**Performance Journaling a WIN: Helping a Valuable Employee Overcome a Career-Limiting Habit**

**WHY PERFORMANCE JOURNAL A WIN?**

Sometimes we identify an issue that is worth extra effort to Game-Film because making progress on it will be very significant. We may Performance Journal such a pattern many times between first identifying it and thoroughly working it out. When we notice that we have taken a significant step in the right direction it can be very helpful to anchor that WIN with an extended version of Performance Journaling. This will answer questions such as, *“What just happened? What part did I play in getting this to happen? How can I repeat this success in the future?”*

What follows comes out of my notes from a coaching conversation with this ILP client. These aren’t exact quotes in all cases, but the client agrees the essence is preserved. As is often the case, we hopped all around during the conversation but ended up covering all the bases (as we like to say about using the PJ form, *start anywhere – go everywhere*).

**AN EXTENDED PERFORMANCE JOURNAL**

**Situation**

“One of my managers gets defensive very easily. It happened again when I introduced the 2x2 practice. He is a hard working and productive guy BUT he has a bad habit. He tends to assume I am criticizing him whenever I introduce something new, or make a suggestion about how best to proceed (never mind actually giving him negative feedback!) For example, he felt that I was introducing the 2x2 because I think he is doing a bad job and needs to be micro-managed. Although I said very clearly up front that the purpose of the 2x2 is to help all of us get aligned on our priorities , he simply couldn’t hear this (at first).

In a conversation last week I took the risk of going beyond content to talk about the PROCESS of how we talk and relate to each other. I pointed out that he tends to get defensive and make negative assumptions about my intent pretty easily. This time - he got it!

**Results**

“This is a BREAKTHROUGH for us… I feel relieved and back from ‘the edge’ of considering making a personnel change.

**My Thoughts**

At first…

*“Oh no! There he goes again! We have to fix this. Despite his hard work and competence, I’m not sure I can continue to work with him – the interpersonal stuff is causing such a drag on my energy, and blocking progress… He’s got to get over this if we are going to continue…”*

After shifting focus…

*What I want is for him to be aware of how his behavior impacts me and others, and see that it is causing him a big problem. I want him to see he doesn’t have to react that way, and that he can respond differently. I want him to get it that I see him as very valuable and that when I introduce a new tool or offer suggestions it is a positive thing, that it means I am investing in him because I see he has so much potential…*

**My Inner State**

“At first, I was feeling Victimized and frustrated by how difficult it is to introduce new things or give him feedback… I felt trapped. When I say nothing about it I feel Victimized. My other choice seems to be to burst into Persecuting him for being so damned ***defensive***! (Of course neither has worked well…)

So I tried hard to shift my focus (FISBE) to what I WANT in our working relationship and to speak to that.

**My Behavior**

“I have been practicing Ongoing Regard with him to build up our ‘relationship account’ enough to have this difficult conversation about the impact of his behavior on me and the team. This time I was able to contain my frustration and shift my focus. Instead of shutting up and stewing or making it worse by attacking him for being so damned defensive, I led our conversation in a Creator mood.

**My Mindset**

“First I felt Victimized. I wanted to switch into Persecutor (I hate being the Victim). But instead I was able to shift into the Creator orientation and coach and challenge him.

**Key Insights**

* I am relieved and much more at ease for having gotten to a candid conversation with him about my concerns. I see that the way he assumes a negative intention on my part is a ‘knee jerk reaction’ for him rather than an conscious choice. This is connected to what he shared with me about issues he has with his dad, and that he looks to me as a mentor…
* Getting us past this won’t happen because of one great conversation. Maintaining trust and a ‘positive relationship account’ will be very important so that he will remain open to my challenge and coaching.

**Desired Outcome**

* I have shifted our way of interaction permanently.
* I have kept a highly valuable employee without having to settle for me and the team continuing to be so negatively impacted by an interpersonal blind spot.
* I have used this one situation as an opportunity to enhance my skills as a leader / coach / challenger.

**Actions**

* I will look for opportunities to give him Ongoing Regard for his strong performance rather than taking it for granted. This will help keep our ‘relationship account’ in the black and help him trust me enough to keep being coached and challenged.
* To cultivate the new habit I will watch for any small steps he is taking to act in this newly open and non-defensive way and immediately let him know how it positively impacts me and others. This will help keep his FISBE focus on what he wants (to be a valued high performer) rather than getting lost in the Drama Triangle script of interpreting every suggestion as a Persecution.
* I will challenge him when necessary – *“Stop! We are getting into that old Drama. Let’s take a breath and Recalibrate.”*