



Honest Evals in the Workplace 2020

“It’s too lovey dovey around here”!

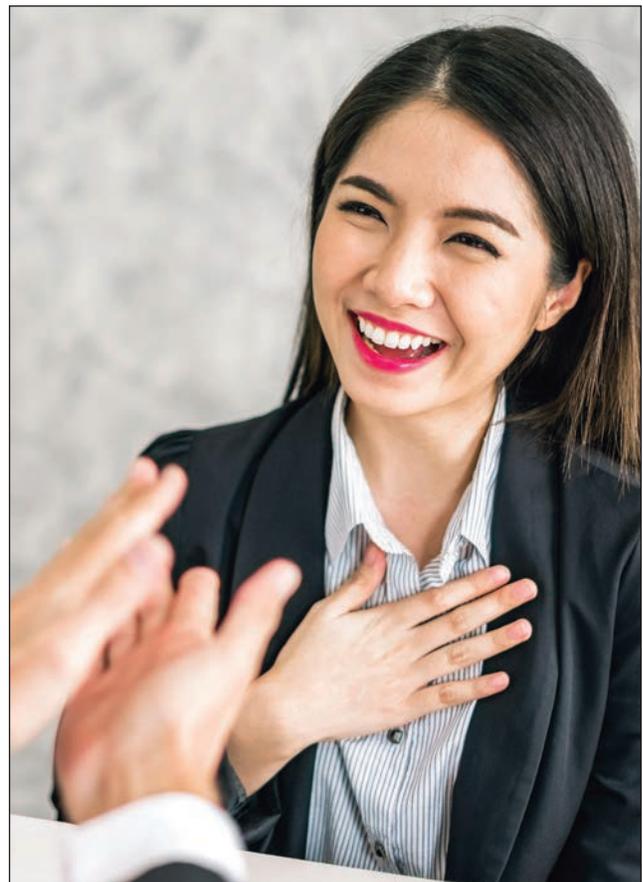
These were the words of a healthcare manager who was telling me that although his organization as a small business ranked 4th in his state in terms of value, success and popular patient vote, of greater concern was the low survey mark given suggesting that as an office, they “were very slow in correcting the behavior of problematic employees.”

When I inquired as to why that was, he said, “we are like a family so nobody wants to hurt anyone’s feelings”.

I asked about the annual evaluation process and he suggested that they didn’t mean anything because we are too “lovey dovey”!

I also spoke with an engineer this last week, and he said that his organization’s annual evaluation process didn’t challenge the employees at all, and that it was just a template that 1000 employees filled out each year. No personal goals were discussed or challenges offered. And yet, with a perplexed look on his brow, he said “our raises are predicated on the annual evaluations”.

Still yet, another situation was presented to me about a supervisor who recently gave high marks in a long term employee’s evaluation who had been causing dissensions for years.



Not every organization has an evaluation process, but if you are going to offer that particular protocol, it seems to me that it should have a clear purpose and function.

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The Purpose of Honest Evaluations

In speaking with another Health Care Administrator, I asked what the value was in an annual evaluation or at least what the nature of one should be, and his reply was interesting:

Annual Evaluations Should Never Be a Surprise

Nothing new or recent should come up in an “annual evaluation.” Only matters of concern that had been pointed out through the year should be discussed.

Another Police Captain went on to say that evaluations should never be used as “only a communication tool” at the end of the year but a gauge of the entire year as to the advancements of the employee or areas needed for improvement.

Another manager told me that “it’s not about annual evaluations anyway”. He went on to say that it’s more about the culture of that specific organization. He said that if there are problems that are not frequently dealt with, but rather mentioned at the end of the year, the employees will assume three things for sure:

1. Management knows and doesn’t care.
2. They don’t know about it and are grossly uninformed.
3. There is an issue of favoritism with certain employees.

Annual Evaluations Should Be an Opportunity to Discuss and Set New Goals both Corporately and Personally

The evaluation process shouldn’t primarily be a monologue from supervisor to employee, but also a discussion from each of them about future training possibilities and any necessary changes to be made.

This is important for at least two reasons:

1. Most of the younger generations (Gen Xers/Gen Yers ages 25-45) prefer discussion and input over lecture, correction and a command style approach. It’s important for them to have a sense of buy- in and

participation especially if it has to do with their performance and future growth. No doubt management should direct the discussion if there are areas needed for improvement, but it comes down to how you direct the discussion.

2. Most people rise to the level of expectations. If you don’t raise the bar, they will not consider how to jump over it. Nobody likes criticism no matter how nicely it can be packaged, but on the other hand, nobody has it all. Anyone who feels they have attained the status of perfection, never needing professional improvement, are grossly misinformed, and not being challenged to grow!

Evaluations should challenge us to grow, highlight the value we have within the organization and offer future opportunities for training and/or advancement.

Annual Evaluations Should be Honest Assessments of the Employee’s Performance

My above mentioned friend who stated it is too lovey dovey around here wasn’t far from the truth as I see it in a lot of organizations. In my opinion, our workplace culture, in general, is very passive and fear based when it comes to honestly sharing constructive evaluations in areas needing improvement.

It reminds me of what I heard a psychologist once say about parenting our children. He stated that if you were cheering your son on at his baseball game and he struck out at home plate, would you applaud? Would you say that was the coolest strikeout you have ever seen? Would you blame the coach or the pitcher so that little Johnny’s feelings would be protected or would you help him with the mechanics of his swing? Johnny needs to improve his swing or he may never play baseball again!

Annual evaluations are to assist workers in the mechanics of their swing. To continue to praise them for (striking out), substandard work, or the inability to get along with co-workers, is to encourage poor performance to continue. It is appropriately stated that

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“In life you get what you tolerate,” so to not give an encouraging, yet truthful assessment, is to send mixed messages to both employee and staff.

Conclusion: So if you truly want evaluations to work and mean something in the workplace, keep them encouraging and honest and I can assure your batting average as a team will improve. And if you are on the other end of the evaluation, keep an open mind and consider the areas for needing improvement as a challenge to grow professionally!

Happy New Year!!!

Teamworks
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For more information regarding Professional Boundaries in the Workplace go to teamworks-works.com and click on “workshops” or email me at bill@teamworks-works.com



Bill Gallagher has been counseling and working with professionals since 1980. His emphasis in the workplace is to help develop both relational skills and professional standards among administration and staff. He has worked in multiple organizational settings and of recent has spent most of his time addressing workplace issues in healthcare and city government.

Bill formed TeamWorks in 2001 to help organizations achieve their goals for establishing high morale and client satisfaction. TeamWorks currently specializes in offering one-on-one surveys and evaluations for management and staff to assess the current culture's needs and recommended trainings going forward.

In addition to conducting a variety of workshops and in-services on workplace issues, Bill mediates conflict among partnerships and staff relationships, speaks at conventions, facilitates management retreats, and offers personal consultation and counseling for staff.

Bill's strengths are in public speaking, mediation, and understanding the complexities of relational dynamics in the workplace. He lives in Medford, Oregon, with his wife Jenny, and enjoys spending time with their five children and five granddaughters.