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Authentic Self

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A few months ago, I missed a long-standing, pre-scheduled bi-monthly meeting with four other members of senior management. I forgot. There was no fire to put out. Of course, I apologized for being absent-minded and forgetting to look at my Outlook calendar. In my apology, I made it clear I didn’t have an excuse.

“You were so honest,” one colleague commented. Another observed with a chuckle, “It happens, not a problem.” A third snickered, “Now that your new office is further away, I guess it takes you longer to walk to meetings.” The fourth was indifferent.

A month later, a manager approached me about the results of a risk assessment he had done. “It might give you heartburn,” he said. On the contrary, it pleased me. I had earned his trust. He thought it safe to approach me with honest results. We discussed the findings. I gave suggestions on the work plan moving forward. It became a positive experience for him and his department. I praised him and his team for the great work and underscored that this is exactly how the process should work. It’s about messaging. Because he trusted me, the manager felt empowered to work on additional risk assessments. He became a better professional and the overall organization improved.

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