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Can You Love Your Employees? (Case Study)



Samantha thought the advice of her grad school professor was a little unusual—words given her as she was about to launch her career: “Don’t get too close to your co-workers,” he said. “You never know when you’re going to have to fire someone, and you don’t want to fire your close friends.”

Soon Samantha was moving up the ranks at Agile, a large pharmaceutical firm, and had several associates reporting to her. Reading a book on leadership, she was drawn to the story of Vince Lombardi, the legendary football coach of Wisconsin’s Green Bay Packers in the late ’50s. She was surprised to discover that Lombardi coached his team to love: “We don’t like one another, we love each other,” he said at an awards banquet in 1961. “If you play together as a team, you’ve got to care for one another, you’ve got to love each other, then you know you’ve got a team.”

Prompted by Lombardi’s example, Samantha had to make a decision. Would she keep co-workers at a safe distance, or begin to extend care and compassion—love—the kind she knew was deep in her heart toward others?

DISCUSSION

- Is there a difference between a business and a sports team as it relates to Samantha’s dilemma?
- How do you love employees, yet deal with significant performance issues?
- If a manager gets close to fellow workers, and later has to release them, can he or she do so in the context of love?
- What human interaction guidelines should we set within our organizations?

REFERENCES

- A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another (John 13:34).
- “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord (Isaiah 55:8).

BEST PRACTICES

Considering God's amazing love for each of us, we have every reason to extend love to others, including co-workers. By working creatively, we can promote organizational cultures in which individuals are profoundly respected, indeed loved, but where necessary disciplines and accountability are also maintained.

This case is an illustration of the relational aspect of being created in God's image, Genesis 1:27; 2:18, 21-25. Click [here](#) to go (or return) to this passage.

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