Toward a Radically Candid Workplace

Advisor Week Edition
Wednesday, March 28th, 2018
Burnham Hall 209

From fudgethatsugar.com
Panel 1

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Panel 2

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Panel 3

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Panel 4

Session Goals

- Attendees will be able to define the major concepts from the book *Radical Candor*.
- Attendees will be able to apply concepts to their workplace.
- Attendees will be able to evaluate the utility of the Radical Candor model in their supervision (of advisees and others).

Introductions: You

- Who in the room currently supervises staff (i.e., "is a boss") and who is here because they want to supervise staff in the future?
  - What makes you/originally made you want to be a boss?
- Think about best boss/worst boss--what made them so?
- How did/do you learn how to supervise

Introduction

- Eric K Nicholas "Nick" Ardinger, PhD
  - Assistant Director for Residential Education
  - Campus Housing
  - 16 years at UIC and Housing
  - ardinger@uic.edu
  - "subject matter expert" —responsible for results achieved via others
  - "benevolent sociopath"
- (Priscilla Velarde Wilson)
  - Associate Director for Residence Life
  - Campus Housing
  - 9 years at UIC and Housing
  - pvelarde@uic.edu
  - "middle manager" —responsible for leading team
  - "anti-Grinch"

Why I like the book (and its ideas)

- "Bring your whole self to work" (very "student affairs-y")
- Relationships, not power, drive you forward (very academic/decentered power/collegial)
- "Telling people when their work isn't good enough" (often hard to define in student affairs—appeals to assessment person in me)
- ACUHO-I common reading

Radical Candor "Just Say It…"

- Just say it (4 min):
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFgu0nOHCcE

"Bosses guide a team to achieve results" (p. 6)

Part I (Theory)
- Build radically candid relationships
  - Bring whole self to work
- Get, give, and encourage guidance
  - Culture of open communication
- Understand what motivates each person on your team
  - Help people step toward dreams
- Drive results collaboratively
  - Telling people what to do doesn't work

Part II (Practice)
- Relationships
  - Establishing trust
- Guidance
  - Praise & criticism
- Team
  - Avoiding burnout and boredom
- Results
  - Get stuff done together—faster

Why Radical Candor: Care Personally

- When people trust you, they're more likely to:
  - Accept and act on your praise and criticism
  - Tell you what they really think
  - Engage in the same behavior with each other
  - Embrace their role on a team
  - Focus on getting results
- Unlearn "Keep it professional"; it gets in the way
- Be prepared to care deeply about people who may hate you in return

What does caring personally look like?

- Put their needs FIRST, above yours.
- Ask these questions:
  - How happy are are you right now?
  - How productive were you this week?
  - What's in your way?
  - How can I help remove any blockers?
  - What else can I do to enable your success?
  - What opportunities are we missing around here?
- (Note how they are less about emotion and personal life and more about professional opinions and productivity)

Why radical candor: challenge directly

- Challenging each other shows:
  - You care enough to point out that things are going well
  - You're willing to admit when you're wrong and you're committed to fixing things
- Jerry Maguire (warning: butts ahead)
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1B1_jQnlFk
- Not license to front-stab, or to nitpick
  - Choose your battles because they take work
- Not about schmoozing or driving go-carts together
- One person may find it obnoxious while another feels it too "touchy-feely"

The "Dog" story (p. 22)

- Really love dog
- Going to get it killed
- It's not mean, it's clear

In Brief: Cultivating Feedback

CARE PERSONALLY

RUINOUS EMPATHY

RADICAL CANDOR

CHALLENGE DIRECTLY

MANIPULATIVE INSINCERITY

OBNOXIOUS AGGRESSION

In Brief: Cultivating Feedback

Care Personally — Kind & clear — Challenge Directly

Care Personally — Specific & sincere — Challenge Directly

Radically Candid praise

Generic / Insincere
- "I really admire that you're a little league coach"
- (but I don't care about sports)
- (no idea what difference that makes—to relationship as people or to work together)

Radically candid praise
- "I admire that you do a good job integrating your work and personal life. I wonder if I'm doing a good job in that, and watching you helps me do better. And the things you've learned as a coach have been helpful in our work."

Obnoxious Aggression

- Don't even take a few seconds to show you care
- Next best thing
  - Because most people care about the quality of their work
  - People want to get better
  - Ultimately, we're responsible for results
- Works in short term, but leaves bodies in its wake
- Not enough to care, have to show you care (cut & paste email story)
- Worst is "cruel empathy" (knowing how to push buttons and doing so to get results—radical candor inverted)

Fixing Obnoxious Aggression

- Need to be challenged that you can change
  - Don't dismiss them as an "a-hole"
    - That's "manipulatively insincere" [caring about your feelings, not theirs; and not addressing things that interfere with results]
- Bosses are people too (Larry Page story p. 28)
  - Letting fear of "kick down and kiss up" get in the way

Manipulative Insincerity

- False apology as MI praise
- Becoming more "political" and less "genuine"
  - Lose our humanity and harder for others to care about or trust us

Ruinous Empathy

- Not effective because goal is not to point out good work and push for more...it's just to make the person feel better.
- Fear of awkwardness leads to neither giving, nor asking for, feedback
- Think you can eventually move to radical candor once they like you...
  - "Don't smile until December"

Understand what motivates each person: Rethinking ambition

Superstars	Rockstars
- Ambitious	- Content in life (or ambitious outside of work)
- Want new opportunities	- Happy in role
- Change agent	- Force for stability
- "Find your passion" at work sort of people	- "Tedium is a part of life"
- Figure out who will replace them	- Respect and recognize them

(people change and you have to change with them)

Practicing Radical Candor- Part 1: "Building Relationships"

- Start by getting feedback.
  - Show you can take it before you dish it out.
- Start giving praise before criticism.
  - Balance both...worry more about praise (not as geared for it)
  - Above all, be sincere
- "Just say it"

Being more specific and sincere with praise
Being more kind and clear with criticism

HIP Feedback is:
Helpful
Humble
Immediate
In Person
Public Praise / Private Criticism
Not Personalized

Bosses Guide Teams to Achieve Results

- "Many managers are perpetually frustrated that is seems harder than it should be to get things done. We just doubled the size of the team, but the results are not twice as good. In fact, they are worse. What happened? Sometimes things move too slowly: the people who work for me would debate forever if I let them. Why can't they make a decision? But other times things move too fast: we missed our deadline because the team was totally unwilling to do a little planning—they insisted on just firing willy-nilly, no ready, no aim! Why can't they think before they act? Or they seem to be on automatic pilot: they are doing exactly the same thing this quarter that they did last quarter, and they failed last quarter. Why do they expect the results to be different?" (pp. 7-8)

Achieving Results- "Get Stuff Done" Wheel

Achieving Results

- **Listen** to your team's ideas about the results your team should be pursuing.
- Help your team **clarify** their ideas and your understanding of the ideas so that you can help augment your team's voice.
- Use **debate** to make ideas more beautiful, to get to the best answer.
- Appoint the person closest to the facts to **decide**.
- Take time to **persuade** the rest of the team that the decision made was a good one.
- Give the team time and space to **execute** with autonomy and purpose.
- After executing, **learn** from the new context and variables whether the decision was correct, if you executed on the right things. And start again at listen!

Achieving Results

- Have regular 1:1s with each person on your team — Let them set the agenda for these meetings and use the time to listen and clarify.
- Hold Debate and Decide meetings — Pick the most important debates and decisions for your team each week, and include the relevant people for each.
- Announce decisions in All Hands meetings — use this time to persuade everyone on your team and to get them onboard with the decision.
- Create Meeting-Free Zones — give yourself and the people on your team time to execute.
- Walk Around — learn what's happening on the ground by spending some time walking around and chatting with people on your team about the work they are doing.

Listening & Clarifying

- Loud listening vs. quiet listening
- Create a culture of listening: Show you're listening
  - System for generating ideas & sharing complaints
  - Address (at least) some of them
  - Offer explanations why others aren't being addressed

- Give people space to get clear on thinking
- (Brainstorming not just "bring me solutions")
- Do the work of being easy to comprehend

Achieving Results- "Get Stuff Done" Wheel

1:1s

- They set agenda
- Mindset of getting to know them better
- Frequency matters
- Follow up questions: (Why?, How can I help?, what can I do or stop doing that would make this easier?, What are you working on that you don't want to work on?")
- Encourage new ideas: (What do you need to develop that idea further so that its ready to discuss with the broader team? How can I help?)
- Signs you're failing via 1:1s
  - Cancellations
  - Updates
  - Good news only
  - No criticism
  - No agenda

Supercharging 1:1s

- Have them…regularly
  - Make them top priority (be on time, be prepared, etc.)
  - Change up the setting (you represent the company, but represent your humanity)
  - It's ok to cancel (if you both agree)
- Things to cover
  - Results
  - Career Development
  - (Getting) Feedback
- Ask simple questions
  - What's on your mind this week?
  - How happy were you this past week?
  - How productive were you this past week?
  - What feedback do you have for me?

Final (depending on time) Thoughts...

- Explain radical candor with your team and what it isn't
- Prove you can take it before you dish it out
  - Have career conversations and up your game in 1:1 conversations
  - Assess. Have you made good progress on giving & getting guidance? Do you know your reports better? Are you happy with your 1:1s?
- (Once you can say yes...) Perfect staff meetings, debate & decide meetings
- Go back to guidance—get it to start happening between team members
- Fight meeting proliferation
- Plan for the future
- Return to guidance—make sure it's happening between team members
- Walk around (skip level meetings)
- Start to change culture of company (performance reviews, hiring & firing)

The "Um" story (p. 19)

- Don't let the good get in the way of what needs to be fixed
- Deal with it immediately (so it doesn't affect future results)
- No "sandwich"
- Not personal— "sound stupid" not "are stupid" (focus on behavior)
- Offer tangible help (in this together)

Building a Team
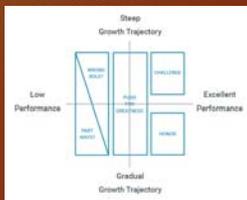
Keep top performers top of mind

- Don't let fear of micromanaging get in the way
  - Ignoring someone is a bad way to show you care (about them or their work)
- Marriage analogy (p. 52)
- Requires knowing the job they do, and occasionally helping do the work

- Managing middle: no such thing as B-player
  - Not shining—find project to give them chance to—everyone can excel somewhere
    - And chance to prepare to find replacement if they don't

Lies managers tell themselves about poor performers

- "It's not me, it's you" (have you given them radical candor?)
- "It'll get better" (how, exactly?)
- "Somebody's better than nobody" (not if it's hurting the team)
- "Transfer is the answer" (don't pas the buck)
- "Firing is bad for morale" (if you know they're doing a bad job, your team does too)

Why do some employees fail to perform?

- Wrong role
- Too much too fast
- Personal problems
- Poor fit

4/6/2018

Achieving Results

Drive Results Collaboratively

- Want to achieve results that are bigger than any one person
  - "burst the bounds of your brain"
- Telling people what to do (even if you're right) doesn't work
  - Feels different at end of spinning rope than at center
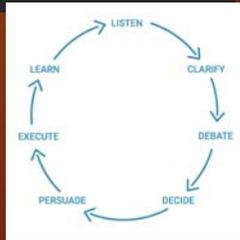
Debate & Decide

- Rock tumbler
- Focus on ideas, not egos
- Create obligation to dissent
- Pause for emotion/exhaustion
- Use humor/have fun
- Have clear ending (not just when it gets painful)

- Push decisions into facts & facts into decisions

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Persuade & Execute & Learn

- Emotion
  - Theirs, not yours
- Credibility
  - Expertise and humility
- Logic
  - Show your work

- Minimize the collaboration tax
- Keep "dirt under your fingernails"
- Block time to execute

- …from your mistakes
- Pressure to keep consistent (even when facts change)
- Avoid burnout by staying centered and keep learning

Part II:

Moving from theory to practice

Relationships

- Put on your own lifejacket first
- No such thing as work/life "balance"; but "integration" exists
  - Working hard for something we don't care about is called stress; working hard for something we care about is called passion.
- Figure out recipe & stick to it—calendar; show up to meetings with yourself

- Only get the best out of people when they feel free to bring their best
- Not "getting it out of them" letting them "bring it out themselves"

- "Mandatory fun" doesn't work…make your work meaningful

Relationships

- Build trust by create pattern of acting in good faith
  - Hold regular 1:1s
- Live your values, don't just list them
- Demonstrate openness
- Be in each others' physical space (yes, even touching…when and how appropriate)
- Recognize own emotions
- Master your reactions to others' emotions: acknowledge, ask questions, don't add guilt, don't tell them how to feel, keep tissues & water bottles handy

6 Tips for Giving Helpful Feedback

- Get clear about how you intend to help
- State your intention to be helpful
- Show, don't tell
- Finding help is better than offering it yourself
- Feedback is a gift, not a whip or a carrot
- Share the context

Giving Guidance

- Be humble
- Situation, behavior, impact
- "Left hand column" exercise (what was said on right, what was thought in left—how did left column influence right)
- Ontological humility (my experience isn't necessarily reality)
- Be helpful—state your intention to do so, but show, don't (just) tell
- Finding help is better than offering it (more efficient for you, less tension for them)
- Guidance is gift, not carrot or stick
- Give immediately (2-3 min between meetings, using slack time in calendar)
  - Don't save up for 1:1 or annual review
  - Has short lifespan
  - Builds up and poisons things—makes you look irrational
- Don't be black hole—people want to know results of their work

Giving Guidance

- In person (if possible)—Immediate is better (unless big deal—don't fire via text)
  - Closer to in person is best (walk down hall/video/phone/email)
  - Multiple modes (praise in public, follow up in 1:1)
  - Reply all: don't do it to criticize/fix. Tell them and ask them to send the correction to all. Quick praise via reply all is ok. (But best to follow up in person)
- Praise in public, criticize in private
  - Corrections, factual observations, disagreements and debates are different
  - Adapt to the person
  - Use it for group learning (let people self-report mistakes)
- Don't personalize ("fundamental attribution error")
- Get baseline & track improvements: make a chart, ask others to fill it in

Giving Guidance to your boss

- Start with your team: Roll it up the same way you roll it out
- If they're not going to go for it, maybe look for new boss
- Stuck in the middle: implementing ideas you disagree with
  - Listen, challenge, commit

Guidance

Guidance	Praise	Criticism
Get from team		
Give to team		
Encourage between team		

Need to check each box

Building a Team

- Have Career Conversations
- Be a Thought Partner
  - Not Micromanager
  - Not Absentee Manager
- Take Time for Growth Management

Thought Partners

ABSENTEE MANAGEMENT	PARTNERSHIP	MICROMANAGEMENT
Hands-off, ears off, mouth off.	Hands-on, ears on, mouth off.	Hands-on, ears off, mouth on.
Lacks curiosity. Doesn't want to know.	Displays curiosity. Recognizes when they need to know more.	Lacks curiosity. Pretends to know all.
Doesn't listen. Says nothing.	Listens. Asks why.	Doesn't listen. Tells how.
Is afraid of any details.	Asks about relevant details.	Gets lost in the details.
Has no idea what's going on.	Is informed because hands-on.	Asks for make-work presentations, reports, and updates.
Sets no goals.	Leads collaborative goal-setting.	Sets goals arbitrarily.
Remains unaware of problems.	Listens to problems. Predicts problems. Brainstorms solutions.	Tells people how to solve problems without fully understanding them.
Causes collateral damage by tripping on grenades unawares.	Removes obstacles and defuses explosive situations.	Tells people how to remove obstacles/ defuse situations, but watches from a safe distance.
Is ignorant of both the questions and the answers.	Shares what they know; asks questions when they don't	Pretends to know when they don't.
Is unaware of context.	Shares relevant context.	Hoards information.

Guidance between team members

- Shuttle diplomacy doesn't work
- Encourage sharing of praise and criticism ("Whoops the Monkey")
- Speak truth to power: skip level meetings
  - Explain, show, explain
  - Ensure meeting is "not for attribution"
  - Take notes & project them
  - Kickstart the conversation
  - Prioritize issues
  - Share notes after meeting
  - Ensure manager makes and communicates changes

Team: Avoiding burnout and boredom

- Conversation 1: life story
  - Find out what's important to them
- Conversation 2: dreams
  - Get away from "see yourself in five years"
  - Makes work more satisfying if going in direction of, but also boosts retention
  - 3-5 dreams: skills necessary to achieve each
- Conversation 3: 18-month plan
  - How their current role can help them learn skills they want, who to learn from, resources to help. Who does what by when?

Performance Reviews

- No surprises
- Don't rely just on your judgment
- Solicit feedback on yourself first
- Write it down
- Be conscious of when to give the written review (some like it before, others need to have it couched in person)
- Don't do them back-to-back
- Spend half time looking back and half looking forward
- Schedule regular check ins

Team: Growth management

- Put people in appropriate boxes (for now)
- Write growth plans
- Ensure fair grading

- Hiring: define "fit" as rigorously as you define "skills"; jot down thoughts right away; keep committee the same across candidates; use casual moments to determine fit; if you're not dying to hire them, don't.
- Firing: don't wait too long; don't decide unilaterally; give a damn; follow up

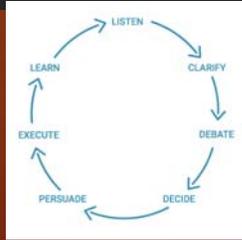- Promotions: be fair; prepare for meetings, manage time, acknowledge how hard conversations are; reward rockstars

Get Stuff Done Faster

- 1:1 conversations
- Staff meetings
- Think time
- Big Debate meetings
- Big Decision meetings
- All-hands meetings
- Meeting-free zones
- Kanban boards
- Walk around

LISTEN — CLARIFY — DEBATE — DECIDE — PERSUADE — EXECUTE — LEARN

Staff meetings & Think time

- Review metrics, Study hall updates, Identify (but don't make) key decisions
- Learn: review key metrics
- Listen: updates shared (work in shared documents)
- Clarify: identify key decisions & debates

- Make think time a required part of the calendar (for you to clarify as a boss)

Big Debate meetings

- Lower tension (decisions aren't made)
- Allow folks to slow down
- Foster culture of debate

- Identify owner of issue, they run meeting
- Only those identified as needing to be there are there
- Notes sent out after to all
- Check egos at door; no winners or losers
- Goal is summary of facts & issues, clear definition of choices, recommendation to decide or keep debating

Big Decision meetings

- Make explicit when debate has to stop
- Anyone can attend; notes sent to all afterward
- All decisions are final
- Decide if you have veto power ahead of time, but use sparingly

Other meetings

- All hands meetings
  - Get everyone on board
  - Presentations to persuade and Q&A

- When you get to execution, don't let meetings get in the way

- Kanban boards: to do/in progress/done; each person is different color post-it, each task is different note. Look for trends.

- Walking around (informal meetings to learn & listen)

Gender norms makes things difficult

- Men taught to "be gentler" on women
- May be afraid of being accused of being gender biased
- Women may get tagged as "abrasive" (by both men and women)
- Men: don't pull punches
- Women: demand criticism, don't stop challenging, care personally, but don't be "the angel in the house"; recognize you may be out of line occasionally, don't write men off
- Both: don't fall into the "competence/likeability" trap
  - Switch genders
  - Be more specific
  - Don't use gendered language

Be conscious of culture

- Everyone is watching you, but it's not all about you
- People are listening: you're under a microscope
- Clarify. Be vigilant about clarifying what you're communicating.
- Debate and decide explicitly. Don't let things that get in way of culture "just happen."
- Persuade. Pay attention to the small things.
- Execute: Action should reflect culture
- Learn
- Listen…

Appendix

Random slides full of resources

Videos

- moving from ruinous empathy to radical candor:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XQBxPy3Ah4
- Situation/behavior/impact (vs. personality):
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0YaXSbLqork
- The full video (21 min)
  https://youtu.be/WHpGkWdWOIA

(original) Agenda

- Major concepts
  - Radical Candor
  - Obnoxious Aggression
  - Ruinous Empathy
  - Manipulative Insincerity
- Exercise: think/pair/share
- Other important concepts
  - HHIIPP
    - Helpful/humble/in person/immediate/public praise/don't personalize
  - Rockstars & Superstars
  - Get Stuff Done Wheel
  - Absentee managers/thought partners/micromanagers
  - Skip level meetings
- Case Studies
- Q&A