I was a new director hired to turn a struggling team around.

I was excited, I was determined, and I was ready.

But as the weeks turned into months turned into a year, I was getting more and more frustrated and burnt out.

It seemed that we were having the same conversations over and over and over again, but we weren't getting any better. And in a particularly frustrating moment, I witnessed my staff do something that ultimately I misinterpreted.

At that moment, I was so upset, I got behind my desk and I sent a really harsh email.

Once we got to the bottom of what really happened, my bigger mistake was I never owned up to it, and I never apologized. Our relationship never recovered.

Learning how to admit your mistakes matters because you're going to make a lot of them. As a human being, as a leader, and as somebody who's learning and growing. It's just part of the process. Throughout that process you're going to have to determine when you need to admit your mistakes to other people.

Some mistakes are going to be pretty small and only really affect you. There's not really much purpose in admitting them to other people. But when those mistakes negatively impact other people, that's when you need to admit them. When you do, it's going to strengthen your relationships because people know that they can trust you. They'll respect you. You've given them permission to reciprocate when they make a mistake.

What about this is challenging for you?

Are you able to admit your mistakes?

Does it depend if it's personal or professional?

If it's a big mistake or a small one?

Who are you admitting it to?

How could you shift your mindset to make this better serve you?

As you're deciding how to admit your mistake, there are a lot of things to keep in mind.

Who should you admit the mistake to?

Of course the person who's directly affected, but you might want to also share it with your own supervisor. Maybe HR. Maybe your entire team depending on the circumstances.

Know that there might be consequences.

Is it a big enough mistake that you might get written up, suspended, or even fired?

Is it a big enough mistake that the relationship might not be fixable?

Honesty isn't always appreciated or reciprocated. You can only do your part. You can't control the other person's part, including whether or not they forgive you.

As you admit your mistakes, model for others, especially your team.Show them how it's done, that it's okay to make mistakes, and that it's important to admit them. Apologize sincerely and specifically.

'I'm sorry' is a good start but saying what you're sorry for shows that you understand what you did.

Own it, but don't beat yourself up about it. Take the lesson. Use the lesson going forward to try not to make the same mistake again. But don't beat yourself up. That's not going to serve anybody.

Focus on the future. Once you've made amends, once you've had the conversation, then focus on going forward. Don't get stuck in the past.

Give the other person space and opportunity to share.

Are they angry?

Disappointed?

How are they feeling?

Engage them in that conversation.

Remember the easy way out might make you feel better, but it's only going to make you look worse.

When you make a mistake, like I did, people know it and when you don't admit it, it makes everything so much worse.

Do the right thing, not just for the other person- though, that's important- but also do it for yourself and your leadership.

Show your team that you are a true leader.

So, the most important question for you is, what will you do differently the next time you make a mistake?