



Trait of the Month: Tough-Mindedness

Context

Leaders are ultimately responsible for the services and products their people produce. By giving clear and direct instructions in the beginning and by being firm and consistent in enforcing them, leaders are in a better position to ensure that the quality and quantity of all work performed meets expectations. Leaders should ensure their teams have a clear understanding of what acceptable performance looks like and how to measure it.

Understanding the Trait

BHI's Tough-Mindedness scale measures the degree to which a person is capable of making demands upon other people, being critical in evaluating standards, and facing conflict in a direct and straightforward manner. Low scorers are not likely to confront issues head on and are reluctant to discipline or hold others accountable. They are hesitant to surface problems within the organization that need to be addressed. People with "high" ratings in this area can make unpopular decisions, hold others accountable, and take disciplinary action when necessary.

On the flip side, however, leaders who score excessively high on Tough-Mindedness often come across as argumentative and even defensive when challenged. If not balanced out with positive reinforcement, recognition and support, constantly confronting issues and people can erode trust, admiration and eventually relationships.

Tips for Personal Development

Address your reluctance to provide clear direction and consistent follow-up:

- Ask yourself: What am I concerned about? What am I afraid of? What prevents me from confronting this situation head on?
- Determine the consequences if you do NOT confront a particular situation or conflict.
- Ask friends and family members to give you honest feedback on how you approach conflicts and to give you ideas on how you can improve.

Take charge to address problems:

- Identify the problem.



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- Develop a clear plan of action and execute it.
 - Constructively communicate and establish clear accountability with employees.
 - Evaluate progress and results frequently.
 - Provide positive feedback for accomplishments and enforce repercussions for unmet goals.