



The Consulting Team, LLC  
Facilitating Positive Change

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## Leadership Tips October 2021: **EMPATHY:** *A Powerful Tool for Connection*

### Message from Dr. Marilyn Manning



Hi Friends,

During the past year with various degrees of isolation, many of us are feeling disconnected and deeply missing face-to-face contact with colleagues, friends, and our family members. We have all experienced stress and uncertainty. More than ever, little acts of kindness, expressing gratitude, and showing empathy are much appreciated.

When you sense that someone is “down,” ask a simple question: “Are you feeling worried?” Or ask: “Are you frustrated?” Most of us will answer truthfully with a “Yes, I am” or “No, but I’m feeling X.” Then just be quiet and listen and let them express. Next, ask what they need and see if together you can help them meet that need in a productive way. Sometimes, just asking a few simple questions shows your concern, makes a connection, and helps resolve a negative situation.

I recently coached two managers who both complained that the other was losing his temper and even yelling within earshot of some workers. Even though they told me that they had a trusting relationship, both said that their communication had deteriorated.

I explained the above tools of expressing feelings and needs. They immediately used the tools and reported that when they observed the other getting frustrated, they asked: “Are you getting stressed or ...?” The upset person would then pause, feeling the empathy, and was able to express what he needed. Their common needs included safety, space or time out, efficiency and understanding.

This is what empathy is all about, being aware of others’ negative emotions and showing them that you care. We hope this issue of *Leadership Tips* will give you ways to express more empathy, enhance your communication, and connect even better with others.

Best,  
Marilyn

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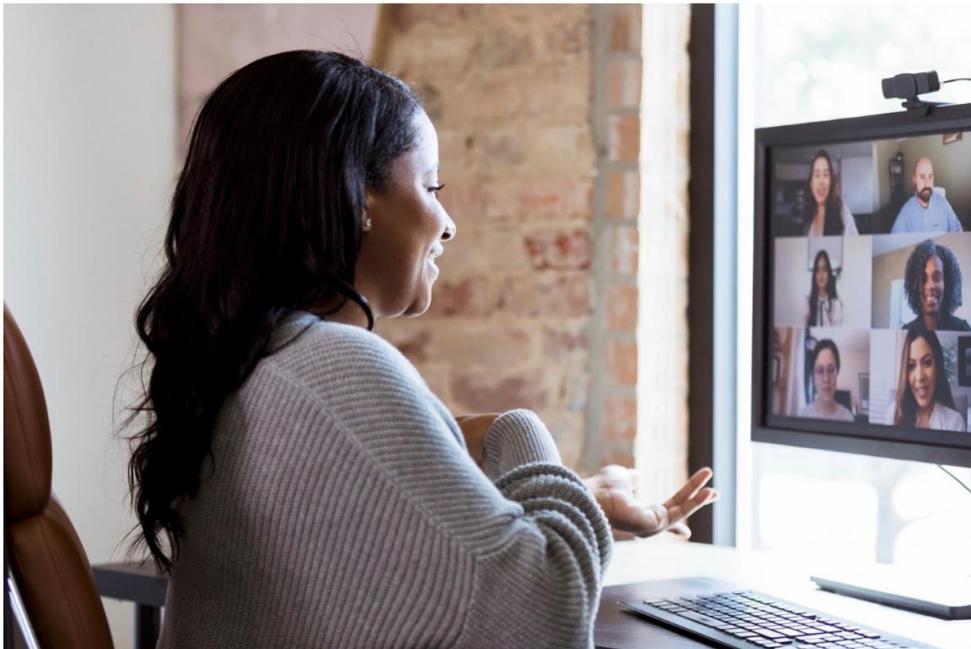
P.S. Our new website was designed with you in mind: [www.TheConsultingTeam.com](http://www.TheConsultingTeam.com).



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### In this issue of *Leadership Tips*...

1. Article: Empathy: A Powerful Tool for Connection
  2. October 12 Zoom mini-training: *How to Motivate Yourself and Your Team*, 1:00-1:30PM Pacific (No Charge)
  3. December 7 Zoom mini-training: *How Agreements Enable Results*, 1:00-1:30PM Pacific (No Charge)
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## EMPATHY

### *A Powerful Tool for Connection*

These past 18 months have thrown individuals, organizations, governments and our planet into major upheaval. The ways we meet and communicate, transact and govern, have all been challenged — whether by the pandemic, extreme weather events, political upheaval, racial reckonings, or market uncertainty.

You may feel skeptical of any quick fix or simple remedy we might prescribe in this monthly e-zine. That being said, let us instead identify a place we can all start, whether we are leaders or workers, in offices or in the field, working with internal or external customers, or as part of remote or hybrid teams. **Our prescription: *Express More Empathy.***

#### **Empathy Defined**

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. It isn't something we must study, train for, or master. It doesn't require an advanced degree. It's really as simple as putting ourselves in other people's shoes in order to understand what they're experiencing and then appreciate their point of view.

- Can you imagine yourself in your customer's situation?
- Can you feel the pain your depressed family member is feeling?

- Is your heart touched by the anguish of your employee facing hardship?
- As you prepare annual performance reviews, can you look at key events from your employees' point of view as well as your own?

So, empathy is the ability to see an experience through another party's eyes and appreciate their perspective. Yet there's more to it than intellectually understanding their experience. When we "get" it, it opens our hearts, and we are able to imagine how we'd feel if we were actually in their situation.

Also, in our emotional intelligence training and coaching, we describe empathy as:

- The capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from their frame of reference
- Taking an active interest in another's concerns
- Picking up cues to what others are feeling and thinking

### **Empathy at Work**

During tough times, where jobs are lost, money is tight, families are strained, and supply chains are disrupted, our empathy can help. Empathy for each other can soften the blows individuals, families, or organizations are feeling. It can replace a knee-jerk reaction when someone is late, misses a deadline, turns in less than stellar work, or completes 'quick and dirty' work instead of their usual elegant output. We can then recognize the duress they are experiencing and the less-than-ideal work conditions during the economic and social strains in this time of uncertainty.

### **Forgiveness and Empathy**

We all have the capacity to empathize. And in doing so, it becomes easier to extend gratitude and forgiveness to each other.

When was the last time you forgave someone else? How did it feel? What was the result? For some, extending forgiveness doesn't come naturally. Perhaps when you were growing up it was in short supply, so it's not your second nature to extend it to others. We suggest you try it anyway.

Are you holding on to any resentments or blame? If so, consider extending forgiveness to that person, whether they are a colleague, co-worker, or customer. Or extend empathy to a family member or stranger. Can you appreciate what they did, instead of fixating on what they didn't do?

### **Gratitude and Empathy**

Gratitude is the counterbalance to resentment. Psychology Today defines it as "the expression of appreciation for what one has" and notes that those who actively practice gratitude derive a value independent of monetary worth.

### **Cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude**

How about you? Are you someone who naturally and regularly expresses gratitude? Are you as generous to yourself? Do you give yourself the benefit of the doubt? Or do you hold yourself to a higher standard? Are you unforgiving when it comes to your own goals, expectations, reputation, and work quality?

An attitude of gratitude can make you happier and also help you to feel more empathy for others.

### **Our Gift to You:**

Let us remind you to:

- Empathize with your direct reports, colleagues, family, friends, and customers
- Put yourself in others' shoes periodically. Visualize how you would handle their load should your roles be reversed
- Remind yourself that what comes naturally to you may be harder for others
- Look deeper to realize many challenges exist beneath the surface for all of us; you never really know the burdens others are carrying, just as they likely have no clue of the strains you may be under

- Practice expressing empathy and gratitude daily
- Forgive yourself as well as others

### Apply Liberal Doses of Empathy.

Empathy creates warmth, understanding, kindness, and caring. Its ripple effect builds trust. Observe how liberal doses of empathy make a difference in your relationships and work environment.



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*We offer the following training and coaching that address EMPATHY:*

- [Emotional Intelligence: the key to success in today's workplace](#)
- [Conflict Resolution](#)
- [Mediation](#)
- [How to Have Essential Difficult Conversations about Diversity, Inclusion, Bias, and Belonging](#)

*Coming early 2022:*

*Our hybrid course entirely focused on Empathy, Gratitude and Forgiveness*

Click here to register for our free October 12 mini-training

**FREE 30-min. online event Tuesday October 12, 1PM:  
"How to Motivate Yourself and Your Team"**



*Facilitated by Senior Associate Kathye Citron*

In these times of constant change, we all need fresh ideas and tools for engagement and motivation. Join us for a lively session to hear:

- How to inspire and encourage others

- How to get yourself and others to achieve goals
- How to get yourself and others to be timely and focused

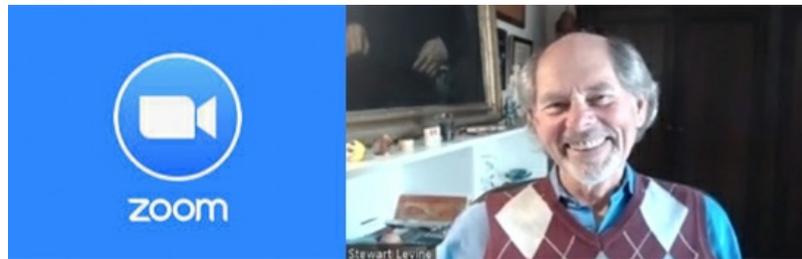
**Tuesday, October 12**  
**1:00-1:30PM Pacific**

Limited space: confirm your seat and receive log-in details when you register using the button below.

Register for this free 30-min. online mini-training in mid-October

Register for this free 30-min. online mini-training on December 7

**FREE 30-min. online event Tuesday December 7, 1PM:**  
**"How Agreements Enable Results"**



*Facilitated by Senior Associate Stewart Levine, J.D.*

Discover how agreements can promote collaboration and prevent conflicts.

- Get tips on when to use agreements
- See how to craft powerful agreements

**Tuesday, December 7**  
**1:00-1:30PM Pacific**

Limited space: confirm your seat and receive log-in details when you register using the button below.

Click here to register for our free early December mini-training

## Our Team of Trainers, Facilitators, and Coaches



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*Contact The Consulting Team to learn more about our online [training](#), [group](#) and [one-to-one virtual coaching](#), and [consulting](#) assistance for leaders and employees.*

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