A key leadership skill is identifying the skills and talents of employees and motivating them to use those skills in the pursuit of organizational goals. Effective leaders invest in developing constructive working relationships with their employees, and they help them apply their talents in the pursuit of those goals. Behaviors that demonstrate effective leadership skills are both learned and naturally part of some supervisors’ personalities, but
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I am a new supervisor. I tend to avoid conflict. Perhaps it is my lack of experience that explains my avoidance issues. But I wonder whether my avoidance is explained by something more deeply personal than a simple lack of experience. What should I do?

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Being a new supervisor and not having prior experience in leadership positions can be intimidating and difficult. Generally, supervisors and managers improve as they participate in various forms of continuing education and reach out to experienced supervisors willing to coach and advise them. Experience is the best teacher, of course. None of these steps guarantee the acquisition of effective leadership skills. Indeed, many supervisors acquire attitudes about styles of supervision that undermine their leadership abilities. Self-awareness and interest in your personal growth are essential to becoming a good manager. These will lead you to challenge and overcome personal weaknesses, quirks, and other foibles that get in the way of your goal. The EAO can help you discover and overcome these personal challenges. Another excellent resource for new supervisors are the Office of Human Resource Development’s Principles of Supervision and Management courses.

The answer to this question varies among employers. It is an important one to consider because employees will gravitate toward burnout, and it will affect the bottom line if there are no creative solutions. Turnover and low morale are two examples. Part of the answer lies in helping employees help each other. This idea of developing a “high nurture” workforce focuses on employees improving communication, sharing skills, getting intra- and inter-organizational training, cooperating with each other more, solving problems together, inspiring and praising one another, recognizing and rewarding one another, processing stress together, and generally building cohesiveness. The ideas above are proven ways of building and maintaining high morale and lowering the risk of burnout.