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Have you been promoted from within your organization and are now in charge of supervising former peers? If so, you'll have some challenges moving forward.

First, congratulations on your promotion. Most likely you deserve it because of your consistent hard work and dedication and you owe no one any apologies for the result and status you earned. Now you must continue your journey with the mindset of fulfilling a purposeful career that benefits your organization, your associates, your family, and yourself.

With your first step in this journey you will have to recalibrate your relationships with former peers, some with whom you may have developed close friendships. Some of these friendships may consist of individual relationships or they may involve entire families. In either instance, you are going to have to change things up a bit.

The moment you are appointed into your new role, you will have to make immediate relationship changes and some people may not take it very well. You can continue being friendly with former peers but can't carry on as “best friends.” If you do, others will probably perceive you to be showing favoritism--even if you're not. (Remember, for most people, perception is reality.)

Leading former peers is never easy. Hopefully your boss or another high-level leader will announce your promotion in front of everyone and give his or her expectations to the group. When former peers hear from another source of authority that they are expected to be great team players and to put their best foot forward in supporting you, it can and should prevent them from becoming careless or disruptive to you

and your efforts as their new leader. If they know that by resisting you they're resisting the big boss, they'll think twice about carrying on in a manner detrimental to the office or department.

If you're not fortunate to have this announcement made on your behalf, then you have to do it yourself. Sit down with everyone in a group setting and let them know about your appointment. Keep the meeting informative only. Leave out your vision and expectations for a later time. You should then follow this up with private meetings with those you are friends with to discuss how and why aspects of your relationship will have to change. If you're worried about how they will take all of this, just know that a true friend will respect the situation and understand your new role and what it means for the organization. Being their new boss doesn't mean you can't have a connection or relationship with them at all, it just means that discretion has to be applied to the manner in which you maintain your relationship with each other moving forward--and they must understand this. Not having this discussion could cause confusion on their part or lead them to view you as someone on their mighty “high-horse” when trying to give directions or orders.

Furthermore, refrain from making any drastic changes immediately unless it is urgent or an emergency. Give people time to get to know your vision and realize that you're going to lead them with integrity. You also need time to think about your leadership style and how you will apply or adapt it to various people and scenarios.

If a former peer is resentful of your new leadership role and it shows in their behavior, you will have to give them some reassurance and guidance. First of all, if they weren't in competition with or in consideration with you for the

new role, don't worry about them--they have no real justification to be resentful. Having another trusted agent talk with them could enlighten them in a discreet way about their pettiness. On the other hand, if they were someone who also could have adequately filled the role, then here are some things to consider:

If it was a close decision and you got the nod, keep in mind there are reasons they, too, were also held in high regard. Therefore, know that they are still valuable to the organization and do all you can to keep them motivated. Create a professional game plan for you and them. All great leaders are continually looking for and finding potential leaders to replace them. So prepare them to replace you! This may seem destructive to your career path but it's not. Think about it. If you and your team excel and make your boss look good, there's a great chance he or she eventually gets an opportunity for advancement. When that happens, who would be in a great position to fill that leadership void? You! Then the door gets opened for you to promote the deserving candidate you've been grooming all along to replace you --a win-win situation for everyone!

If your organization doesn't have this type vertical promotion chain, then opportunities can be created in lateral or outside organizations or departments. Either way don't become stagnant. Everyone's eyes should be on targets for advancement one way or another.

So now is the time. You're in charge! You know from firsthand experience what your people want and need. You know what's legit and what's not. You know the politics of your organization and how to steer it. You know what it takes to succeed. Now it's time to prove you were the best choice to successfully supervise your former peers.

~ The End ~