



I have an exercise for you.

You can wait until the video's over and do it at the end or if you want to do it now, you can pause the video after I give you the instructions.

Get something to write on and something to write with.

Then, think about who would be the perfect supervisor for you.

You might have an actual person in mind.

More than likely there's no one out there who is absolutely perfect, so what would a perfect supervisor for you look like?

Go ahead and list as many attributes, skills, and personality traits that are necessary to describe your perfect supervisor.

After you do that, look at your list and mark all the ones you have control over or at least some input on.

It's an interesting exercise- I hope- for a couple of reasons.

1) It's always important to recognize that each of us has our own specific needs.

What you wrote for your perfect supervisor might be completely different than what I wrote for mine.

This will be true of your staff as well which is why making things personal is so important.

Also I hope you recognized that there's only so much that you can control when it comes to other people generally and your own supervisor specifically.

What we're going to talk about in this lesson are some strategies and tips for how you might more effectively receive feedback from your supervisor and give feedback to your supervisor.

But the entire lesson has an asterisk to it, which is ultimately there's only so much control you have.

A lot of learning how to work best with your own supervisor is thinking about how much you're willing to change what you can control.

Of course that involves your own behavior, your own reactions, your own actions, because you will not have a strong level of control over what your supervisor says or does.



You can request, you can be so bold as to suggest, but ultimately, the only thing you can control in this equation is how you show up in that relationship. You know as a supervisor yourself that your relationship with your direct supervisor has a major impact on your work experience. In fact, the research tells us that the number one reason people leave jobs is their direct supervisor.

That's why it's so important that you do everything you can to be the best supervisor you can be.

But again, you can't control the kind of supervisor that you have.

In a perfect world, perhaps even on your perfect list, you have a supervisor who gives you feedback consistently, effectively, and in a way that has your best interest at heart and helps you grow.

The perfect supervisor also solicits feedback from you, is open to what you say, and doesn't hold it against you.

That's the supervisor you are.

That's not always the supervisor everybody else is. So as you work on your own growth as a supervisor, it's important that you remain realistic about the supervisor you have.

All of the strategies we'll talk about today will work with some people. It won't work with others. It might even backfire with some.

These are realistic decisions for you to make as you get to know your own supervisor.

You need to think about what their willingness is to engage in these conversations.

I had a supervisor once who told me they were really uncomfortable with what they considered confrontation. I learned very quickly that they considered most things to be confrontation. They never gave me any feedback, even though I asked and asked and asked in lots of different ways to try to find what might be the secret sauce to get what I needed. Eventually, I realized I just wasn't going to get it. They just weren't willing.

In any conversation that you broach, especially with your supervisor you want to be thoughtful about what the outcome is. What's the purpose of engaging in this conversation?

How much effort are you willing to put in?

It would be great in all of our relationships if everything was 50/50- that I met you halfway, and you met me halfway. I try to adjust my communication and the support I give you and you try to adjust for me.

This can be especially challenging when you are the wonderful supervisor that you are



and you're not receiving that same wonderful supervision from your own supervisor.

For some of us (i.e. me) it can cause some frustration or even bitterness.

If you're in a position where you're always the one catering to your own supervisor, is that okay?

If you end up getting what you want, are you willing to do all of the work?

At different times in my own career, I've answered that question differently.

That might be the case for you, too.

I think it's important for you to ask yourself that question over and over again.

Anytime you talk to anybody.

Just like when you're giving feedback to your staff you want to know what they care about.

So what does your management or your supervisor care about?

When you're giving them feedback or when you're asking for it, what do they care about?

Is it outcomes?

Is it money?

Is it good PR?

Is it looking like the hero?

And are you willing to adjust the way you communicate to feed into what they care about?

What are you okay with not getting and where do you put your foot down?

What about as you advocate for your team?

Is your line different when you're advocating for yourself?

When you engage in these conversations, these are some questions that might help get you what you need.



But if you don't have the world's most perfect supervisor and you're not being given everything you need, it might be up to you to ask questions to try and get it.

These are just some examples. Again, it might work for some people. It won't work for others.

Part of getting to know your supervisor is trying to understand what works for them.

I call this speaking their language.

Sometimes that might mean literally but I also mean it figuratively.

If their language is money, can you frame your request in terms of money?

If they care about being the one who gets all the credit, can you frame it in a way that gives them all the credit?

You might be okay with that if it gets you what you need.

It might not match your values and what you believe.

At the end of the day, you always want to feel that you are showing up with integrity and authenticity.

So what works best for you? How can you get what you need?

One thing that will not work for almost everyone is just hoping and wishing you get what you need. Most of us have to ask for it.

Often when we are not sure what is expected of us from our supervisors or if we're meeting expectations- it would be great if they told us up front- but many times we have to ask.

It's up to you to decide if you're not getting what you need, if you feel like you've tried every angle.

Is there a point in time where you just say I give up, it's just not going to work?

Like with the feedback you give to your staff, you solicit from your staff, being able to give feedback to your supervisor will help their growth.

They may or may not be interested in getting that feedback from you. That's something you need to gauge.

You always want to look out for your own growth.

If they're not giving you what you need to grow, are you able to ask for it and advocate



for it?

And if they can't help you grow, can they at least help you with your goals of getting promoted or getting a raise or whatever it is that you need from them to reach the goals that you want to reach?

You can only control what you can.

You need to let go of the rest.

So what can you control?

And what are you willing to let go of?