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**Author’s Bio:** Kim Scott is the co-founder of Radical Candor, LLC., which offers workshops that help companies roll out Radical Candor. She is also the author of three novels.

Prior to founding Candor, Inc., Scott was a CEO coach at Dropbox, Qualtrics, Twitter, and several other Silicon Valley companies. She was a member of the faculty at Apple University, developing the course "Managing at Apple," and before that led AdSense, YouTube, and Doubleclick Online Sales and Operations at Google. Previously, Scott was the co-founder and CEO of Juice Software, a collaboration start-up, and led business development at two other start-ups, Delta Three and Capital Thinking. Earlier in her career, she worked as a senior policy advisor at the FCC, managed a pediatric clinic in Kosovo, started a diamond cutting factory in Moscow, and was an analyst on the Soviet Companies Fund. She received her MBA from Harvard Business School and her BA from Princeton University. Kim and her husband Andy Scott are parents of twins and live in the San Francisco Bay Area.

**Authors’ big thought:** *Radical Candor has been embraced around the world by leaders of every stripe at companies of all sizes. Now a cultural touchstone, the concept has come to be applied to a wide range of human relationships.*

**The idea is simple:** You don’t have to choose between being a pushover and a jerk. Using Radical Candor—avoiding the perils of Obnoxious Aggression, Manipulative Insincerity, and Ruinous Empathy—you can be kind and clear at the same time.

Radical Candor is about caring personally and challenging directly, about soliciting criticism to improve your leadership and also providing guidance that helps others grow. It focuses on praise but doesn't shy away from criticism—to help you love your work and the people you work with.
Radically Candid relationships with team members enable bosses to fulfill their three core responsibilities:
1. Create a culture of Compassionate Candor
2. Build a cohesive team
3. Achieve results collaboratively

Part 1: A New Management Philosophy

Chapter 1: Build Radically Candid Relationships: Bringing your whole self to work

• We undervalue the “emotional labor” of being the boss. That term is usually reserved for people who work in the service or health industry.
• This emotional labor is not just part of the job; it’s the key to being a good boss.
• Scott prefers the word “boss” because the distinctions between leadership and management tend to define leaders as BSers who don’t actually do anything and managers as petty executors. By the end of this book you’ll have a more positive association with all three words: boss, manager, leader.
• Ultimately, though, bosses are responsible for results. They achieve these results not by doing all the work themselves but by guiding the people on their teams. Bosses guide a team to achieve results.
• The three areas of responsibility that managers do have: guidance, team-building, and results.
  1. Guidance is often called “feedback.” People dread feedback. They dread getting it, both the praise, which can feel patronizing, and especially the criticism. They dread giving it.
  2. Team-building. Building a cohesive team means figuring out the right people for the right roles: hiring, firing, promoting.
  3. Results. Many managers are perpetually frustrated that it seems harder than it should be to get things done.
• Very few people focus first on the central difficulty of management, establishing a trusting relationship with each person who reports directly to you.
• Many things get in the way, though: power dynamics first and foremost, but also fear of conflict, worry about the boundaries of what’s appropriate or “professional,” fear of losing credibility, and time pressure. Nevertheless, these relationships are core to your job. They determine whether you can fulfill your three responsibilities as a manager:
  1. to create a culture of guidance (praise and criticism) that will keep everyone moving in the right direction;
  2. to understand what motivates each person on your team well enough to avoid burnout or boredom and keep the team cohesive; and
  3. to drive results collaboratively. If you think that you can do these things without strong relationships, you are kidding yourself.
• You strengthen your relationships by learning the best ways to get, give, and encourage guidance; by putting the right people in the right roles on your team; and by achieving results collectively that you couldn’t dream of individually.
• Your relationships and your responsibilities reinforce each other positively or negatively, and this dynamic is what drives you forward as a manager — or leaves you dead in the water. Your relationships with your direct reports affect the relationships they have with their direct reports, and your team’s culture. Your ability to build trusting, human connections with the people who report directly to you will determine the quality of everything that follows.
• Developing trust is not simply a matter of “do x, y, and z, and you will have a good relationship. Like all human bonds, the connections between bosses and the people who report to them are unpredictable and not subject to absolute rules.

• Scott has have identified two dimensions that, when paired, will help you move in a positive direction.

**Care Personally: The First Dimension**

• The first dimension is about being more than “just professional.” It’s about giving a damn, sharing more than just your work self, and encouraging everyone who reports to you to do the same.

• It’s not just business; it is personal, and deeply personal. Scott calls this dimension “**Care Personally.**”

• The second dimension involves telling people when their work isn’t good enough — and when it is; challenging people is often the best way to show them that you care when you’re the boss. This dimension she calls “**Challenge Directly.**”

• “**Radical Candor**” is what happens when you put “Care Personally” and “Challenge Directly” together. Radical Candor builds trust and opens the door for the kind of communication that helps you achieve the results you’re aiming for.

• It turns out that when people trust you and believe you care about them, they are much more likely to 1 ) accept and act on your praise and criticism; 2 ) tell you what they really think about what you are doing well and, more importantly, not doing so well; 3 ) engage in this same behavior with one another, meaning less pushing the rock up the hill again and again; 4 ) embrace their role on the team; and 5 ) focus on getting results.

• The most surprising thing about Radical Candor may be that its results are often the opposite of what you fear. You fear people will become angry or vindictive; instead they are usually grateful for the chance to talk it through.

• Caring personally is the antidote to both robotic professionalism and managerial arrogance.

• Only when you actually care about the whole person with your whole self can you build a relationship.

• Caring personally is about doing things you already know how to do. It’s about acknowledging that we are all people with lives and aspirations that extend beyond those related to our shared work. It’s about finding time for real conversations; about getting to know each other at a human level; about learning what’s important to people; about sharing with one another what makes us want to get out of bed in the morning and go to work — and what has the opposite effect.

• Once people know what it feels like to have a good boss, it’s more natural for them to want to be a good boss.

**Challenge Directly: The Second Dimension**

• Challenging others and encouraging them to challenge you helps build trusting relationships because it shows 1 ) you care enough to point out both the things that aren’t going well and those that are and that 2 ) you are willing to admit when you’re wrong and that you are committed to fixing mistakes that you or others have made . But because challenging often involves disagreeing or saying no, this approach embraces conflict rather than avoiding it.

**What Radical Candor Is Not**

• Radical Candor is not a license to be gratuitously harsh or to “front - stab.” It’s not Radical Candor just because you begin with the words, “Let me be Radically Candid with you.”

• It’s not Radical Candor if you don’t show that you care personally.

• Radical Candor is also not an invitation to nitpick. Do it only for things that really matter.
• Radical Candor is not about schmoozing, nor is it about endless extroversion that exhausts the introverts on your team or wears you out if you happen to be the introvert.

**Radical Candor Is Universally Human, But Interpersonally and Culturally Relative**

• Radical Candor is not a personality type or a talent or a cultural judgment. Radical Candor works only if the other person understands that your efforts at caring personally and challenging directly are delivered in good faith.
• Radical Candor requires even more adjustment when we go from one company to another, and more yet when we go from one country to another. What worked in one culture won’t translate directly to another.

**Chapter 2: Get, Give, and Encourage Guidance: Creating a culture of open communication**

• How many times have you tried to give feedback that totally falls flat?
• How can you, give guidance in a way that confronts a specific situation and creates ripple effects that change how everyone communicates?
• There are two dimensions to good guidance: care personally and challenge directly.
• When you fail, it can be in one dimension (Ruinous Empathy), the other (Obnoxious Aggression), or both (Manipulative Insincerity).
• Don’t personalize. The names of each quadrant refer to guidance, not to personality traits. They are a way to gauge praise and criticism, and to help people remember to do a better job offering both. They are not to be used to label people.

![Graph showing the dimensions of Radical Candor](image)

**Radical Candor**

• “It’s not means it’s clear!” has become a management mantra for Scott.
• A great way to get to know somebody and to build trust is to offer Radically Candid praise and criticism.
• *Radically Candid praise* “I admire that about you”
• *Radically Candid criticism* to keep winning, criticize the wins.

• **Obnoxious Aggression: When You Criticize** someone without taking even two seconds to show you care, your guidance feels obnoxiously aggressive to the recipient.
• Obnoxious Aggression is debilitating, particularly at the extreme. When bosses belittle employees, embarrass them publicly, or freeze them out, their behavior falls into this quadrant. This Obnoxious Aggression sometimes gets great results short-term but leaves a trail of dead bodies in its wake in the long run.
• The worst kind of Obnoxious Aggression happens when one person really understands another’s vulnerabilities and then targets them, either for sport or to assert dominance.
• When this is the toxic culture of guidance, criticism is a weapon rather than a tool for improvement; it makes the giver feel powerful and the receiver feel awful.
• Obnoxiously aggressive criticism - Front - stabbing
• Remember, Obnoxious Aggression is a behavior, not a personality trait.
• Obnoxiously Aggressive Praise: Belittling Compliments. Praise can be obnoxiously aggressive, too.

Manipulative Insincerity
• Manipulatively Insincere Guidance happens when you don’t care enough about a person to challenge directly. People give praise and criticism that is manipulatively insincere when they are too focused on being liked or think they can gain some sort of political advantage by being fake — or when they are just too tired to care or argue any more.
• Guidance that is manipulatively insincere rarely reflects what the speaker actually thinks; rather, it’s an attempt to push the other person’s emotional buttons in return for some personal gain.
• Conventional wisdom and a lot of management advice pushes bosses to challenge less, rather than encouraging them to care more. Generally, the resulting praise and criticism feels to employees like flattery or backstabbing. Needless to say, this doesn’t build trust between boss and direct report.
• Manipulatively insincere praise - the false apology. When you behave badly and get called out for it, an all-too-natural response is to become less genuine and more political — to move from Obnoxious Aggression to a worse place, Manipulative Insincerity.

Ruinous Empathy
• Bosses rarely intend to ruin an employee’s chance of success or to handicap the entire team by letting poor performance slide. And yet that is often the net result of Ruinous Empathy.
• Similarly, praise that’s ruinously empathetic is not effective because its primary goal is to make the person feel better rather than to point out really great work and push for more of it.
• Ruinous Empathy can also prevent a boss from asking for criticism. Typically, when a boss asks an employee for criticism, the employee feels awkward at best, afraid at worst.
• Instead of pushing through the discomfort to get an employee to challenge them, bosses who are being ruinously empathetic may be so eager to ease the awkwardness that they simply let the matter drop.
• When bosses are too invested in everyone getting along, they also fail to encourage the people on their team to criticize one another for fear of sowing discord. They create the kind of work environment where “being nice” is prioritized at the expense of critiquing, and therefore, improving actual performance.
• When Ruinous Empathy prevents bosses from soliciting criticism, they have no idea anything is wrong until a person quits. Needless to say, this strategy does not build trust on either side.
• Ruinously empathetic praise- “Just trying to say something nice”.
• When giving praise, investigate until you really understand who did what and why it was so great. Be as specific and thorough with praise as with criticism. Go deep into the details.
Moving Toward Radical Candor

- Start by explaining the idea and then asking people to be Radically Candid with you. Start by getting feedback, in other words, not by dishing it out. Then when you do start giving it, start with praise, not criticism. When you move on to criticism, make sure you understand where the perilous border between Radical Candor and Obnoxious Aggression is.
- Start by asking for criticism, not by giving it. Don’t dish it out before you show you can take it.
- Bosses get Radically Candid guidance from their teams not merely by being open to criticism but by actively soliciting it. If a person is bold enough to criticize you, do not critique their criticism.
- If you see somebody criticizing a peer inappropriately, say something. But if somebody criticizes you inappropriately, your job is to listen with the intent to understand and then to reward the candor. Just as important as soliciting criticism is encouraging it between your team members.
- Balance praise and criticism. Worry more about praise, less about criticism — but above all be sincere. We learn more from our mistakes than our successes, more from criticism than from praise.
- First, it guides people in the right direction. It’s just as important to let people know what to do more of as what to do less of. Second, it encourages people to keep improving. In other words, the best praise does a lot more than just make people feel good. It can actually challenge them directly.
- The notion of a “right” ratio between praise and criticism is dangerous, because it can lead you to say things that are unnatural, insincere, or just plain ridiculous.
- Patronizing or insincere praise will erode trust and hurt your relationships just as much as overly harsh criticism.
- In the case of criticism, most people are nervous about hurting someone’s feelings, so they often say nothing. In the case of praise, some people are eager to please those around them, so they always say something — sometimes inane things. Other people just aren’t in the habit of giving praise.
- Understand the perilous border between Obnoxious Aggression and Radical Candor “Your work is shit”.
- Radically Candid criticism is an important part of the culture at both Google and Apple, but it takes very different forms at the two companies. Google emphasizes caring personally more than challenging directly, so Scott describes criticism there as Radical Candor with a twist of Ruinous Empathy. Apple does the opposite, so she’d describe its culture of criticism as Radical Candor with a twist of Obnoxious Aggression.
- It’s tempting to think that Radical Candor should be reserved only for people you know well, like your friends and family. But the need for honest communication doesn’t always wait until you’ve built a close personal relationship, and even a near - stranger’s silence invites more awkwardness and mistrust.
- When confronted with somebody who is really upset, really angry, or shutting down, most people retreat to Ruinous Empathy. A few hold their ground but defend themselves against this onslaught of emotion by ceasing to care, and therefore become obnoxiously aggressive. Even really well - intentioned people are sometimes tempted both to give ground and to quit caring, retreating to Manipulative Insincerity.

Chapter 3: Understand What Motivates Each Person on Your Team: Helping people take a step in the direction of their dreams

- In order to build a great team, you need to understand how each person’s job fits into their life goals. You need to get to know each person who reports directly to you, to have real, human relationships — relationships that change as people change.
When putting the right people in the right roles on your team, you’ll also have to challenge people even more directly than you did with guidance — and in a way that will impact not just their feelings but also their income, their career growth, and their ability to get what they want out of life. Building a team is hard.

A leader at Apple had a good way to think about different types of ambition that people on her team had so that she could be thoughtful about what roles to put people in. To keep a team cohesive, you need both rock stars and superstars.

*Rock stars* are solid as a rock. The rock stars love their work. They have found their groove. They don’t want the next job if it will take them away from their craft.

*Superstars*, on the other hand, need to be challenged and given new opportunities to grow constantly.

In order to distinguish between the two, you must let go of your judgments and your own ambitions, forget for a while what you need from people, and focus on getting to know each person as a human being. For many bosses, this means rethinking ambition.

Scott prefers using the word “growth” instead of “potential,” to help managers think about what opportunities to give to which people on their teams.

She encouraged managers to ask themselves questions like, “What growth trajectory does each person on my team want to be on right now?”

Sometimes people really want to grow and are capable of contributing more than they have been allowed to; at other times, they simply want more money or recognition but don’t really want to change the way they work or contribute any more than they do already. As the boss, you’re the one who’s going to have to know your direct reports well enough to make these distinctions and then have some Radically Candid conversations when you see things differently.

Trajectories change and that you shouldn’t put permanent labels on people. They will help you build stable teams that achieve astounding results.

**Growth Management**

- Shifting from a traditional “talent management” mind-set to one of “growth management” will help you make sure everyone on your team is moving in the direction of their dreams, ensuring that your team collectively improves over time. Creativity flourishes, efficiency improves, people enjoy working together.

- The most important thing you can do for your team collectively is to understand what growth trajectory each person wants to be on at a given time and whether that matches the needs and opportunities of the team. To do that, you are going to have to get to know each of your direct reports at a personal level.

**Understanding What Matters and Why**

- To be successful at growth management, you need to find out what motivates each person on your team. You also need to learn what each person’s long-term ambitions are and understand how their current circumstances fit into their motivations and their life goals.

- Only when you get to know your direct reports well enough to know why they care about their work, what they hope to get out of their careers, and where they are in the present moment in time can you put the right people in the right roles and assign the right projects to the right people.

- “Steep growth” is generally characterized by rapid change — learning new skills or deepening existing ones quickly. It’s not about becoming a manager. Nor should steep growth be thought of as narrowly as “promotion.” It’s about having an increased impact over time.
• Gradual growth is characterized by stability. People on a gradual growth trajectory, who perform well, have generally mastered their work and are making incremental rather than sudden, dramatic improvements. Some roles may be better suited to a rock star because they require steadiness, accumulated knowledge, and an attention to detail that someone in a superstar phase might not have the focus or patience for.
• People in a superstar phase are bad at rock star roles, and people in a rock star phase will hate a superstar role.
• Most people shift between a steep growth trajectory and a gradual growth trajectory in different phases of their lives and careers, so it’s important not to put a permanent label on people.

The Problem With “Passion”
• Insisting that people have passion for their job can place unnecessary pressure on both boss and employee.
• There’s nothing wrong with working hard to earn a paycheck that supports the life you want to lead. That has plenty of meaning.
• Your job is not to provide purpose but instead to get to know each of your direct reports well enough to understand how each one derives meaning from their work.

Excellent Performance
• Keep your top performers top of mind. Your role is to focus on them and to make sure they are getting everything they need to continue doing great work.
• Be a partner, not an absentee manager or a micromanager. One of the most common mistakes bosses make is to ignore the people who are doing the best work because “they don’t need me” or “I don’t want to micromanage.” Ignoring somebody is a terrible way to build a relationship.
• You don’t want to be an absentee manager any more than you want to be a micromanager. Instead, you want to be a partner — that is, you must take the time to help the people doing the best work overcome obstacles and make their good work even better. This is time-consuming because it requires that you know enough about the details of the person’s work to understand the nuances. It often requires you to help do the work, rather than just advising.
• Managers often devote more time to those who are struggling than to those who are succeeding. But that’s not fair to those who are succeeding — nor is it good for the team as a whole.

Excellent Performance / Gradual Growth Trajectory
• Recognize, reward, but don’t promote.
• We all have periods in our lives when our professional growth speeds up or slows down. Recreation is essential for creation. Just as there is nothing inherently ignoble about ambition, there is no shame in being in the same job for many years. We all need a bit of both growth and stability in our lives and on our teams.
• What’s the best way to manage rock stars, the people whom you can count on to deliver great results year after year? You need to recognize them to keep them happy. For too many bosses, “recognition” means “promotion.” But in most cases, this is a big mistake. Promotion often puts these people in roles they are not as well-suited for or don’t want. The key is to recognize their contribution in other ways. It may be a bonus or a raise.
• If your organization gives performance ratings and / or bonuses, make sure they are fair to the rock stars.
• Fair performance ratings— in some companies, rock stars don’t get the performance review they deserve because all the top ratings are reserved for people who are in line to get promoted.

Recognition

• In addition to top ratings, a great way to recognize people in a rock star phase is to designate them as “gurus,” or “go-to” experts. Often this means putting them in charge of teaching newer team members, if they show the aptitude for it. Bosses can be reluctant to use a top performer this way, wanting them to do the job rather than to teach others. However, this attitude prevents an organization from getting as much leverage out of experts as they otherwise would.

Respect

• Life is so much better when people are great at their work and love it. The idea of climbing a corporate ladder is not inspiring to plenty of people. And yet those on a gradual growth trajectory are often referred to pejoratively as “B players,” or as having “capped out.”

• To manage these people well, it’s obviously important to reject these derogatory characterizations. Those who find work they can continue to love for five or ten or thirty years, even if it doesn’t lead to some sort of advancement, are damn lucky.

• Kick-ass bosses never judge people doing great work as having “capped out.” Instead, they treat them with the honor that they are due and retain the individuals who will keep their team stable, cohesive, and productive.

The dangers of promotion obsession

• The Peter Principle results in people getting promoted beyond their level of competence — an unhappy situation for everyone, especially the person who’s been promoted.

• Another version of the bad promotion occurs when people are competent for the next job but have no desire to do it at that moment in their lives. Don’t do this to your rock stars!

• Part of building a cohesive team is to create a culture that recognizes and rewards the rock stars.

Excellent Performance / Steep Growth Trajectory

• Keep superstars challenged (and figure out who’ll replace them when they move on). The best way to keep superstars happy is to challenge them and make sure they are constantly learning.

• Give them new opportunities, even when it is sometimes more work than seems feasible for one person to do. Figure out what the next job for them will be.

• Build an intellectual partnership with them. Find them mentors from outside your team or organization—people who have even more to offer than you do. But make sure you don’t get too dependent on them; ask them to teach others on the team to do their job, because they won’t stay in their existing role for long.

• Don’t squash them or block them.

• Not every superstar wants to manage. Lack of interest in managing is not the same thing as being on a gradual growth trajectory, just as interest in managing is not the same thing as being on a steep growth trajectory. Management and growth should not be conflated.

Managing the Middle

• Raise the bar—there’s no such thing as a B player. Everyone can be excellent at something.

• Sadly, lots of people never find work they are truly excellent at because they stay in the wrong job so long that any change would require a step or two backward. They may have come to depend on the prestige and money of the current position and feel pressure from family to keep it.
• Bosses keep this kind of employee on for several reasons: they’re not sure they can find someone better; it takes time and effort to train new people; and they like the person and feel it would be unfair to encourage them to find a job they are better suited for.

• This lack of courage and energy leads to a tremendous loss of human potential — to lives of quiet desperation. Assuming that people who are not thriving are therefore “mediocre” and can’t do any better is both unjust and unkind.

• Allowing them to continue down that path may be the worst case of Ruinous Empathy that managers regularly display and a great source of wasted possibility.

**Poor Performance / Negative Growth Trajectory**

• Part ways when somebody is performing poorly and, having received clear communication about the nature of the problem, is showing no signs of improvement. You must fire that person.

• How do it goes a long way to defining your long-term success as a boss, because it sends a clear signal to everyone on your team whether or not you truly care about people for more than what they can do for you on the job.

• How do you know when it’s time to fire somebody? There are three questions to consider: have you given her Radically Candid guidance; do you understand the impact of her performance on her colleagues, and have you sought advice from others? Have you given *Radically Candid guidance*?

• How is this person’s poor performance affecting the rest of the team?

• Have you sought out a second opinion, spoken to someone whom you trust and with whom you can talk the problem through?

**Common lies** managers tell themselves to avoid firing somebody who needs to be fired

• Managers almost always wait too long to fire people. Being too cautious may be preferable to being too hasty, but most managers wait far too long to do it because they have fooled themselves into believing that it’s unnecessary. Below are four common “lies” managers tell themselves to avoid firing somebody:
  1. It will get better.
  2. Somebody is better than nobody.
  3. A transfer is the answer.
  4. It’s bad for morale.

• Be Radically Candid with the person you’re firing. The way you fire people really matters, and to do this hard job well, it’s important not to distance yourself from the person you’re about to fire. If you try to avoid feeling the pain that is inherent in the situation, especially for the person you’re firing, you’ll make a hash of it.

• To be in the right frame of mind, remember the following:
  o Recall a job you were terrible at and think how glad you feel that you’re no longer in it.
  o When you fire someone, you create the possibility for the person to excel and find happiness performing meaningful work elsewhere.
  o Retaining people who are doing bad work penalizes the people doing excellent work. Failing to deal with a performance issue is not fair to the rest of the team.

**Low Performance / Steep Growth Trajectory**

• Manager look at yourself in the mirror! One of the most perplexing management dilemmas is when a person who ought to be taking on more and more and getting better every day is instead screwing up or just doing a lousy job. This happens for five different reasons that are worth parsing.
  1. *Wrong role*. Sometimes you will put a great person into the wrong job.
2. **New to role; too much too fast.** Obviously when you hire someone who has never done a job before and they have to learn it from scratch, they sometimes take longer than expected to progress. If the person gives you reason to believe they can be great in the role, if they show signs of “spiking,” it’s worth investing more. But sometimes it isn’t that obvious. Another mistake that bosses sometimes make is to dump too much on a person all at once, setting them up to fail.

3. **Unclear expectations.** If the problem is that you have not explained the role or the expectations clearly enough, you should invest more time to do so if you think the person can become a kick-ass employee.

4. **Personal problems.** Sometimes people who have been on a tear in their careers suddenly stop performing well because they are having a personal issue.

5. **Poor fit.** Sometimes a person seems to be in the perfect role, given their experience and expertise, but just can’t get traction at a particular company or on a team because there is a misalignment between the culture.

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**No Permanent Markers**

- People change, and you have to change with them. Somebody who’s been on a gradual growth trajectory may suddenly become restless and yearn for a new challenge at work. Or, a person who’s been on a steep growth trajectory for years may be craving a period of stability.
- This is another reason why you have to manage. Being a great boss involves constantly adjusting to the new reality of the day or week or year as it unfolds. But you can’t adjust if you haven’t been paying attention or if you don’t know the person well enough to notice that something significant has shifted.
- It’s not only important to remember that nobody is always on a steep or growth trajectory; people’s performance changes over time, too. Over the course of our careers, most of us go through waves. Sometimes we are in learning mode or transition mode. Sometimes our priorities change: a spouse takes a new job and we need to be home more, or we want to devote time to a passion outside work.
- It is important for the team member and the boss to be clear about what is driving the degree of trajectory at each juncture, so that both the team member and the company can benefit.

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**The Radical Candor Framework**

- Use The Radical Candor Framework like a compass to guide individual conversations to a better place. Please do NOT use it as a personality test to judge yourself or others. Don’t write names in boxes. We all fall into each quadrant multiple times a day.

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**Chapter 4: Drive Results Collaboratively: Telling people what to do doesn’t work**

- The ultimate goal of Radical Candor is to achieve collaboratively what you could never achieve individually, and to do that, you need to care about the people you’re working with.
- If you want your team to achieve something bigger than you could achieve alone, take the time to incorporate their thinking into yours, and yours into theirs.
- Don’t let your focus on results get in the way of caring about the people you work with.
- Telling people what to do didn’t work at Google. At a time when they were obviously in need of big changes, it had seemed like it was the fastest way forward, but it wasn’t. First, because Scott didn’t involve her team in decision-making; She just made the decisions herself. Second, because even after making them she didn’t take the time to explain why or to persuade the team she’d made good decisions. So, instead of executing on decisions they didn’t agree with or even understand, her team dissolved, and she wasn’t going to improve their results until she rebuilt it.
Telling People What to Do Didn’t Work for Steve Jobs Either

- Steve often demonstrated that he was willing — eager, even — to change his mind when he was proven wrong. But this rarely played out in a gracious “You were right, the mistake was mine” manner.
- The relentless focus on challenging himself and those around him to “get it” right rather than to “be” right was part of what drove Apple’s breathtaking ability to execute so well.

The Art of Getting Stuff Done Without Telling People What to Do

- Avoid the impulse to dive right in, you have to first lay the groundwork for collaboration.
- First, you have to listen to the ideas that people on your team have and create a culture in which they listen to each other. Next, you have to create space in which ideas can be sharpened and clarified, to make sure these ideas don’t get crushed before everyone fully understands their potential usefulness. Just because an idea is easy to understand doesn’t mean it’s a good one.
- Next, you have to debate ideas and test them more rigorously. Then you need to decide — quickly, but not too quickly. Since not everyone will have been involved in the listen - clarify - debate - decide part of the cycle for every idea, the next step is to bring the broader team along. You have to persuade those who weren’t involved in a decision that it was a good one, so that everyone can execute it effectively. Then, having executed, you have to learn from the results, whether or not you did the right thing, and start the whole process over again.

Listen

- You have to find a way to listen that fits your personal style, and then create a culture in which everyone listens to each other, so that all the burden of listening doesn’t fall on you.

Quiet listening

- Spend at least ten minutes in every one-on-one meeting listening silently, without reacting in any way.
- By doing so, people were much more likely to say what they really thought — even if it wasn’t what Scott was hoping to hear — when she was careful not to show what she thought.
- There are real advantages to quiet listening, but it also has a downside. When you’re the boss and people don’t know what you think, they waste a lot of time trying to guess.
- If you’re a quiet listener, then, you need to take steps to reassure those made uncomfortable by your style.

Loud listening

- If quiet listening involves being silent to give people room to talk, loud listening is about saying things intended to get a reaction out of them.
- **Loud listening** — stating a point of view strongly — offers a quick way to expose opposing points of view or flaws in reasoning. It also prevents people from wasting a lot of time trying to figure out what the boss thinks. Assuming that you are surrounded with people who don’t hesitate to challenge what you say, stating it clearly can be the fastest way to get to the best answer.
- Perhaps most important is to stick to the style that feels most natural to you. Try to strengthen your awareness of how your style makes your colleagues feel and work on improving that dynamic. Figure out how to listen to give the quiet ones a voice without weirding out their louder colleagues.

Create a culture of listening

- It’s hard enough to get yourself to listen to your team members and let them know you are listening; getting them to listen to one another is even harder. The keys are:
  1. have a simple system for employees to use to generate ideas and voice complaints,
  2. make sure that at least some of the issues raised are quickly addressed, and
3) regularly offer explanations as to why the other issues aren’t being addressed. This system should not merely empower anyone to point out things that could be better but also enable others to help fix those things or make changes.

- Sometimes creating a culture of listening is simply a matter of managing meetings the right way, constantly figure out new ways to “give the quiet ones a voice.”

**Clarify**

- Once you’ve created a culture of listening, the next step is to push yourself and your direct reports to understand and convey thoughts and ideas more clearly.
- Taking the moments to help clarify the ideas will save you time in the long run. Take the time to help your direct reports explain what they mean, so that they can do something about fixing the problem or pursuing the opportunity rather than just complaining about it.
- It’s not just important to understand new ideas clearly; it’s equally important, and often more difficult, to understand the people to whom your team will have to explain the ideas clearly.
- Be clear in your own mind.

*Create a safe space to nurture new ideas*

- Part of your job as the boss is to help people think through their ideas before submitting them to the rough - and - tumble of debate.
- There’s a lot of research demonstrating that when companies help people develop new ideas by creating the space and time to clarify their thinking, innovation flourishes.
- Brainstorming sessions are often used to surface and clarify new ideas. These sessions are not just random conversations where nobody is allowed to say anything negative, though.
- A good brainstorming session distinguishes between the two without killing too many good ideas or wasting too much time on the bad ones.

**Be clear to others**

- Make thoughts / ideas drop - dead easy for others to comprehend.
- You’ll be heard more accurately if you take the time to understand the people you are talking to.
- When you are listening to people on your team, take on the responsibility to understand — to actually listen — rather than putting the burden to communicate onto them. But when you are helping them prepare to explain their ideas to others — whether they are peers or cross - functional colleagues or executives — it’s your job to push your direct reports, and yourself, to do a better job.
- You need to push them to communicate with such precision and clarity that it’s impossible not to grasp their argument.

**Debate - The rock tumbler**

- Once you’ve spent all that time clarifying an idea — getting it really clear in your own mind and making it easy for others to understand — it’s tempting to feel like you’re done. Not so fast! The point of spending all that time in clarification mode was just to get the idea ready for a debate.
- If you skip the debate phase, you’ll make worse decisions, you’ll be unable to persuade everyone who needs to execute, and you’ll ultimately slow down or grind to a halt. You’ve got to make sure that they happen, and that there is a culture of debate on your team.

*Keep the conversation focused on ideas not egos*

- Make sure that individual egos and self - interest don’t get in the way of an objective quest for the best answer. Nothing is a bigger time - sucker or blocker to getting it right than ego.

*Create an obligation to dissent*

*Pause for emotion / exhaustion*
There are times when people are just too tired, burnt out, or emotionally charged up to engage in productive debate. It’s crucial to be aware of these moments, because they rarely lead to good outcomes. Your job is to intervene and call a time-out.

**Use humor and have fun**

- The spirit with which a debate is launched often determines the tenor of what follows.
- In some cases, it might be simple humor or opening the meeting with a good self-effacing story. What you say is less important than the tone it conveys, and the mood it sets for what follows.
- Finally, it’s important to be aware that not everyone enjoys debate. Some people find the very act of debate aggressive and/or threatening.

**Be clear when the debate will end**

- One of the reasons that people find debate stressful or annoying is that often half the room expects a decision at the end of the meeting and the other half wants to keep arguing in a follow-up meeting. One way to avoid this tension is to separate debate meetings and decision meetings.
- Don’t grab a decision just because the debate has gotten painful. It’s tempting to end debates and make a decision too soon when a debate becomes too painful.

**Decide**

- Push decisions into the facts, or pull the facts into the decisions, but keep ego out.
- Unfortunately, most cultures tend to favor either the most senior people or the people with the kinds of personalities that insist on sitting around the table. The bad decisions that result is among the biggest drivers of organizational mediocrity and employee dissatisfaction. That is why kick-ass bosses often do not decide themselves, but rather create a clear decision-making process that empowers people closest to the facts to make as many decisions as possible. Not only does that result in better decisions, it results in better morale.
- The decider should get facts, not recommendations.

**Persuade**

- You’ve managed to drive your team to a decision, but there are still people who don’t agree with it — the same people who will be responsible for helping to implement it. If you’re working efficiently, not everybody on your team is involved in every step of the listen-clarify-debate-decide process for everything — just the relevant people. Now that a decision has been reached, it’s time to get more people on board. This isn’t easy, and it’s vital to get it right.
- Expecting others to execute on a decision without being persuaded that it’s the right thing to do is a recipe for terrible results.
- To help you be more persuasive, and to teach the “deciders” on your team to be more persuasive, think about the following:

  **Emotion**
  - The listener’s emotions, not the speaker’s. If you fail to take into account your listener’s emotions, too, you won’t be persuasive.

  **Credibility**
  - Demonstrate expertise and humility
  - Credibility is one of those things that is hard to articulate but you know it when you see it. Part of it is obviously knowing your subject and demonstrating a track record of sound decisions. But it also requires a third component — humility — which is sometimes in short supply.
Logic
• Show your work. Sometimes, the logic may seem self-evident to you, so you fail to share it with others. When you know something deeply, it’s hard to remember that others don’t.

Execute
• Minimize the collaboration tax. As the boss, part of your job is to take a lot of the “collaboration tax” on yourself so that your team can spend more time executing. The responsibilities you have as a boss take up a tremendous amount of time.
• One of the hardest things about being a boss is balancing these responsibilities with the work you need to do personally in your area of expertise.
• Here are the three things Scott learned about getting this balance right: Don’t waste your team’s time; Keep the “dirt under your fingernails”; and Block time to execute.
• Keep the “dirt under your fingernails” - Even though the burden of the collaboration tax falls on you as the boss, the tax shouldn’t be 100 percent. In order to be a good partner to the people on your team you need to stay connected to the actual work that is being done — not just by observing others executing but by executing yourself.
• You need to learn to toggle between leading and executing personally.
• Block time to execute - Often, execution is a solitary task. We use calendars mostly for collaborative tasks — to schedule meetings, etc. One of your jobs as a manager is to make sure that collaborative tasks don’t consume so much of your time or your team’s time that there’s no time to execute whatever plan has been decided on and accepted.

Learn
• It’s obvious that good bosses learn from mistakes and successes alike and keep improving. And yet, denial is actually the more common reaction to imperfect execution than learning.
• There were two enormous pressures -
  1. To quit learning.
  2. Pressure to be consistent
• Burnout - Sometimes we’re overwhelmed by our work and personal lives, and these are the moments when it is hardest to learn from our results and to start the whole cycle over again.

Part 2: Tools and Techniques
Part 2 of this book will describe some tools and techniques you can use to put the ideas from Part 1 into place immediately.

Chapter 5: Relationships: An approach to establishing trust with your direct reports
• While it is commonly taught to maximize shareholder value, Scott learned that too much emphasis on shareholder value actually destroys value, as well as morale.
• You can’t fulfill your responsibilities without good relationships, but the way in which you fulfill your responsibilities is integral to relationships. They’re built from the outside in and the inside out.

Stay Centered – you can’t give a damn about others if you don’t give a damn about yourself.
• Managers who create a stable foundation for themselves are invariably more effective at building teams on which people can do the best work of their lives.
  Work-life integration
• Be relentlessly insistent on bringing your fullest and best self to work – and taking it back home again.
• Figure out your “recipe” to stay centered and stick to it. It’s even more important to focus on making time for whatever keeps you centered when you are stressed and busy than when things are calm.
• Put the things you need to do for yourself on your calendar, just as you would an important meeting. *Show up for yourself*
• Don’t blow off those meetings with yourself!

**Free at Work**

• When everyone on your team is able to bring the best of what they’ve got mentally, emotionally, and physically to their work, they are more fulfilled in their jobs, they work better with one another, and the team gets better results. You can’t get that out of people with power, authority, or control.
• If you can build a trusting relationship with people so they feel free at work, then they’re more likely to do the best work of their lives. But you’re not “getting it out of them”; you’re creating conditions for them to bring it out of themselves.
• Google has an extreme approach to hiring but it gives people a sense of fairness and autonomy simply by reducing the odds that any individual can be at the mercy of a single person.
• The first rule of building the kind of relationship with the people that will make them feel free at work is to lay down unilateral authority. Look for places where you can let go some of the traditional sources of a boss’s control, thereby signaling to your direct reports that you want them to be more autonomous.

**Mastering the Art of Socializing at Work**

• Mostly you get to know the people you work with on the job, every day, as an integrated part of the work rhythm, not at the annual holiday party. Spending time with people from work in a more relaxed setting, without the pressure of work deadlines, can be a good way to build relationships. For the most part, it’s better to use the time after work to keep yourself centered than to socialize with work colleagues.
  *Even non-mandatory events can feel mandatory*
• The social pressure will drag some people into situations they’d rather avoid.
• Sometimes the greatest gift you can give your team is to let them go home.
  *Booze*
• A drink or two can be a social lubricant. But it can also backfire, and badly.

**Respect Boundaries**

• Building radically candid relationships requires you to walk a fine line between respecting other people’s boundaries and encouraging them to bring their whole selves to work. You’ll need to negotiate boundaries with each person you work with. And you’ve got to respect these boundaries while also getting to know the people you work with better over time, in order to build the best relationships of your career.
  *Building trust*
• Probably the most important thing you can do to build trust is to spend a little time alone with each of your direct reports on a regular basis. Let your direct reports set the agenda for your 1:1s and then asking questions is a good way to begin building trust.
• The way you ask for criticism and react when you get it goes a long way toward building trust or destroying it.
Sharing Values

- Your values are what keep you centered. Many people feel that their personal values are a deeply private set of beliefs that they don’t want to discuss with colleagues. An exercise that requires people to talk publicly about their values may drive a wedge rather than help people find what they have in common. Live your values.

Demonstrating openness

- You do need to respect other people’s values when they do share them with you.
- It’s crucial to remind people that an important part of Radically Candid relationships is opening yourself to the possibility of connecting with people who have different worldviews or whose lives involve behavior you don’t understand or that may even conflict with a core belief of yours.
- The work is the bond everybody on a team does share, and the most productive way to strengthen the bond is by learning how to work together in ways that benefit everyone involved.

Physical space

- Interesting fact: to be most effective at optimizing the flow of chemicals oxytocin and serotonin, which boost mood and promote bonding, hold a hug for at least six seconds.
- To show that you “care personally” with your hugs, you have to obey the “platinum rule.” This means, figure out what makes the other person comfortable, and do that. If most people on your team are comfortable with hugs (in appropriate circumstances), and others are not, you need to figure out a way to make sure that they don’t feel excluded from all those hugs they don’t want. Use your words!

Recognizing your own emotions

- Everyone notices what kind of mood the boss is in. They have to. It’s adaptive. You can’t successfully hide how you feel from people who work closely with you. The best you can do is own up to how you feel so others don’t feel your mood is their fault.
- If you have a truly terrible emotional upset in your life, stay home for a day. Mental-health days should be taken more seriously than they are.

Master your reactions to others’ emotions

- All people, including the people who report to you, are responsible for their own emotional lives. Do not try to prevent, control, or manage other people’s emotions.
- To react with compassion:
  - Acknowledge emotions
  - Ask questions
  - Adding your guilt to other people’s difficult emotions doesn’t make them feel better
  - Telling people how to feel will backfire
  - If you really can’t handle emotional outbursts, forgive yourself
  - Keep tissues a short walk from your desk
  - Keep some closed bottles of water at your desk
  - Walk, don’t sit. When you’re walking, the emotions are less on display. Walking and looking in the same direction often feels more collaborative than sitting across a table and staring each other down.

Chapter 6: Guidance: Ideas for getting/giving/encouraging praise and criticism

- In order to build a culture of Radically Candid guidance you need to get, give, and encourage both praise and criticism.

Soliciting Impromptu Guidance

Embrace the discomfort

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• When you are the boss people really do not want to criticize you or to tell you what they really think.
• Here are some tips / techniques Scott has seen work to get the conversation flowing:
  o You are the exception to the “criticize in private” rule of thumb.
  o You also set an ideal for the team as a whole: everyone should embrace criticism that helps us do our jobs better.
  o The bigger your team, the harder it is for people to get on your calendar.
  o Airing it in public has another benefit as well: it saves you from having to hear the same thing over and over.
  o Have a go - to question.
  o “What could I do or stop doing that would make it easier to work with me?”
• Prepare scenarios in advance and commit to sticking with the conversation until you have a genuine response.
• Another way to embrace the discomfort is to point out when people’s body language is at odds with what they’re saying.
• Listen with the intent to understand, not to respond.
• Listen to and clarify the criticism — but don’t debate it.
• Remind yourself going in that no matter how unfair the criticism, your first job is to listen with the intent to understand, not to defend yourself.

**Reward criticism to get more of it.**
• You have to reward the candor if you want to get more of it.
• In some cases, of course, you may disagree with the criticism. It’s here that your Radical Candor skills become essential.
• First, find something in the criticism you can agree with, to signal that you’re open to criticism. Then, check for understanding — repeat what you heard back to the person to make sure you got it.

**Gauge the guidance you get.**

**Orange Box**
• Make it not just safe but natural to criticize you.
• Employees won’t feel free if you don’t take specific actions to ensure that it’s not just safe but expected to make suggestions and complaints. You have to organize a system.
• Put an orange box with a slit on the top in a high-traffic area so that people could drop questions or feedback into it. At his all-hands meeting he’d reach into the box and answer off the cuff.

**Management “Fix - It” Weeks**
• Instead of a chance to work on new and exciting ideas people usually don’t have time to get to, it’s a chance to fix old and annoying problems that have been bothering people for months.

**Giving Impromptu Guidance**
• If you don’t lead by example, the people on your team are unlikely to guide each other.
• Be humble - start with being humble because it’s absolutely essential when delivering both praise and criticism.
• A huge part of what makes giving guidance so valuable is that misperceptions on both sides of the equation get corrected.

Here are some techniques:
• *Situation, behavior, impact.*
Describe three things when giving feedback: 1) the situation you saw, 2) the behavior (i.e., what the person did, either good or bad), and 3) the impact you observed. This helps you avoid making judgments about the person’s intelligence, common sense, innate goodness, or other personal attributes.

- Situation, behavior, and impact applies to praise as well as to criticism.
- To give praise to people properly. Use these three touchstones as well.

### Left - hand column.
- Think of a conversation you had that was frustrating. Take out a clean sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle. Write down what you actually said in the right - hand column. Write down what you thought in the left - hand column. Now think about when the conversation went sideways.

### “Ontological Humility.”
- The idea is that when you are mindful that your subjective experience is not objective truth, it can help you challenge others in a way that invites a reciprocal challenge.

### Be helpful
- To find a way to help them clarify the challenge they’re facing — that clarity is a gift that will enable them to move forward. Here are some tips and reminders:

### Stating your intention to be helpful can lower defenses.
- Show, don’t tell.
- By explicitly describing what was good or what was bad, you are helping a person do more of what’s good and less of what’s bad — and to see the difference.
- Finding help is better than offering it yourself.

### Guidance is a gift, not a whip or a carrot.
- Think about times that guidance has been most helpful to you and offer it in that spirit.
- Give feedback immediately
- If you wait too long to give guidance, everything about it gets harder.
- It’s much more effective and less burdensome to just say it right away!
- Say it in 2 – 3 minutes between meetings.

### Reiterate impromptu guidance
- Truly this is something you can squeeze in between meetings in three minutes or less. If you give it right away in between meetings, you will not only save yourself a subsequent meeting but also deliver the guidance in less time than it would take you to schedule the subsequent meeting. And the quality of your guidance will be much better.
- Keep slack time in your calendar or be willing to be late.
- Don’t “save up” guidance for a 1: 1 or a performance review.
- Don’t let the formal processes — the 1: 1 meeting, annual or biannual performance reviews, or employee happiness surveys — take over. They are meant to reinforce, not substitute, what we do every day.

### Guidance has a short half-life.
- Unspoken criticism explodes like a dirty bomb.
- Remaining silent at work for too long about something that angers or frustrates you makes it more likely that you will eventually blow up in a way that makes you look irrational, harms your relationship, or both.
- Avoid black holes.
- Be sure to let people know immediately how their work is being received.
- In person (if possible)
The clarity of your guidance gets measured at the other person’s ear, not at your mouth. That’s why it’s best to deliver guidance in person. You won’t really know if the other person understood what you were saying if you can’t see the reaction.

Unfortunately, giving guidance in person is not always possible. When that is the case, here are some things to keep in mind: Immediate vs. in person.

- **Hierarchy of modes.**
  - A video call, if you have high-speed internet access, is second best.
  - Multiple modes.
  - Praise people at a public all-hands meeting.
  - Following up in person at a 1:1 carried more emotional weight and following up with an email to the whole team carried more lasting weight.

- **Do’s and don’ts.**
  - If you must criticize or correct somebody over email, do not Reply All.
  - Being in a remote office is hard.
  - It’s really important to have quick, frequent interactions.
  - Praise in public, criticize in private.
  - Public praise tends to lend more weight to the praise, and it encourages others to emulate whatever was great.
  - Corrections, factual observations, disagreements, and debates are different from criticism.
  - Adapt to an individual’s preferences.
  - When you’re praising people, your goal is to let them know what they did well as clearly as possible and in the way that will make them feel best — not the way you’d like to hear it.

- **Group learning.**
  - To encourage public criticism so that everyone learns from one another’s mistakes, let it be self-reported.
  - Don’t personalize—avoid personalizing but accept it when people take what you say personally.
  - The “fundamental attribution error” will harm the effectiveness of your guidance.
  - Use situation, behavior, impact, or the left-hand column techniques to be humble and to avoid personalizing.
  - Say “that’s wrong” not “you’re wrong.”
  - When an argument is about an issue, keep it about the issue. Personalizing unnecessarily will only make the issue harder to resolve.
  - The phrase “don’t take it personally” is worse than useless.
  - Don’t personalize even when it really is personal.

**Gauge Your Impromptu Guidance, Get A Baseline, Track Your Improvements**

- One of the most effective ways to become more Radically Candid is to explain the framework to your team and then ask them to gauge your guidance each week. Track your progress over time.

- The most important thing is figuring out how others experience your guidance. Listen to how they feel about the guidance you’re giving them. Help them understand that when you’re challenging them it’s because you care about not just their professional growth but them as human beings.

**Being Radically Candid with Your Boss**

- If you are not in a position of authority, I do recommend that you try being Radically Candid — but proceed with caution. It is not your moral obligation to criticize your boss if it will cost you your job.
• Once you start rolling out Radical Candor with your team and seeing good results, explain what you’re doing and why to your boss. Give your boss a chance to challenge you but assume good intent.
• You can approach Radical Candor with your boss in much the same way you did with your team. Start by asking for guidance before you give it.
• Here is a slight modification if you’re talking to your boss instead of your employee — ask permission to give guidance.
• When offering guidance to your boss, use the same tips above: be helpful, humble, do it immediately and in person, praise in public (if it doesn’t look like kissing up), criticize in private, and don’t personalize.
• Radical Candor may be harder for men managing women.
• Criticism is a gift, and you need to give it in equal measure to your male and female direct reports.
• Gender politics is another factor that makes it harder for some men to be Radically Candid with women.
• Gender bias makes it difficult for women to be Radically Candid with both men and women. One common bias woman often fall prey to: the “Abrasive Trap.”
• When bias plays out over a whole organization, the impact on female leadership is profound.
• The context of gender politics and gender bias is becoming untouchable — to everyone’s detriment. It doesn’t have to be this way.
• Scott has a few thoughts on how individuals can take action to cool things down where they work on a daily basis.
  o Men: don’t “pull punches” with women - become aware of how the woman feels about your guidance; just ask her. Ask her to gauge your praise and criticism.
  o Women: demand criticism. Do whatever it takes to drag a candid assessment out of your male colleagues or boss.
• Men and women: things to think about when you feel a woman is being “too aggressive”:
  o Switch genders. Imagine a man on your team doing exactly the same thing the woman did. Now, how would you react? If you’d react differently, you’re about to fall into the trap.
  o Be more specific.
  o Don’t use gendered language. Notice the words you use.
  o Never just say, “Be more likeable.”
• Things to think about if you’re a woman who’s being told, “You’re abrasive.”
  o Never stop challenging directly.
  o Care personally — but kill the angel in the office.
  o The competence / likeability research has not concluded that you weren’t out of line. Remember: it is possible that you have been obnoxious.
  o Just because it’s wrong to kiss up and kick down doesn’t mean it’s right to do the opposite.
  o Don’t write men off.

Formal Performance Reviews
• No surprises.
• Don’t rely on your unilateral judgment.
• Solicit feedback on yourself first.
• Write it down.
• Taking the time to articulate your thinking on paper beforehand can spare you the awkwardness of having to backpedal in the middle of a review, or after you’ve delivered it.
• Make a conscious decision about when to give the written review. There is no right timing here. Some people are much better able to have a productive conversation if they already know the substance of the review.
• No matter how you decide to deliver the review, commit to being Radically Candid — and to being sure that what you have to say has been fully understood by the other person.
• Schedule at least fifty minutes in person, and don’t do reviews back - to - back.
• Spend half the time looking back (diagnosis), half the time looking forward (plan).
• Schedule regular check - ins to assess how the plan is working.
• Deliver the rating / compensation news after the performance review.

Prevent Backstabbing
• Never let one person on your team talk to you about another behind their back.
• Instead, insist that they talk directly to each other, without you. Hopefully, they’ll work it out. But if they can’t, offer to have a three - way conversation, ideally in person but at worst on the phone.

Peer Guidance
• GOOD guidance should happen in a conversation, in person.
• It’s important that you, as the leader, encourage your team to take the time to talk to one another.
• Peer gauging. Another good way to get people talking to each other is to explain the Radical Candor framework to your team. Explain how you ask your team to gauge the guidance you give them, so that you can improve your guidance. Encourage them to gauge their peer guidance. Having a shared vocabulary will help your culture move toward Radical Candor.

Speaking Truth To “Power”
“Skip level meetings.”
• They need to happen only once a year to be effective. This involves meeting with the people who work for your direct reports, without your direct reports in the room, and ask what they could do or stop doing to be better bosses.
• The rationale for skip level meetings is that most people are very reluctant to criticize their boss.
• The intent of these sessions is to be supportive of the managers who report to you, not to undermine them.
• Here are a few rules of thumb for conducting them.
  o Explain it. Show it. Explain it again. Explain to each of your direct reports that you have two goals: 1) to help each of them become better bosses and 2) to make sure people on their team feel comfortable giving them feedback directly.
  o Never have a skip level meeting without prior consent of your direct report.
  o More importantly, never have skip level meetings for some of the people who work for you but not others. It must be clear that this is a routine process undertaken for anyone who has direct reports
  o Ensure the meeting is “not for attribution.” In other words, everything of import will be shared with their boss, but not who said it.
  o Take notes and project them. It is important to take the notes yourself, rather than asking somebody else to do it. First, it shows you are listening and engaged. Second, it’s a great way to learn when you misunderstand something.
  o Kick - start the conversation. “What is your manager doing well?” Then, “What could your manager be doing better?”
Prioritize issues.
Share notes right after the meeting.
Ensure that you direct make and communicate changes.
Have these meetings once a year for each of your direct reports.
The key to success when implementing any of these suggestions is to return to core principles, rather than following step-by-step instructions.

Chapter 7: Team: Techniques for avoiding boredom and burnout

• Ideally, you want everyone on your team to achieve exceptional results. But you don’t want 100 percent of them to be gunning for the next job — or to be content with their current role.

• Instead you want a balance, so that you have both people who push for change and those who offer stability. And to understand what motivates the different people you work with; you need to have Radically Candid relationships with each.

Career Conversations

• Understand people’s motivations and ambitions to help them take a step in the direction of their dreams.

• You should have these conversations with each person who reports directly to you. They are your single biggest opportunity to move up on the “care personally” axis of the Radical Candor framework.

• Russ Laraway developed a particularly effective approach during a difficult period at Google. Russ held an off-site and taught his managers how to talk to their direct reports not just about their career goals or how to get promoted but also about their life stories and dreams. He taught every manager on his team to have a succession of three forty-five-minute conversations with each direct report over the course of three to six weeks.

• Conversation one: life story.

  o The first conversation is designed to learn what motivates each person who reports directly to you. Focus on changes that people have made and to understand why they made those choices. Values often get revealed in moments of change.

  o You’re not looking for definitive answers; you’re just trying to get to know people a little better and understand what they care about.

    1. Most people are happy to have this conversation, as long as it takes place in an environment of trust and respect. If part of your job is to care personally, you have to get to know people personally.

    2. There may be times when you touch on something that is too personal. If a person signals discomfort at a question, you have to respect that.

  o The reason to pull these motivations out of a life story rather than to discuss them abstractly is that it’s so easy to misunderstand abstractions.

  o Just this first of the three conversations will have a big impact. First, you’ve done more in forty-five minutes to get to know each person who reports to you than you could do in any other way. You’ve done something to show you care, and — invariably, after a conversation like that — you do care more. Next, you’re already better equipped to figure out what kinds of opportunities would be helpful for each person. Finally, you’re more prepared for the next conversation.

  o When you understand what motivates a person and why, you’re much better able to understand their dreams.

• The second conversation: dreams
The second conversation moves from understanding what motivates people to understanding the person’s dreams — what they want to achieve at the apex of their career, how they imagine life at its best to feel.

Giving space for people to talk about dreams allows bosses to help people find opportunities that can move them in the direction of those dreams. This makes work more satisfying and more meaningful and ultimately improves retention.

You begin these conversations with, “What do you want the pinnacle of your career to look like?”

Encourage people to come up with three to five different dreams for the future. This allows employees to include the dream they think you want to hear as well as those that are far closer to their hearts.

It will become very obvious what new skills the person needs to acquire. Now, your job as the boss is to help them think about how they can acquire those skills: what are the projects you can put them on, whom can you introduce them to, what are the options for education?

The final part of Russ’s second conversation involves making sure that the person’s dreams are aligned with the values they have expressed.

• Conversation three: eighteen-month plan

Make a list of how the person’s role can change to help them learn the skills needed to achieve each dream; whom they can learn from; and classes they could take or books they could read.

Then, next to each item, note who does what by when — and make sure you have some action items. Helping people clarify values and dreams and then aligning them as closely as possible with their current work will invariably make your team stronger.

Growth Management

• Figure out who needs what types of opportunities, and how you’re going to provide them.

These efforts have moved you way up on the “care personally” dimension of Radical Candor. Now it’s time to move over on the “challenge directly” dimension.

Once a year, you need to put together a growth-management plan for each person on your team. Take a look across your whole team and make sure that you understand how each individual’s aspirations and growth trajectory is lining up with the collective needs of the team.

The first step is to identify your rock stars and superstars.

Next, identify the people on your team who are doing good, but not exceptional, work.

Identify the people who are performing poorly but whom you believe should do much better, either because they are demonstrating signs that they can improve or because their skills and ambitions suggest improvement is possible.

Finally — and this is usually the hardest part — identify the people who are not doing good work and not getting any better.

Write growth plans: Next, come up with a three-to-five-bullet-point growth plan for each person. Make sure that you have projects or opportunities that will stretch the superstars. Make sure that you’re giving the rock stars what they need to be productive. Think of ways to push people who are doing good work to do exceptional work.

Don’t be an “easy grader” or a “hard grader”

• When your part of a broader team, it’s important to have a shared understanding of what exceptional work is, what good work is, and what bad work is.

• If you are a manager of managers, find a simple way to keep everyone on the same page.
Ensure fairness by level

- Ensuring fairness across levels both cultivates growth throughout the organization and avoids unnecessary resentment. Too often, the people who have the most senior roles are given the highest ratings when in fact they are surfing on the productivity of the people working for them.

Hiring: Your Mentality and Your Process

**Process**

- Your hiring process is important; it’s a vital part of building a great team. When you are growing really fast, you’ll wind up spending a lot of your time hiring.

- Here are some simple things you can do to make sure you’re hiring the right people:
  - Job description: define team “fit” as rigorously as you define “skills” to minimize bias.
  - Try to describe your culture in three to four words.
  - Be disciplined about interviewing for those things.
  - The written job description should then go to all interviewers, so they know precisely what they are interviewing for.
  - Blind skills assessments can also minimize bias.
  - Use the same interview committee for multiple candidates, to allow for meaningful comparisons.

- Four people is about the right size for an interview committee.

Firing - A Necessary Evil

- Firing people is not easy, either emotionally or legally. At companies where it’s too easy to fire people, bad/unfair firing decisions get made, with the result that even people who are great at their jobs start to get spooked. When people feel that kind of fear, they start to avoid taking risks. They learn less, they grow less, and they innovate less.

- Firing people is hard, and it ought to be hard.

- Tips:
  - *Don’t wait too long*

- Here are four very good reasons to push yourself to identify underperformance early:
  1. *To be fair to the person who is failing.* If you identify a problem early, you give the person time to address it. You also reduce the shock if they can’t or won’t address it and you wind up having to fire the person.
  2. *To be fair to your company.* If you identify and address problems early enough, you dramatically reduce the risk of being sued or the chance that you’ll have to keep them on the payroll for months of painful legal documentation.
  3. *To be fair to yourself.* When you give someone a good rating one quarter and fire them the next, word gets around, and it undermines trust with everyone else. Not to mention that you risk being sued by the employee.
  4. *Most importantly,* you want to address underperformance early to be fair to the people who are performing well. Tolerating bad work is unfair to the people doing excellent work.

- *Don’t make the decision unilaterally*

- *Give a damn*  
  - Think hard about how to do it in a way that will make it easiest on them – even if it makes it harder on you, or if you have to take some risks.

- *Follow up*
Email them about a month after you’ve fired them to check in. Keep your ear to the ground about jobs that they might be well suited for. In any case, reach out.

Promotions

- Be fair. Few things can create a sense of injustice on a team like having a boss who promotes people much faster than the manager sitting in the next office. Yet a few managers get together to make sure their promotions are fair, and the politics can get ugly quickly.

- Tips to prevent politics:
  - Prepare
  - Ask everyone on your team to send a list of people they are planning to promote, together with a justification
  - Manage the time carefully, and don’t let arguments go too long. Go through all the promotions by level, senior to last.
  - Get enough sleep the day before, exercise that morning, and eat a good breakfast.
  - When it’s all done, acknowledge how hard these conversations are

Reward Your Rockstar’s

- Don’t give all the glory to the superstars.
- Avoid promotion/status obsession
  - Announcing promotions breeds unhealthy competition for wrong things: documentation of status rather than development of skill.
  - If a promotion changes a role, then announce it.
  - Focus of the work the person is doing, not on the status they have achieved in the company for doing it.

Say “thank you”

- A thank you goes beyond praise. Praise expresses admiration for great work. A thank you expresses personal gratitude. In the case of a thank-you, you are explaining not just why the work matters, but why it matters to you.
- Do it in person and do it in writing.

Gurus

- Another great way to highlight how great people are at a job is to acknowledge them as gurus in their area of expertise. You might acknowledge their mastery by putting the person in charge of teaching others the skill.

Public presentations

- Give people on your team who focus on tasks that are important but under-recognized or misunderstood an opportunity to explain their work to their colleagues.

Chapter 8: Results: Things you can do to get stuff done together – faster

- The ultimate goal of Radical Candor is to achieve results collaboratively that you could never achieve. With Radical Candor the team has a developed self-correcting quality whereby most problems are solved before you are even aware of them.
- Your role will be to encourage that process of listening, clarifying, debating, deciding, persuading, and executing to the point that it’s almost as if your team shares one mind when it comes to completing projects, and then learning from their results.
- One of your most important responsibilities to keep everything moving smoothly is to decide who needs to communicate with whom and how frequently. This means meetings.
• Every meeting comes with a significant cost-time, so it is important to minimize the duration, frequency, and number of people required to attend.

1:1 Conversations: The most important is the one with your direct reports.
• Employees set the agenda. Your direct report’s agenda, not yours.
• This is your best opportunity to really listen, to the people on your team to make sure you understand their perspective on what is and isn’t working.
• These meetings provide an opportunity to get to know your direct reports, to move up on the “care personally” dimension.
• Understand what is blocking them.
• To make sure you and each of your reports are getting the most out of your 1:1s:
  o Your Mindset
  o Frequency –50 minutes a week. Limit the number of direct reports you have as a natural bottleneck.
  o Show up!
• Examples of some good follow-up questions:
  o Why
  o How can I help
  o What wakes you up at night
  o What are you not working on that you don’t want to to/ do want to, work on?
• Encourage new ideas
• Signs you’ll get from 1:1s that you’re failing as a boss:
  o Cancellations
  o Updates with just info that could be emailed
  o Good news only
  o No criticism

Staff Meetings
• Review metrics, study hall updates, and identify (but do not make) key decisions.
• An effective staff meeting has three goals: It reviews how things have gone the previous week, allows people to share important updates, and forces the team to clarify the most important decisions and debated for the coming week.
• Agenda:
  o Learn: review key metrics (20 min)
  o Listen: put updates I a shared document (15 min)
  o Clarify: Identify key decisions & debates (30 min)

Think Time
• Block time to think, and hold that time sacred

“Big Debate” Meetings
• Lower the tension by making it clear that you are debating, not deciding When everyone knows that the meeting will end in no decision, this source of tension is eliminated.
• They allow you to slow down key decisions when appropriate.
• They foster a larger culture of debate.
• The goal of debate is to work together to come up with the best answer.

“Big Decision” Meetings
• Push decisions into the facts, pull facts into the decisions, and keep egos at bay.
• It can be hard to know when to stop debating and start deciding. Two separate meetings make it explicit when you are debating and when you are deciding,

**All-hands Meetings**

• Bring others along.

• As your team grows a regular all-hands meeting can really help to get broad buy-in on the decisions being made, and also learn about dissent.

• These meetings usually include two parts: presentations to persuade people that the company is making good decisions and headed in the right direction, and Q & As conducted so leaders can hear dissent and address it head on.

• When handled well, the answers the leaders give to the questions, which are often quite challenging, are usually more persuasive than the presentations.

**Execution Time**

• Fight meeting proliferation. Make sure your team has time to execute.

• Schedule time to execute.

**Kanban Boards**

• Make activity and workflows visible. To do/in progress/ and done.

• You can quickly identify bottlenecks and drive personal accountability.

• Measuring activities and visualizing workflows will push you and your team to make sure you really understand how what you all do drives success- or doesn’t.

• Measuring activities will also create more respect between teams.

• Measuring activities and displaying them publicly also tends to lead to ratings and promotions that more consistently reward top performers and are less prone to create biases.

**Walk Around**

• Learn about small problems to prevent big ones.

• Management by walking around is a tried and true technique. If nothing is beneath your attention, then others will pay attention to details as well.

• When you show that you care about small things that contribute to customer happiness or the quality of life on your team, suddenly everybody cares more about them, and some of the big things start working better too.

**Be Conscious of Culture**

• “Culture eats strategy for lunch”. A team’s culture has an enormous impact on its results, and a leader’s personality has a huge impact on a team’s culture. Who you are as a human being impacts your culture enormously.

• People are listening. Like it or not you’re under the microscope.

• Debate and decide explicitly. Don’t let things that pervert your culture “just happen”.

• Clarify. Be vigilant about clarifying what you are communicating.

• Persuade. Pay attention to the small things.

• Execute: Action should reflect your culture.

**Recommendation:** Required reading for the most successful organizations, *Radical Candor* has raised the bar for management practices worldwide. There are three main contributions to management in Radical Candor, contributions that I haven’t seen anywhere else:

1. The description of ‘radical candor’ — what it looks like, what it isn’t, how to start practicing it, and how to avoid common gotchas.

2. Russ Laraway’s recipe for rapidly building trust in a team.
3. Scott’s description of ‘superstars’ vs ‘rock stars’ — and what this means when it comes to managing team growth.

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About the reviewer: Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, PhD

Dr. Frumi Rachel Barr is truly an entrepreneur having started and run 5 entrepreneurial adventures prior to following her passion for guiding the success of CEOs and their teams to Scale Up.

**Money and a plan don’t guarantee execution**

Execution depends on communication, cascading priorities throughout the organization and an external guide that holds the team accountable and keeps the momentum going. Lots of companies know what to do — it’s the doing that needs an external guide. That’s what we provide. We use the best systems on the planet, as well as software to track team initiatives and progress.

Dr. Frumi’s "Why" is to create a safe place for leaders and teams to discuss what matters most. She is known as The CEO’s Secret Weapon. Her Who: Dr. Frumi guides creative, ambitious CEOs who want to grow their businesses, so they have more freedom and a fabulous culture. Her how: Dr. Frumi works with companies of all sizes to Scale Up and to create greater alignment, effectiveness and accountability. She focuses on culture first to create an environment that allows for the right decisions to be made regarding People, Strategy, Execution and Cash Management. Using practical tools, outcomes include higher revenue and profitability, with greater collaboration and accountability.

Dr. Frumi is the author of a **CEO’s Secret Weapon: How to Accelerate Success**. The book was ranked top business book of 2012 by ExecRank and has a forward by her colleague Simon Sinek, international author of best-selling **Start with Why**.