

# Supervision: What You Do Is What You Get

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*By Dr. Robert A. Fazzi*

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There is a wonderful children's poem that most of us know. It's a poem that talks about how to treat children. The poem is called "Children Learn What They Live". It was written by Dorothy L. Nolte. What makes this poem so memorable is that in a rhythmic, poetic fashion, it presents a set of truisms that can guide any parent in the healthy development of their child. Children learn what they experience. If you treat children with love and respect, they tend to grow up with a sense of security. If you ridicule them, they lose much of their confidence. How you treat and relate to children has a strong impact on the type of child they become. These truisms, however, don't stop here.

## **Truisms Also Apply to Adults**

How you treat and relate to adults - your staff - has a strong impact on the type of worker they will become. If you treat workers with respect, they will learn to respect the work that they do. If you treat them as an inept subordinate whom you must constantly watch and control, they will slowly lose confidence and much of their motivation. What you do is what you get.

If you want to be a better supervisor, step back. Think about what motivates you. What makes you feel good? What gives you confidence? Think about what your supervisors could do (and hopefully are doing) to encourage you to work more effectively and more responsibly. Think about which supervisory traits or behaviors are most supportive and encouraging to your work-related efforts. What you will quickly realize is that optimal supervision is more than techniques, training, delegation and control.

Optimal supervision includes the development of a strong, supportive, performance motivating relationship with your subordinate. A relationship in which your subordinate feels that he or she is being treated with encouragement and respect. A relationship in which you constructively address weak performance and sincerely praise positive performance. A relationship in which employee's attitudes toward their job and organization clearly reflects their supervisor's attitudes toward them.

## The Supervisors Creed

So, how can you be a more effective supervisor? We need only to look at ourselves to realize that what we feel and very often what we do directly relates to how our supervisors treat us. The same goes for our staff. How we treat our staff directly relates to how they feel about their jobs, their work, and their organization. If you want to be a better supervisor, look at the Supervisor's Creed. It's the supervisor's version of Dorothy Nottle's wonderful poem. And, as she so eloquently points out, what we do (with children as well as staff) really does affect what we get.

### The Supervisor's Creed

If employees are continually criticized, they learn to avoid the responsibilities that they might be criticized for doing.

If employees are treated with disrespect, they find little reason to respect their product or service.

If employees are treated like children, they learn to act like children.

If employees are ridiculed or ignored when they suggest new ideas, they learn to avoid creativity.

If employees are not praised for their efforts or accomplishments, they learn that there is little sense in trying harder or making an extra effort.

If employees are encouraged and treated with respect, they become inspired to reach their potential.

If employees are praised and recognized for their accomplishments, they strive even harder to excel in their efforts.

If employees are treated in an honest and fair manner, they respond by giving the organization an honest and fair day of work.

If employees are challenged and given the opportunity to use their skills to the fullest, they feel fulfilled and committed to the work they do.

If employees are seen and treated as mature, responsible adults, they will behave as mature, responsible adults.

If employees are to succeed, it is the level of support, encouragement, and concern they receive from their supervisor that will determine their chances for success...for the success of the employee is a direct reflection of the success of the supervisor.

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