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Have you ever been caught off guard with a performance evaluation?

Have you ever found out that the great job you thought you were doing wasn't so great after all?

I believe that most of us go to work each day with the intention of doing a great job. But,

sometimes we miss the mark. And sometimes that mark is missed because of communication. Below are a few examples of how miscommunication can lead to poor job performance.

SOMETIMES EXPECTATIONS AREN'T WELL ARTICULATED.

Leaders think they are clear in their communications, but they aren't. Communications expert Joe McCormack of the [Brief Lab](#) says that the two things that people think come naturally - listening and speaking - don't. We have to work at it. Message sent doesn't always mean message received.

FEEDBACK IS TOUGH.

As time goes on, the gap between our performance and expectations widen. As a 2014 [article](#) from the Harvard Business Review points out, honest and candid feedback is uncomfortable, and not that easy to give. As author Kevin Kruse points in [Great Leaders Have No Rules](#), many leaders want to be liked and as a result, don't give the quality feedback their people need to improve.

PEOPLE CAN'T SEE WHAT ISN'T SAID.

In his book [Die Empty](#), Todd Henry suggests that there is a final 10% of expectations that are never communicated or voluntarily divulged by leaders or managers. Unfortunately, these unspoken "Final 10%" conversations are the ones that shape their outlook on our performance.

WANT TO KNOW IF YOU'RE DOING WELL? JUST ASK.

We can overcome these miscommunication problems by seeking feedback before it's too late. Henry provides three questions we can ask to help clear up our communication failures.

1. What's something I'm doing that doesn't make sense?

I once got very excited about a project that was extremely low on my boss' priority list. At the time, I didn't realize it was at the bottom of the barrel. So, I spent several weeks working on it. At some point, he finally had enough and angrily told me that he had no idea why I was focused on this particular project. I realized through that encounter that sometimes what's important to me might not be important to the person I'm working for. This question would have alleviated tension if I would have only asked it.

2. What's the smartest thing I'm doing right now?

In asking this question we find out what our bosses value. Going back to the previous point, we may be doing something that seems trivial to us that matters greatly to the people who count on us.

3. What's something obvious that you don't think I'm seeing?

We all view the world through various lenses. These lenses are based on our level of knowledge and life experiences. Because of this, an issue that might seem obvious to your boss, might not be to you. Asking this question helps us to close these gaps and ensure we are on the same sheet of music.

Close the gap. Don't get so far down the road, that your efforts don't meet expectations. Miscommunication doesn't have to affect your performance. If you aren't sure about the expectations or unwritten rules of the road, say something.

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