This month I just wanted to chat about one of the things we often will talk about in our leadership programming, that we train people how to treat us and when leaders start to wrap their head around this concept, that when we are working with people if there's a behaviour or something that we see that we may not like, we want to consider, is it possible that me as the leader is doing something that's actually encouraging that behaviour?

One of the good examples I like to use is we've worked with leaders, for example just one example, that really are very extroverted they lean towards perfectionism. They like to be the final decision-maker in most things and so what happens is that leader will actually be a little bit more autocratic.

That leader may in fact prefer to just tell people what to do and what happens, I'll give you a perfect example, we had a leader in one of our clients that in a classroom actually said, “You know, my managers, they'd like to be told what to do, they don't like to make decisions.” You can see the looks on the faces of the people around the table thinking, that doesn't sound right and it doesn't make a lot of sense but in fact this leader was very comfortable telling people what to do, already planning out all the decisions and instead of bringing his leaders in to have valuable and important conversations about what's actually going on in the business unit and how the decisions should be made and being collaborative in decision-making, he'd actually trained his managers not to really contribute. When I was coaching some of the managers, some of the comments would be, “Well, you know, I don't really have to go to meetings prepared.”

Now I'm giving you a fairly exaggerated example, it was a true example but very much this manager said, “I don't have to go to meetings prepared because he's already decided what he wants to do. We sit down, he talks for about 40 minutes, we really don't get asked too many questions. We don't get much opportunity to contribute, he tells us what he wants, he tells us how he wants us to do it, we sort of get our marching orders and then we leave. So I just learned that I, because I used to, you know, really prepare and I'd have ideas and plans and wanted to share information about what was going on in my area but really, he wasn't interested. He'd pretty much already decided.” So what happens is that it's not that the managers didn't want to participate, it's not that the managers didn't have really great ideas about their business unit, it's that there was a lack of real, authentic interest by the senior leader and, as a result, and because this leader was more leading from a place of control and command, it was less likely that people were going to actually share with him. So he had trained them to be a certain way.

So, that's just one example where leaders are actually very capable of providing a B+ or A level of competency but are actually performing at a C and C – level because they don't need to. Work is redone, work is checked, double checked and often, just basically it's about execution. So I want you to think in terms of your leadership perspective, are you training people to treat you a certain way that maybe isn't best for the business unit, for yourself or the organization? Just something to think about. Thanks, have a great month!