



The CareFull Supervisor: The Tools to Succeed and Be the Supervisor Employees Want to Have

Kevin Burns

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The empathetic leadership guide The CareFull Supervisor prioritizes the core value of being full of care for one's employees.

Kevin Burns's leadership guide *The CareFull Supervisor* promotes an empathetic, human-centric approach to management.

Promoting its own CareFull model of management, the book defines its parameters for good leadership: a good supervisor cares for their team, believing that employees do not work for their supervisors but rather supervisors work for their employees. Rather than acting on authority, which is given, such leaders aim to build trust, which is earned. Thus, supervisors should strive to build healthy working environments, put their employees first, and be motivational coaches. Doing so, the book says, will help their companies attract and keep top talent.

A guide through the mindset shifts that are necessary to supervise in its modeled way, the book addresses all those who are "tasked with leading others." Its prose is lively and humorous, combining personal anecdotes with employee polls and scholarship to ground its suggestions. So too does the book make illustrative use of metaphors, drawing connections to sports, carnival games, and classic movies throughout, as when it compares elite supervisors to premium products and mediocre supervisors to budget brands. Still, the central concept is quite idealized, envisioning supervision in empathetic terms and prioritizing the core value of being full of care for one's employees to the near exclusion of other measures.

When it comes to leadership exemplified by employee care, the book's advice is quite specific. Each chapter centers a key element of care-filled supervision, with tips including 52 Benefits of Safety and precise guidance for one-on-one meetings (using the employee's name, showing up on time, and putting one's phone away included). And the tools named throughout, which are also gathered in "toolboxes" at the end of each chapter, are helpful.

Some such recommendations are generic, though. Further, the tenor of the advice becomes repetitive as the book continues—as do the highlighted leadership elements, which begin to blend together, as when subsections focused on coaching, safety, and conversations pop up in several chapters without additional distinction. In addition, there is a distracting emphasis on safety, a topic that is belabored and limiting—despite the fact that the related concrete examples are few and far between. Indeed, the lack of concrete examples in general (including of what a culture of trust looks like, for example) lessens the book's general impact. Further, the dearth of information regarding remote work—a significant omission for a professional self-development book written post-COVID-19—dates the book's recommendations.

A compassionate and practical business guide, *The CareFull Supervisor* recommends methods for leading by placing one's employees first.

HANNAH PEARSON (February 7, 2024)

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