



For me, it's makeup.

When I teach a class or give a presentation or record a video for a virtual course, every once in a while when I'm done, and I go to the restroom or I get back in my car and I look in the mirror, there is makeup running all the way down my face.

It only happens every now and again, but when it does happen, not once has anyone ever said anything.

For other people it might be lipstick on their teeth or spinach in their teeth, something hanging from their nose or a fly that's down.

Even though most of us would want someone to tell us when we are experiencing one of those things, most of us are too uncomfortable to tell other people when they're experiencing it.

Why is that?

Well, it goes back to something we've been talking about- the discomfort and not wanting to make someone feel bad. Even when we know ultimately it would help them.

So why in the world are we talking about this?

Well, it's not to help you know what to say or do when you see someone with spinach in their teeth literally, although of course that might happen to you, but I'm using this as an extended metaphor to talk about those things that everybody knows that everybody notices. That people talk about behind closed doors, but they never tell the person directly. Specifically those things that might be holding that person back from reaching their goals, from getting to that next step.

We somehow justify that it's nicer or better not to let them know, when not telling them is preventing them from getting what they want.

How can you use your feedback for your own growth and for the growth of your staff in ways that it might never have been used before but is going to magnify your purpose, which of course is growth?

You may have heard over time and if you've read posts of mine over time, you will often hear me say that feedback should focus on performance. That is generally true. And in a roundabout way the spinach in the teeth metaphor is ultimately about performance.

Not in the sense that it's preventing them from performing well, but in the sense that it's holding back from them reaching their goals.

Examples of this in the workplace might be something like bad hygiene, inappropriate dress, bad breath, people who show up to a meeting and dominate, people who interrupt constantly and don't realize they're doing it, people who never say anything at all and



other people think they're not invested when they're completely engaged, but it's not apparent to other people.

These are the things that hold people back, and in many cases they have absolutely no idea.

So I want you to think sincerely, intentionally, deeply for each member of your team.

What is the spinach in their teeth that you're noticing?

Something that you haven't brought up because it's not exactly about performance, that is a little bit touchy, that is awkward, and they just keep doing that thing. They just keep saying that thing, and people are whispering about it. They don't include them in the meeting or the after work happy hour because of that thing.

Something that's holding them back and they have absolutely no idea.

In addition to you thinking about this, this is a fabulous conversation to engage each of your staff in. As you build up that trust, ask them if they want to have this kind of conversation about something you've noticed that might be uncomfortable, but that you ultimately are sharing because you care about your staff and their growth.

What about your own spinach? Who do you trust to be completely honest with you? It may be someone at work. It may be someone outside.

Are you willing to listen and hear something that may be in the moment very uncomfortable for you to hear but ultimately will help you as you work toward your goals?

Who is that person for you?

This type of feedback is an entirely different level of feedback even more than good to great. When you're a good supervisor and you give good feedback, you are helping your staff in their profession.

When you take it to the next level, when you pull someone aside to talk to them about that spinach, you literally might be changing their lives.

When you decide that you're ready to hear about your own spinach, it might take you to an entirely new level as a leader.

So if you want to go from good to great, you need to help make people aware of their spinach.

And you have to be willing to be made aware of your own.