

# The 3 Toughest ?'s Employees Will Ask *(and How to Respond)*



**Lightning Sessions**

*a webinar series*

**Wednesday, June 21, 2023**



# Building better teams through development workshops & coaching.

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- Delivering Feedback
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- Mitigating Unconscious Bias
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- A Manager's Perspective

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- Career Coaching
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- Management Coaching
- Engineering Management Coaching

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- Career Mapping
- LMS Implementation
- L&D Programs
- DEI Programs
- Organizational Development



# Learning Agenda



Raises & Promotions



Disagreements



Previous Promises

# **Raises & Promotions**



## Question #1

# *“When will I get a raise / promotion?”*

**A**

Tell them that salary reviews are done at a different time than performance reviews so we can discuss your salary during the next cycle.

**B**

Tell them you'll think about it and will get back to them.

**C**

Get a better understanding of why the employee feels they should receive a raise or promotion. Ask the employee what impact they feel they've made to the business.

**D**

Direct the employee to reach out to the HR Team for proper guidance.

# Things to Consider

## About Raises or Promotions

- Understand **what** the employee wants  
*(raise, job title change, more recognition or credit)*
- Understand **why** the employee feels they deserve a raise/promotion.
- Raises & promotions are **based on performance**, not tenure
- **Don't make any promises** about compensation or title



# Example Responses

## on Raises or Promotions

### Response Structure

**STEP 1.** Ask the employee to **reflect on their performance**

**STEP 2.** Highlight the employee's **strengths and contributions** to the team or company (provide behavioral examples)

**STEP 3.** Focus on key **areas for improvement** (be specific on behaviors)

**STEP 4.** Agree on **action items** for their career development

### Example Response

1. Thank you for sharing this with me. It shows me that you're committed to learning and growing with our company. I'd love to hear your thoughts about the past year. **What impact do you feel you've made to the team?**
2. I agree that Project X was one of your key contributions – it really showed how **well-organized** you were. I appreciate that you're **detail-oriented**. You help the team by ensuring we submit high quality work by anticipating obstacles we may encounter, having backup plans, and ensuring we meet our deadlines.
3. One key area for improvement would be your **communication and follow-up skills**. For example, there have been 2-3 instances when I assigned you a task or project, but I don't know if you're working on it or if you need help. I find myself asking you for progress updates. Instead, I'd like for you to start updating me on the progress during our 1:1's.
4. I'm not making any promises because there are so many variables to getting a raise/promotion, but **I'm committed to developing your skills** so that you become more qualified for a promotion. I'm very optimistic – you're headed in the right direction. Let's **agree on some action items** and when to revisit this conversation.

# Disagreements on Performance





## Question/Comment #2

***“I think I performed better than what you’re telling me.”***

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**A**

Tell the employee that you thought long and hard about their performance and you’re staying firm with your decision.

**B**

Ask the employee to help you understand why they feel they deserve a stronger performance review.

**C**

Allow for disagreements, but give specific examples and evidence to support your decision.

**D**

Tell the employee you need to see what the HR Team thinks to get an objective opinion.

# Things to Consider

## About Disagreements on Performance

- Allow for disagreements, and **give specific examples/evidence** to support your decision
- Ask the employee to help you **understand why they feel they deserve a stronger review**
- It's not about winning; it's about **understanding**



# Example Responses

## *Disagreements on Performance*

### Response Structure

**STEP 1.** Paraphrase their POV and yours

**STEP 2.** Focus on the **behaviors** that need improvement

**STEP 3.** Seek **clarification/understanding**

### Example Response

*“It’s important for me to hear your perspective, and it’s important for us to be on the same page. **It seems like you’re saying ABC and I’m seeing XYZ.**”*

*“It sounds like we have different perspectives. I believe you are **performing at X level because** [provide behaviors of what the employee did/did not do to receive this feedback/review].”*

*“**Can you help me understand why you feel you performed stronger than what I shared? Where did you feel you went above and beyond in your job duties?**”*

# Previous Promises



### Question/Comment #3

***“...but the previous manager promised me a promotion.”***

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**A**

You are obligated to keep the previous manager’s promises, so give the employee the promotion and deal with it accordingly.

**B**

If the employee deserves a promotion, then give it. If the employee does *not* deserve the promotion, then help them understand why.

**C**

Tell the employee “I’m not your previous manager.”

**D**

Tell the employee you need to talk to the HR Team first.

# Things to Consider

## About Previous Promises

- If the employee was promised a raise/promotion and **deserves it**, then give it
- If the employee was promised a raise/promotion and **doesn't deserve it**, then help them understand why



# Example Responses

## Previous Promises

*“Ann, I understand you were promised a promotion. It’s important for me to evaluate everyone fairly. I’m happy to talk through it with you so you can help me understand why you feel you’re due for a promotion. **What was your performance at that time that made the past manager think you were ready for a promotion?”***

**OR**

*“Jarette, I’d like to learn more about the conversations you had with the previous manager before making a decision. **Do you have any documentation to share with me? What career development plans were the two of you working on together?”***

# Moving Forward

①

**Give ongoing feedback (strengths & development opportunities) focused on behavioral words, not judgment words.** No one should ever feel surprised when it's performance review time.

②

**Seek to understand the employee first.** Be curious and get all sides of the story before making a decision.

③

**Document, Document, Document.** Summarize the conversation in an email to the employee to create alignment and establish proof.

④

**Partner with your HR Team.** They are your resource to help you navigate employee matters.





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discussion





**Jessica Nguyen**

Founder



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