Have you read the book *Radical Candor* by Kim Scott yet? It’s about being a boss who isn’t afraid to drive results through maximizing everyone’s potential on the team. We’ve talked about the criticality of relationships many times before, and this is a natural extension; in this case, focusing on giving honest and caring feedback. It’s our responsibility to grow and develop our staff, students, mentees, and even peers. How does radical candor help?

Think of radical candor as revolutionary honesty. According to Scott, it’s the ability to simultaneously “challenge directly” and “care personally.” That means not avoiding needed conversations and not being insincere or insulting when you do have them. The author’s main point is that you can’t be a good boss without using radical candor. *Forbes* picked up on the concept, as did multiple reviewers who claim that Scott’s book is a must-read for new and experienced managers. There must be something in it for us nurse leaders to learn.

Giving feedback is always fraught with anxiety unless it’s all positive. We usually don’t like to give or receive anything but affirmative comments. It just doesn’t come easily for most of us. The *Radical Candor* website points out another tricky point in these conversations: Saying “don’t take it personally” can be insulting. Of course, it’s personal! It’s about ourselves, it’s very personal.

Here’s the thing. Scott reminds us we can say what we think in a way that lets people know we care and respect them. Successful and authentic leaders have reputations for being genuine, caring, and honest. That goes for feedback, too. You can be genuine, caring, and honest all at the same time.

You’ll love the four quadrants of getting to radical candor, ranging and intersecting on two axes of caring and challenging. First is “ruinous empathy”—the boss who cares but doesn’t challenge. Then there’s the “manipulatively insincere” boss who neither cares nor challenges, offering trivialities such as “try harder” as feedback. The “obnoxious aggressor” boss challenges but doesn’t care and isn’t kind or sincere. Where does the “radical candor” boss fit in? You guessed it, the boss who cares and challenges. It makes sense.

We have to be better at giving feedback. We even see it with clinical nurses who struggle with peer review; the thought of exercising judgment on someone else’s performance seeming too much to bear. It’s our professional responsibility at every level, especially as leaders. If you have an underperforming workforce, you really need this. As the author says, bad news doesn’t get better with age. Lead with the truth.

One of my colleagues tells me feedback is purely information that we shouldn't look at as either good or bad. Maybe that can help us get over our trepidation about feedback throughout the spectrum.

I’m thankful for my ambitious, nonhealthcare professional nephew-in-law who happened to be devouring this book. Without him, I wouldn’t have known about it or what the aspiring leader workforce is reading. Besides the practical content, I learned two more lessons from this encounter: Be open to continuous learning and look for inspiration all around you.

I’m committing to radical candor with respect and kindness. The outcomes we strive for as nurse leaders are significant; our work is truly about making a difference in the health of our nation. We owe it to ourselves and our teams to drive outcomes and maximize performance. Feedback isn’t the enemy—it’s essential. Revolutionary? I hope not. Honesty? Yes! [NM]