Troubleshooting Leadership:
How to Lead Challenging People and How to Lead in Challenging Circumstances

ACSA Leadership Summit 2018
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Presented by:

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Practice Areas and Experience

Barbara J. Ginsberg represents school and community college districts, and public agencies in all aspects of labor and employment matters and education law. She serves as chief negotiator for agencies in collective bargaining with certificated, classified, and police/safety units, and is experienced in both traditional and interest-based bargaining methods. In addition, Ms. Ginsberg has more than 24 years of experience investigating charges of harassment and discrimination as well as uniform complaints. She is a member of the firm’s Title IX and Clery Act groups. Other areas of Ms. Ginsberg’s practice include: classified and certificated employee evaluation and discipline (merit and non-merit); statutory and negotiated leave issues; police and safety matters, including POBOR issues; certificated and classified reductions in force; disability accommodation issues; student and employee privacy, search and seizure, and other constitutional issues; drafting board/agency policies; hiring practices; PERB, EEOC, DFEH, OCR, OAH, and personnel commission matters; and federal and state civil litigation.

Prior to joining AALRR in 2008, Ms. Ginsberg spent seven years as a legal advocate for public and private employee unions, including the Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs, Riverside Sheriffs Association, Orange County Firefighters Association, Santa Ana Firefighters, and the San Bernardino Public Employees Association; and eight years as an advocate for school and community college districts. She also served as Deputy City Attorney for the City of Victorville, and as teacher in elementary, middle school, and high school settings.

Events & Speaking Engagements

Ms. Ginsberg is a popular and highly requested speaker and regularly provides training throughout the nation on a variety of subjects of interest to K-12 school districts, community colleges, universities, cities, counties, governing boards, management teams, administrators, police and safety personnel, supervisors, and staff. In addition to addressing subjects that impact the workplace, the educational
Barbara J. Ginsberg

setting, and collective bargaining, Ms. Ginsberg provides training on the FRISK model for preparing effective documentation regarding employee substandard performance or conduct; leadership and communication skills; conducting investigations in the educational and workplace environments; conflict resolution; Brown Act compliance, and state-mandated sexual harassment training. She regularly lectures at conferences for local, statewide, and national organizations such as AASPA, ACCCA, ACSA, ACHRO, CAAASA, CABE, CALSA, CCLC, CCUPCA, CPCA, CSBA, NSBA, and WACUBO. She is also a regular instructor at various personnel and administrator academies throughout the state, and a guest lecturer at local universities.

Upcoming conferences include:

Santa Barbara County Education Office
02.22.2019 – Infusing the Practice of Civility into the Workplace
02.22.2019 – Conflict Resolution
02.22.2019 – Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

2018 ACSA Leadership Summit | San Diego
11.09.2018 Troubleshooting Leadership: How to Lead Challenging People and How to Lead in Challenging Circumstances

Central Coast | Buellton
01.16.2019 FRISK Documentation Model

2019 ACSA Classified Educational Leaders Institute | Monterey
03.02.2019 – Secrets to Getting Stuff Done

2019 Leadership Series with Barbara Ginsberg
Dates to be announced - Visit AALRR website for updates and registration
Conflict Resolution
Ten Tips for Teambuilding
Communicating with Difficult People
Building, Maintaining and Repairing Trust
Secrets to Getting Stuff Done

Community & Professional

- California Bar Association, Labor & Employment Law Section, Member
- California Council of School Attorneys, Member
- Cerritos College Foundation, Member and Past President
- Orange County Labor & Employment Relations Association
Dr. Myrna Morales serves as the Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources for the Paramount Unified School District. Dr. Morales has almost 30 years’ experience in education. At the site level, she served as a teacher, instructional coach, assistant principal and principal. As a site principal, she worked closely with all staff members, students and parents to create successful school sites. This success was noted and she was selected to serve as a full time Principal Coach. In this position, she worked to support each site by expanding and cultivating leadership in site principals. She also has extensive experience providing professional development to teachers and administrators. She has presented at a variety of conferences to support school improvement efforts. Dr. Morales has worked in Human Resources for the past nine years, working to support all employees.

She is a graduate of California State University Long Beach, California State University Dominguez Hills and Azusa Pacific University. She received her doctorate degree from University of Southern California in 2005.
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Signs of an Effective Team

Good communication / Good social relations

Efficient / Productive

Trust is evident

Collaborative

Minimal Conflict
Where is your team at?

The Four Stages of Group Development

- **FORMING**
  - The Group is not yet a Group but a set of individuals. Testing.
  - Polite
  - Impersonal
  - Guarded
  - Muted
  - Watchful

- **STORMING**
  - Internal Conflicts and Infighting over initial definitions, leadership, norms.
  - Confrontations
  - Opting out
  - Difficulties
  - People leaving
  - Demotivation
  - Feeling stuck

- **NORMING**
  - The Group establishes norms, rules of behaviour, and practices.
  - Getting Organised
  - Systems & Procedures
  - Giving Feedback
  - Confronting Issues

- **PERFORMING**
  - The Group becomes mature and capable.
  - Closeness
  - Resourceful
  - Flexible
  - Open
  - Supportive
  - Tolerant
  - Sharing
  - Effective

Challenging Employees

- People with bad attitudes
- Unmotivated people or not working to full capacity
- People who don’t want to be led
- People with low self-esteem
- People who are mediocre or seem unteachable
- People who hinder the team
Challenging Bosses

- Bosses who don’t like you
- Bosses who are bullies/tyrants
- Bosses with character problems
- Bosses who micromanage or don’t trust
- Indecisive or clueless bosses
- Bosses who can’t motivate the team

SIGNS OF TROUBLE IN YOUR OWN LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Micromanaging
- Hard time giving credit to others
- Not sharing information with staff
- Thinking no one can do a task as good as you
- Blaming others when things go wrong
- Being dismissive of ideas/people
- Not fulfilling resolutions
- More worried about pleasing others than being true to yourself
- Willing to bend the truth
- Not willing to see your blind spots or analyze what went wrong
Are you genuinely interested in making your employees successful?

Are you grounded?

Do you add value to your team?

Are you staying in your strengths?

Are you taking care of today?

Are you investing your time in the right people?

Are you investing in yourself?
IS IT THEM?

WHAT IS THEIR MOTIVE FOR ACTING THIS WAY?

WHAT IS PREVENTING THE PERSON FROM BEING COOPERATIVE?

DO THEY HAVE THE ABILITY TO CHANGE

DO THEY HAVE THE ATTITUDE/DESIRE TO CHANGE

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION = MATCHING PICTURES
TROUBLESHOOT YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

PREPARE WELL FOR MEETINGS WITH CHALLENGING PEOPLE

- Plan your communication well
- Be prepared to be honest, direct, and composed – avoid escalation
- Have specific examples ready
- Hold a private meeting
- Be prepared for if the meeting goes south and be prepared for consequences

TROUBLESHOOT YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

BE PREPARED TO SPEAK TO THE OTHER PERSON IN A MANNER THAT IS MOST EFFECTIVE FOR THEM

- Describe how you, the college, or the educational environment are being impacted by the difficult person’s actions/behavior
- Use an appropriate communication filter
- Be “other” oriented
- Avoid being reactive, defensive, or judgmental
TROUBLESHOOT YOUR COMMUNICATION SKILLS

LISTENING!!
- Be respectful and maintain self-control
- Listen to understand, not to reply; listen with intent until you know they feel heard
- Giving “attention” requires “attending to” the other person and actively listening
  - Do not interrupt or engage in competitive listening
  - Keep eye contact
- Don’t fragment your attention (especially between a person and an electronic device); avoid distractions in order to perceive details

SUMMARIZE AND CLARIFY FOR UNDERSTANDING
- Recap back to them after they speak
- Request recap from them after you speak
- When there are gaps/inaccuracies, clarify
- Ask inquiry questions for deeper understanding
- Goal is to get the listener’s understanding to match the message the speaker was trying to convey
CONTROL YOUR BODY LANGUAGE AND TONE

- 93% of communication is body language & tone
- When listening, your movements, voice quality, posture, gestures, eye contact, facial expressions tell others how available you are to interact and how interested you are in what they have to say. When speaking, they influence the way your message is interpreted by the listener.

WORK OUT SOLUTIONS TOGETHER

- Look at the “business interest” of the problem
- Mutually determine what can be done differently moving forward to lessen the impact
- Be willing to compromise
- Commit to and follow through on the solution
Help Your Team Improve Their Communication Skills

**INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNICATING TOGETHER**

- Regularly meet as a team
  - Everyone hears the same message
  - Everyone solves issues together
- Require everyone to have a voice during meetings & do interactive activities
  - Trust, understanding, reliability and care are established when everyone participates
  - The more often the team speaks together in a group setting, the easier communication gets

**TIPS FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGING EMPLOYEES**

- Figure out if your own leadership deficiencies are part of the problem
- Act swiftly to address issues and use direct language
- Have two-way communication to invest the individual in changing their behavior & use inquiry questions and listen to their answers
- Have a written action plan
- Be prepared to make difficult decisions once you have put in the work
• Consider whether you are actually the problem
• Ensure you have specific examples based on fact
• Do you have the credibility to influence your boss to change?
• Speak privately with your boss, not publicly
• Think through all the possible outcomes and be prepared to accept the outcome
• Either take action or keep the status quo but don’t complain or gossip if you don’t act
• Focus on reaching a collaborative solution & be respectful
• You can’t force a person to change, but you can choose to change your own circumstances

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGING BOSSES

• Be proactive in repairing relationships
• Always maintain a respectful, professional demeanor
• Keep things in perspective: Understand that all employees have a place and purpose in the District and their individual contributions have value
• Work, work, work to engage in EFFECTIVE communication
• Listen and summarize for understanding
• Get assistance where needed
• Follow District policies and procedures
• Work through solutions together

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH CHALLENGING PEERS
Ways to Help Make Your Work Team Stronger

PARTICIPATION

- Require attendance at all office/team meetings and ensure active participation
- Be interactive and approachable
- Regularly communicate
- Have an opinion when asked
- Challenge/push back, but respectfully & move on
- Be supportive of the common goals of the District & be prepared with both ideas and solutions

CULTIVATE GOOD RELATIONSHIPS & GET ALONG WITH OTHERS

- Treat others (public/co-workers) with courtesy, respect, and kindness
- Be likeable
- Don’t hang with employees who mistreat, disrespect, or talk down to others
- You don’t have to personally like co-workers or bosses, but you have to be kind to them and interact with them on work-related business. Make an effort to get along with those who are not easy to get along with
- Give credit and show appreciation to co-workers
Ways to Help Make Your Work Team Stronger

BE FORGIVING AND PROACTIVELY FIX BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

When you are the one who has betrayed someone’s trust, be proactive in repairing the relationship

- Acknowledge your behavior
- Apologize for it, without trying to excuse/justify it
- Commit to redeeming yourself
- Find out how their trust can be redeemed
When someone has betrayed your trust or behaved in a hurtful manner toward you, be proactive in fixing the relationship

- Acknowledge to yourself what happened and its impact on you; explore your feelings
- Take responsibility for your role in what went wrong
- Forgive others
- Move on

Strengthen Your Leadership Skills to Strengthen Your Team

- Connect with your employees and with your bosses
- Have patience with and respect for each other
- Communicate effectively and often
  - LISTEN, ask inquiry questions and summarize for understanding
  - Control your body language
- Initiate fixing relationships & BUILD TRUST
- Know your team members’ strengths and weaknesses and push them
- Have passion and bring positive support to those around you
- Quit comparing yourself to others & stay true to yourself
Footnotes


Disclaimer

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Question & Answer Session

Thank You
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