It’s Lonely at the Top Discussion Questions

Discussion Rules
- Be present.
- Start from a place of belief and respect for others’ experiences.
- Everyone is invited to speak, but it is not required.
- Ensure that others are given the space to share as well.
- What is said in here, stays in here.

General/Getting to Know You
- How long have you been a manager? What kind of library do you manage?
- What was your path to leadership like?
- What has been the most surprising thing about being a manager?
- What has been the most challenging situation you have dealt with as a manager? What have you learned from that situation?

Performance Management
- What do you find most challenging about managing staff’s performance?
- What has worked for you in eliciting strong performance from your employees?
- Do you have a story where you successfully turned a problem employee around?
- Do you have a story where you were not successful in helping an employee with their performance issues? What have you learned from that experience? What would you do differently if you had the same situation again?

Communication
- What communication challenges have you dealt with as a manager?
- How have you handled giving bad news to employees? What has worked well in your experience? What has not worked well?
- How do you combat misinformation, gossip, etc. around changes?

Decision Making
- What has been the toughest decision you have had to make as a manager? How did it go? Do you have regrets about the decision you made?
- What is the process you usually go through when making a decision? What are your highest priorities?

Dealing with Administration/Boards/etc.
- What strategies have you utilized to manage up? Have they been successful? What have been the challenges?
- Have you ever had a challenging situation with an advisory or governing board? How did you handle it and what did you learn from the situation?
Staff Development
- How do you ensure that staff keep their skills up in a changing environment?
- What are your favorite resources for staff training?

Hiring, Firing, Retention
- What tips do you have for hiring? What has worked well for you in the past?
- Have you had to fire someone? How did you come to the decision? What did you learn from the process?
- How do you keep employees motivated?

Leadership Development
- What resources have been helpful to you in your leadership journey?
- What do you think is missing in management courses or continuing education?

Work/Life Balance
- How has being a manager affected your work/life balance?
- What have you done to improve or preserve your balance between life and work?

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