLAMA PAMS Survey

Reminders from LLAMA PAMS

Ask questions in the chat window

Please use fake names

Maintain a collegial conversation in the chat window, even when you are frustrated

Question 1

- I now supervise a **former colleague** who finds every excuse to leave the library for campus 'service' activities so as not to interact with staff **outside of what she wishes to do**. Most mornings are spent with her on the phone chatting with family and setting up activities outside of work; she tells me at the last minute she'll be 'out of the office' tomorrow [...]. This went on well **before I became her supervisor** and was overlooked. She replies to questions about her activities with **"tell me how I'm not doing my job?"**. How [can I limit] her outside activities and not be accused of creating a **"hostile workplace"** when she is confronted with not being here?

Questions 2 & 3

- How to supervise staff who are **best friends** and sometimes band together on issues to the detriment of other staff or the supervisor?
- I was recently promoted and have inherited two employees who **do not like each other at all**. It started as a petty disagreement years ago, and over time it escalated to them not speaking to each other. Their previous supervisor did not do anything to address the problem. Thankfully, their jobs do not require them to interact much, but on occasion, they must. I would appreciate any suggestions on how to alleviate the hostility between them!

Question 4

- How do I work with and train a new staff member who seems to "know it all", consistently **interrupts**, and **finishes [everyone's] sentences**?

Let's chat!



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Thank you for joining us!

Please see the following link / use the QR code for a quick survey



<https://goo.gl/forms/zMaSr6g6ebTZAeqW2>