Lawrence Neal: Brandon, welcome back.

Brandon Jonker: Lawrence, thanks for having me once again. Always a pleasure to be here.

Lawrence Neal: You are most welcome. In this episode, we're going to be focused on quarterly reviews, reward, and recognition. This really makes up the third part in a three part series that you've been so kind and generous in contributing to the membership.

                      I really do encourage the members to review the other pieces of content that you contributed, so that is the, "How to communicate and set expectations of your team," and, "How to run effective meetings that draw results in your business." So both of those are listed within the Operations Management section in the membership.

                      But yes, in this one we are going to be focused on quarterly reviews, reward, and recognition as kind of the third and fourth pillar of operations management. I guess Brandon, makes sense to begin with quarterly reviews. Do you want to just kick off with talking about what that is, exactly, and how you should conduct that?

Brandon Jonker: I would love to. So I actually like to use the term, "quarterly conversation," as opposed to quarterly review. That's actually a really key term. We'll get into that a little bit more as to why, okay, but the standard pulse, I guess, in traditional business would be some sort of quarterly formalized review, or even less frequently than that, annual or bi-annual review as well.

                      The problem with that is, is it just feels … what's the term I'm looking for? So I guess stiff, where that the employee sits down, it's like, "All right, time to review your performance and tell you exactly what you're doing right and where you're really doing wrong, okay?"

                      Whereas the quarterly conversation really opens it up to be in a two-way street, a mutually beneficial conversation where both parties are going to improve. Before I get too much into exactly how to do that, I want to take a step back and say there is a little bit of formality here.

                      Of course as the manager throughout this conversation, you really do want to touch on three things. You want to touch on quarterly priorities of that individual, so what were their quarterly priorities? How did they perform in them? So just give them an honest small piece of feedback there.

                      The second piece would be how are they aligned with the company core values? Are they still the right person for the organization? The last thing is how are they performing at their key roles or the key function of their job? That's kind of the general structure of the conversation that you do want to touch on those three areas. Outside of that, it's very much a conversation.

This should happen not in the office. You want to go offsite, you want to go to a coffee shop, take a walk, literally, a walk through a park and have a conversation as you would with a friend. Just take that tension or the formality, I guess, out of the review process, and make it a conversation.

A lot of the questions you want to revolve this conversation around are this. What is working and what is not working? If I'm having a conversation with you, Lawrence, and like literally we're sitting down in a coffee shop, I'm going to sit down as a manager and say, "Lawrence, I'm your manager. What's working in our relationship? Tell me the things that are going really well." You're going to frankly review me, okay?

And I'm going to say, "What's not working? Where can I improve? What are some areas that you see that I could be better as your manager?" Then I'm going to do the same thing for you. I'm going to say, "Okay, how can I improve, and what can I continue to double down on? Again, what's working and what's not working?"

Again, the key here is that this is a conversation, very much as you would with a friend. You're just having a two-way conversation looking for both parties to mutually benefit from that in order to strengthen your relationship. As we've touched on at the very beginning of this, of course you still have the slight formality of it, so the person is still getting an honest quote unquote, "review," of them on a quarterly pulse so they know like, "Okay, I need to improve a little bit here. I'm a little off track here." It's setting the bumpers, if you will, as far as expectations are concerned.

Outside of that, it's very much a two-way conversation where both parties are looking to benefit, and both parties are looking to strengthen that relationship. It does a number of different things, but really what I've found is that it takes the stress, it takes the worry, it takes the tension out of the formalized review, which so many people go through their jobs and their careers just agonizing about and fearing. It really opens up to productive conversation when you approach it that way.

Lawrence Neal: I love that, and I think it's an excellent idea. A couple questions on that. So what would be the productive length of time for something like that?

Brandon Jonker: That's great, so I have always left an open time period. So don't say this is going to be exactly 45 minutes, because sometimes, and obviously you and I have done this even ourselves, sometimes you get into a conversation and it just rolls, and you don't want to be like, "Oh, 45 minutes, time's up. We got to cut that off."

When I've done this, I've blocked off as much as like two hours. Sometimes that's gone 30 minutes, sometimes it's taken the full two hours, but I really try hard to not go to my direct report and say, "Nope, that's your two hour time limit. Thanks for your time." Then it just puts the stodginess or the ... it makes it more like a review in that sense,

and it seems as though your time is not as important to them as maybe they need it to be.

Lawrence Neal: Right okay, but you'll still probably block out like two hours in your calendar?

Brandon Jonker: I've never in my career had one go over two hours, so that's where I've gotten that, but I would say majority of them, if I had to give you a timeframe, is about 45 minutes. So I'd say probably an hour is a good time to block off. Just as a good practice, my own, I go two hours.

Lawrence Neal: Okay. Now, this is going to sound like a strange question, but let's say … I agree that it can be a great idea to take it outside the office, take it away from a formal environment, through a park, plus it's always good to walk and talk rather than be sat down, right, from a health perspective. We are in exercise at the end of the day.

Brandon Jonker: Yup.

Lawrence Neal: However, what about … and maybe this is my own issue, and not an issue perhaps the members will have, but what about you've had the conversation, you're walking back to the office. Let's say it's been perhaps kind of negative, maybe from … I don't know, whatever, maybe the manager has had to have a pretty uncomfortable conversation with the member of staff, or both, vice versa. Walking back to the office together, let's say, or back to the facility, is it not slightly uncomfortable, that kind of walk back? Is there any ways or any advice you've got on how you handle those awkward situations?

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, I mean, I would say that as long as you have what is working in there paired with what is not working, and that's not like a sandwich effect, like, "Let's tell him two good pieces of information and one bad piece." That's just being honest.

As long as you pair, "Hey, this is going well, but I need you to improve here," I would say that awkwardness for the most part, is really just self-imposed from the manager. They're assuming it's awkward. They're feeling that, "Oh, I got to give them this tough information. They're not going to like that."

Honestly, if they don't, that's called being a manager and being a leader. That is your responsibility to do that, so quite frankly, I don't have any advice as far as mitigating that, but I do feel that as long as you pair that with some what is working, some positive reinforcement, things that they are doing well, which inevitably 99% of your directs are going to be something well, and if they're not, that's a whole different issue, then I really feel that awkwardness will be mitigated.

Lawrence Neal: Cool. So okay, so you talked a little bit about the structure in terms of the things you cover. Is there any more you want to add into the structure of the quarterly conversation?

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, the only other piece there is do not let this go into review style via taking notes. So you do not want to sit down and write down a formalized review of them and then hold a piece of paper, or read off a computer screen in front of them. If you're going to take any notes as the manager, the notes should just be for whatever that direct report gives feedback to you on. You shouldn't have formalized notes as far as what they did right, what they did wrong, because again, then it just ... it immediately seems like a review.

Imagine talking to your best friend. You don't go into a conversation with your best friend having a thing ... notes of what you're going to talk to them about, you just talk. That's very much what we want this to turn into. If you're going to write down a note or two, it's simply based on areas that you can improve that they told you.

Honestly, and in my personal experience of that, people absolutely love not having that barrier, if you will, of technology, or of even a notepad, because again, it just feels so much like a traditional review, it almost shuts the individual down. But sometimes I'll say, "Okay, I'm just going to take a quick note on that ... excuse me ... on that piece of feedback that you gave me so I can remember that so I can improve." Does that make sense?

Lawrence Neal: It does completely, yeah. I appreciate why you would only take notes in that particular context.

Brandon Jonker: Now to contrast this, sorry, to contrast this, it is my belief that there still is a formalized review, like truly sit down formal notes and that, but that comes on an annual basis. So you pair that along with these quarterly conversations, and you have your quote unquote, "review pulse," for the year.

Lawrence Neal: Right, so do you want to talk about that then, the structure of that? This is a different kind of meeting to the quarterly conversation, the annual review.

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, absolutely. So that's going to be much more like a traditional review. I mean, you're going to sit down, and you're going to review those three areas we just talked on again, or we just touched on, meaning quarterly and annual priorities and how they did on them, how they're doing on the core values, and are they still the right person for the organization, and frankly how they're performing in your job.

You're also going to review a few key other things. You're going to review key accomplishments throughout the year. Goals going into next year for that individual, and then their career progress. Then there is a small conversational component about that as well, but that is much more of a formalized review, and you actually will go through the process of documenting, writing notes, giving it to that individual, having it go through HR, et cetera. But that's the only one you do, so you have conversations on a quarterly basis, and you have one annual review that is your traditional formalized review process.

Lawrence Neal:	Cool, and is there any other meetings, or are those the key ones that you might have with your team?
Brandon Jonker:	As far as review, I mean, we talked on the weekly meeting in our last conversation, but as far as individual meetings with that person and performance reviews, or performance conversations, if you will, those are really the ones that you do. It's four per year, so it's three quarterly conversations, and then in quarter four it's a formalized annual review.
Lawrence Neal:	Cool, okay. How long would you have the annual review for? With it being more formal, would that be a set amount of time?
Brandon Jonker:	Yeah. That one I usually plan for an hour, and depending upon the seniority of the individual, how much you have to discuss with them, sometimes they go a little bit quicker, but oftentimes I've found they take 45 minutes to an hour, so I block an hour.
Lawrence Neal:	Cool. Okay, so the next part of this conversation, unless ... Well, actually first, before I go onto that, what have you found in your experience, what are the benefits of doing the quarterly conversations and the annual review? What do you find that you've got out of those aspects in your experience?
Brandon Jonker:	Yeah, I would say first and foremost, that it overcomes anonymity. It allows the direct report to not feel anonymous in the eyes of their manager. The glory of that really comes through in the conversational component, because you might get on a topic of their personal life. You might get on topic of a stress they have going on non-related to work that you're just there to be a support mechanism for, and it's important for you to understand that in your managerial relationship.
	Okay, so that's the first thing. I've also found that it gives that person, and this should go without saying, but it gives that person a regular pulse on how well they're doing at their job. I mean, oftentimes you'll hear people if they've been terminated, or if they've been removed from a certain position, or even if they left an organization, they oftentimes would say, "Yeah, I wish my manager would have just told me that sooner, or my manager would have given me more corrective or negative feedback, if you will, sooner so it didn't lead to this point."
	Whereas if you flip the coin, the manager will often say, "No, no, they don't want to hear that, they don't want to hear the negative stuff." The reality is more often than not, they absolutely do more than we as managers and leaders even assume, and so it allows us to again, go without saying, give them a quarterly performance analysis, but really have a conversational component as well.
Lawrence Neal:	Have you got any other tips that come to mind on how to run these successfully to make them as productive as possible?
Brandon Jonker:	I would say this, and we've touched on this a few times already, but you're going to ... for our listeners that are listening to this, if they go to apply this, they'll probably get it down maybe the first or second

time, they'll have a conversation. Then in let's say quarter three, something goes wrong, the person doesn't perform as well, and they're going to want to tip their hat and just dive right back into the stereotypical review. "This is how you do it. This is what you're doing right, this is what you're doing wrong. This is where you got to improve."

I would tell you, you have to fight that on all fronts, because as soon as you do that, the glory of the conversation and really, the magic of it, if you will, is dead. Then you might as well just go back to your standard review process, whereas I am a huge proponent of saying the conversation is a thousand times better, and frankly more productive from both parties. So again, to sum that up is don't fall into the trap of switching back after a quarter or two of doing it.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah. This is great advice, because I remember from my time in working in sales in IT, we had something called performance review, but it had incredibly, and as it does in any organization, an incredibly negative connotations. You'd only be put on it if you weren't performing, so if you weren't achieving at least 60% of your target, you'd go on performance review, and there would be a ... it was either monthly or quarterly meeting to review your performance, and then there'd be KPIs and objectives.

But it was always dreaded. It was always something that the staff would talk amongst themselves about. "Oh, I've got my performance review today." It's very kind of negative air about it. The difference in this context, what we're talking about, it's a quarterly conversation. It sounds like it's mandatory for everyone, it's just part of ... doesn't matter whether you're doing really well or doing badly, everyone goes through it, correct?

Brandon Jonker: Absolutely. From being in a position myself, who was both having these conversations and being on the other side of the coin, with my direct manager I was of course the direct report, and it's such a great process, because you get a platform, if you will, not to take a shot at that person, but to give them an open and honest review and say, "You know what? How you interact with me, how you have a conversation with me outside of this is just not going well. I don't respond well to how you approach," or whatever it may be.

You get to give them a piece of feedback for them to improve, okay? I found that so rewarding, and really helpful in the growth of my relationship with my direct manager that I could just have that platform and say, "This is working really well. This is not. Could we please make some iterations or some changes here?" And they were very responsive to that, which frankly, it was awesome.

One of the pieces, this is just a personal example that I received as a manager from my direct report in one of these was, "Hey, you tend to come off as very ... I guess would be a harsh personality." I forget the exact term he used, and he just said, "I don't respond well to that, so if you have to give me a piece of feedback, I would appreciate if you approached it in a less harsh or less strict manner."

That was frankly, Lawrence, such an easy change for me, that if it wasn't for the quarterly conversations, I never, ever would have known, unless he decided to tell me, which is unlikely if he doesn't have a platform for that, because I'm his boss. These conversations, like I said, are mutually beneficial, and they made me a much, much better leader and manager, because I could get a perspective from my direct manager, and what they thought of me, and how I was performing, and then how I could improve if necessary.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, I think it's excellent, because I think without this, what happens, and I'm sure you know this, is people just for want of a better word, bitch or moan amongst themselves about their managers, and it just creates a really, really toxic environment in the business. I've seen this happen in so many different contexts in so many businesses I've worked for in the past. It's incredibly destructive, and it just drives productivity through the floor.

And yeah, so this is excellent, because it gives people obviously the opportunity to really air any concerns they might have, and also, for someone like me and my personality type, I love praise. I mean, we all like praise, but I particularly am a praise person. So if you enjoy the podcast or the membership, please let me know.

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, absolutely.

Lawrence Neal: No, I'm kidding. You guys have been great, and I get tons of praise, which I really appreciate. Whenever I was doing really well, I would look forward to opportunities to be praised or to talk about my achievements, whether it be a team meeting, or a one-on-one, or a quarterly conversation in this context. I also feel like it could be incredibly motivational if you've got that type of person on your team.

Brandon Jonker: Yup, I 100% agree with that.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah. On that vein, talking about praise and all that, the next part I want to talk about is reward and recognition. Do you want to talk a bit about that, in terms of where that fits into all this?

Brandon Jonker: Absolutely. So I like to view this as a separate pillar or a separate managerial principle, if you will. I call this, "rewarding and recognizing." The first part about rewarding and recognition is that it has to happen within 24 hours. That's true for both positive and negative feedback. Of course, the recognizing portion is where you can get negative feedback as well. You recognize something they did right or something they did wrong.

So whether this is good or bad feedback, you have to do it within 24 hours. It's the immediacy of that that is so important. If you wait too long after that, especially with positive feedback, it just reduces the impact of that, and if you wait too long with negative feedback, essentially what happens is it allows the person ... it puts them in a defensive mode. "Hey, a week ago, Lawrence, I saw you do this." Whereas if you say, "Yesterday I saw you do this, and I need you to

improve there, okay?" So again, 24 hour rule, you want to have rewarding and recognizing, or accountability, if you will, within 24 hours. That's the first component to it, okay?

The second piece is public and private. I call it, "public and private." The piece here is that praise should be given in a public scenario, and criticism should be given in a private scenario. Now, this doesn't mean that there's not going to be the occasional overlap where you're going to have to give somebody praise in private, or maybe you'd give them a critique when a few other people are around, but as much as possible, you want to publicly praise the individual.

"Hey Lawrence," and you were just touching on this a second ago, "Hey everybody, Lawrence did this in this past week. It was unbelievable. It helped us do this as an organization." Or pulling you aside, "Hey Lawrence, can you step into my office? You were a little off track here, I really need you to improve," or, "I heard you say this to so-and-so yesterday. Please don't ever do that again." So again, that's called public and private, where you want to focus on public praise, private criticism, or when needed.

The next one is an area that is extremely hard to do, but so unbelievably important. This is called boss versus buddy. Ultimately, as you are a manager, or if you are a leader of any organization of any size, you're going to have people that you are of course leading and responsible for. It is your job to make sure that you maintain a relationship in which you are their boss and not their buddy.

This doesn't mean that you can't be friends with your directs, or that you can't go have a beer with some of your colleagues. Of course you can do that, but the area where this becomes blurred is if it ever impacts your ability as a manager to do your job, if your friendship with them impacts your ability to do your job. If you ever cross that line, you've essentially failed as a manager. It's always important to continually be evaluating that in your own mind, in your own head, when you approach relationships with your direct reports.

Oftentimes, and I don't mean to give a blanket statement, but what I've found is that this is a very easy barrier to cross, and if you've crossed that barrier and it impedes your ability to do your job, you've failed completely as a manager. Just a more concrete example of this. Imagine you've been working with somebody for five years. You're their manager, and they've done something wrong, or they've done numerous things wrong, and you know ultimately in your heart of hearts that you have to make a people move or you have to terminate them.

If your friendship with them impedes your ability to do that, or do it in a timely manner, you've failed. Again, that's extremely hard to do, especially in small start up or even entrepreneurial organizations where you've grown up with these people throughout your organization, it's very normal. Like, "Hey, we've built this thing together." Be hand-in-hand in it, and then if you have to hold them accountable, most people

shy away from that, which leads to organizational complacency, or frankly, lack of top and bottom line growth.

So that one utterly important, extremely simple on the surface, unbelievably challenging in practice, but one of the most important things I've found to being a successful leader and manager. The last piece for this an accountability mechanism. It's simply called, "the three strike rule," and this again came from directly from Gino Wickman and the Traction Process.

This is an accountability mechanism where you give somebody a strike, so if they were to do something wrong, and when I say, "do something wrong," really there's three areas outside of something like blatant, that they would really get a strike for. Meaning they're probably going to get a strike for a core value violation, or they could.

They'll get a strike for a lack of ability to execute one of their key roles, or not do their job, and they frankly should get a strike if they don't achieve or don't make progress towards one of their quarterly priorities. So those three areas typically you're going to get a strike for ... I mean, like if you got in a fight with a co-worker you might get a strike for that, but that isn't going to fall under typically those three areas, typically.

So how this process works is it's very simple. Let's say, Lawrence, you're my direct report. I realize that you were violating a core value. I come down and say, "Lawrence, we have to have a conversation. I'm going to give you a strike right now, because you're off track here, and you're really not doing well with this core value."

Now, the key to a strike is that a strike is both punitive, meaning it's punishment, but it's also a great coaching opportunity and learning opportunity for the person. They say, "Great, I'm off track. I should get a little bit of punishment, but this is an opportunity for me to improve."

So you get the strike. The strike stays, quote unquote, "stays," on your record for 30 days. If you improve and that behavior has improved within that 30 day window, strike goes away, record's totally clean. You have no strikes.

If however, you do not improve at the 30 day mark, or even before then, if the behavior or whatever the violation they be continues, then you tell the individual, "Hey, you know what? You haven't improved on this. We had a conversation on it. This strike is staying on your record." Okay, so now they have one strike. You do the exact same process with the second strike, and a third strike is inevitably termination.

Now, majority of times, if you're doing this right, people aren't going to make it all the way to the third strike, because you're either going to decide they're not the right person for the organization, or they're going to decide they're not the right person for the organization, and they're going to self-remove, okay?

To give you some more perspective on this, I would say that it's very normal, and actually to be expected, that a manager is going to give out a lot of first strikes as they manage their staff. Now, the strike probably won't stay on their record, it will go away. It's very unlikely that you get to the point where you have two, or ever, a third strike and you had to be terminated, but it's very common to have a strike, and then it goes away every 30 days. Have a strike, go away after 30 days, because people are people, and they're not always going to follow within the painted lines, and that's okay. That's what's called management.

The final tactic or final piece there is called the three strike rule, and I love it because it's such a simple accountability tool. It revolves around those three areas, and it really gives the individual some pretty clear set expectations, and lines or bumpers, if you will, as to how to operate and how to perform within your organization.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, that's excellent. There's a few thoughts on that, so this three strike policy, is that something that you would ... when would you bring the fact that that exists, and that that's a process that you use? When would you inform the member of staff of that? Is that something that they would learn about when first joining the organization, or would that just come up as in when you actually ... they get a strike?

Brandon Jonker: I actually think either one's fine. When I was at Discover Strength, and what we thought was a great practice, and I frankly agree, and would prefer if I was running my own organization, is to just tell the person up front. We did it right in their onboarding when we went through our general policies, our general HR policies, we said, "Hey, just so you know, this is how we hold people accountable in this organization. We give you a strike. If you're doing something wrong, if you're doing something ..."

We just explain the full process. People actually really appreciate that, because then when inevitably they did get their first strike, they weren't taken aback, or we had to say, "Now, this is the strike process." It just kind of takes that negative vibe of it away, and again, it's important to understand that a strike is like I said, punitive.

It is indeed punishment, but it's also a great learning and growth opportunity. If I'm a new person to an organization, I want my manager to come down and say, "Brandon, you're getting a strike today because you did this wrong." I'd say, "Great, thank you. I can improve that, and I won't make that mistake again. It just made me better."

Lawrence Neal: Do you think ... because obviously this comes from I'm guessing this terminology comes from baseball. I mean, I'm British, so I have no idea what I'm talking about.

Brandon Jonker: Yeah it does. Yes, yeah it does.

Lawrence Neal: But to me, it does sound kind of negative. I mean, do you not think that you could perhaps use a ... I don't know whether that comes to mind.

Do you ever think about that? Do you think strikes may be a bit negative, or maybe that's good that it's negative. I don't know.

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, I think to me that's just semantics, but yeah, I think there is a negative connotation to it, but I also think it's super simple. I think the negativeness also comes down to how you deliver it. If I were to say, "Lawrence, you got a strike. Improve." Or if I say, "Lawrence, I'm giving you a strike right now, okay, but this is what a strike is. It's a coaching opportunity so you can learn to get better. Now of course it is a little bit of punishment, but that's just because you did something wrong. You should expect to get punished, if you will, but you can improve this, and you can get better."

I think it comes down to as most things do, delivery, and how the direct manager delivers that. You can use any term you want for a strike. You could use warning, you could use anything you want to make it sound better, if that's what you're concerned about, but I never really ran into that personally. If I did, or when we had people alluding to the negativeness of that, then it was just my job to reiterate and explain, "No, no, this is actually a great opportunity for you. It's a positive that we corrected it now as opposed to this ... excuse me ... getting worse and worse, and eventually leading to something bigger than it needs to be."

Lawrence Neal: Yeah. I guess it's probably not ideal to scream, "Strike one," in someone's face when they ...

Brandon Jonker: No, I wouldn't recommend that. I would recommend doing that in a private setting, and probably just laying it out a little easier.

Lawrence Neal: No, that's really good advice and an excellent tool that I'm sure that the members will find useful. One thing I wanted to touch on what you spoke about earlier was the whole buddy versus boss challenge. This is so huge, and such challenge in business.

I actually had this issue myself. When using freelancers, I've worked with friends in the past who have done work for me which hasn't been up to standard, and it's really, really hard for me personally, and I definitely have this problem, with trying not to ... yeah, with allowing the buddy side to impede our relationship or the productivity of our agreement.

I've actually terminated a freelancer before who was a good friend, and they took it actually really well, but it was very, very challenging for me to do. I know that's different to the whole buddy versus boss thing, but it's the same kind of dynamic. It's very similar.

Brandon Jonker: Yeah, I would say that's very much would fall under that as well. I would agree.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, so do you have any ... I guess I wanted you to elaborate, because you talked about how you can't let it impede. There's the one reservation I have of this, is you almost come across so robotic if you're

able to just not let that affect you, but maybe there is no alternative. Maybe that's just business. So have you got any [inaudible 00:32:44] on how one can cultivate that ability to make sure that they don't make mistakes there?

Brandon Jonker: So the first thing I would say is if you ever have to make a people move, or if you ever have to remove somebody like you said from your organization, leave no doubt about it, there will be pain, and there will be pulling on your heartstrings, and that's actually really, really good, because if you don't have that, you're not a normal human being, and you don't relate to people well, and you don't care about your people.

So that should be there. This is not meant to mitigate that feeling. The principle here is meant to allow you to be an effective and a great manager. If you are too much on the friend side, and again, can't do your managerial responsibilities, make decisions with the greater good in mind first because of your inner personal relationship with your staff members, then you either need to change something drastically, or you're on a path to being a very, very poor manager.

This is balancing act, no doubt about it. Some people are able to be unbelievable friends. They can hang out, their families are good friends, if they have kids, the kids all play together, and at the end of the day, if that person has to terminate the individual or make a tough ... hold them accountable, then they're fine in it.

Other people, and I would contest that a lot more people, if they are at that level of friendship or that level of interpersonal relationship, it makes it much, much, much more challenging, and even impedes their ability to do their job and their managerial responsibilities first.

I don't mean this to sound negative, and I don't want this to come off as don't be friends with your direct reports and your peers, because I think that is actually a piece of management that is very important, but at the end of the day, you have to understand that the reason, frankly, you're great friends with them, or one of the reasons, is because you work together.

Your responsibility is first and foremost to the organization, not to the individual. That's hard for some people to swallow, it is, but that's your job. That's the reality of the situation, and if your interpersonal relationships, if your friendships have impeded your ability to do your job, you have failed and you will never be a great manager, and your organization will likely suffer because of it.

I've experienced this on both sides of the coin, where I've waited too long, I've learned tough lessons in this area. I've waited to long to make a people move, or I waited too long, or even did not give somebody a piece of corrective feedback, because I was too good of friends with them. Frankly, I was fortunate enough to realize this earlier on in my career, and I made a commitment to saying, "Nope, I have to always, always give them feedback and put the organization first, because that is my number one responsibility as a great leader and a great manager."

So I again want to reiterate that the challenge of this, it is no doubt hard, it is no doubt can be painful. You might have to make some decisions. This is a very rudimentary example, but you might have to say, "Yeah, I'm not going to happy hour with you guys tonight," or, "I'm not going to hang out with you on the weekend," or whatever it may be, in order to keep that distance, if that is what works best for you.

At the end of the day, you have to make sure that you keep this relationship if you want to be effective at being a great manager and a great boss. I would also say that ... I've said it a couple times here, this is not easy, but being a great boss and being a great manager, no one ever said it was going to be easy. The challenge of being a great manager and being a great boss, or even a great leader, is you want that challenge. You don't want an easy job, you want a tough task ahead of you, and this is one of those components of it, but if you can do it, it can be extremely rewarding also.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, yeah. I think this is huge, and I think this takes ... to be able to master this, it takes a tremendous amount of maturity to be able to do it. I know within myself that this is something I would definitely have to work on, because I'm just thinking ... as you're talking, I'm thinking about even in my personal relationships, I am quite often quick to apologize about giving honest feedback.

I think that's bad. I think that you're doing yourself and the other person a disservice if you're tip-toeing around the issue, or apologizing every time you give someone constructive criticism, or in the worst case, being dishonest, right?

Brandon Jonker: Exactly, exactly.

Lawrence Neal: I've made it awkward before with friends of mine who've asked for kind of feedback on what are they doing, career, business, whatever, where I've really struggled to just be direct with them. It's just been a really unproductive conversation as a result.

So yeah, this is ... I think this is a big one. It's certainly very challenging. It's certainly something I have ... to be honest with you, I don't think I've ever seen this in my own career ever be delivered effectively. I think that ... I mean, Brandon, I don't know what you think, but I believe very, very few individuals possess the ability to do this aspect of management very well.

Brandon Jonker: I would say that a lot of people possess the ability, they've just never applied that enough, like they've never heard it how we just delivered it and how we just talked about it, and they've never learned, and made mistakes in that regard to get better in that area. Frankly, Lawrence, this will be a blanketed statement, but that's why I would say a lot of people are just shitty bosses. There's not good managers, and that's why we see people saying, "I don't like my job anymore."

You hear it all the time. They don't quit jobs, they quit managers, and they quit relationships with direct managers, and this is a huge

component of it. A quick step back, the other side of that, which is the great irony in all this, and we touched on it when we were talking about having a quarterly conversation is this. If you were to ask the direct report on the other side of the coin, "Hey, what could your manager have done better?" A lot of times they're going to say, "He or she would have been a little stricter on me. Would have gave me more upfront feedback."

There we have that gap, that chasm between those two parties, when the irony is they both want the same thing, and we're just getting in our own way. So yeah, I would say you're actually right, but that's because most people aren't disciplined enough and haven't taken action in this area, and committed to being great at having a good boss versus buddy relationship.

Lawrence Neal: Yeah, and I mean, just to I guess second what you're saying there and elaborate on what I said earlier, I don't want it to sound like this is so impossible to learn, because clearly you've given some really good advice on how you can perform this, on how you can practice it and get better at it in your role. It certainly is a learned skill.

As I said, I don't know anyone who's really born with the ability to do this naturally, but clearly it can be learned, and it's just about realizing, I guess, some of the core tenets in delivering it and then practicing. Do you have, I guess anything further, Brandon, in terms of the reward recognition category of things? Anything you want to add that comes to mind?

Brandon Jonker: I would say that those are really the big four areas, and again, if I had to choose two of the highest there, I mean, I don't like to necessarily rank the pieces of it, but two of the most effective I've found are of course that boss versus buddy, but also the 24 hour rule. If you're going to give somebody corrective feedback or even positive feedback, it's got to be within 24 hours, otherwise the message is simply diluted, and it's not as impactful as it needs to be.

Sometimes people say, "Well, I'm not in front of that person, or I don't see them." Well, I don't see you right now, and we're having a conversation. You know what I mean? There's other ways to talk to people. We can do it over the internet, we can have a phone call, we can meet them in person if it's that way, but do it within 24 hours so the message is as important or as ... what's the word I'm looking for? Meaningful, I guess, as you're intending it to be.

Lawrence Neal: I guess the way you communicate it, obviously you work with what you have, but in an ideal situation, you could always speak to them, is always going to be the best way to do it.

Brandon Jonker: Exactly. I would 100% agree with that. I believe that you break down the communication barrier, you break down assumptions. If you get an email from somebody, you might be assuming their tone. I think having a conversation, a verbal conversation for that matter, is the best way to approach this, personally.

Lawrence Neal:	Cool, so let's summarize those four bits quickly then. So you've got the 24 hour rule, so if you want to give reward or recognize something, or I suppose criticism as well, do it within 24 hours.
Brandon Jonker:	Correct.
Lawrence Neal:	The second one is ... what was the second one?
Brandon Jonker:	Public versus private, so public recognition, private critique.
Lawrence Neal:	Okay, cool. Do you want to just list the others?
Brandon Jonker:	Yup, the third one, boss not buddy, or boss versus buddy, I should say, maintaining that good boss relationship, doing your job as first and foremost as a leader and manager, and then secondly as a friend and a buddy. Then the final one is the three strike policy, or the three strike rule.
Lawrence Neal:	Cool. I know you prepared this in advance didn't you, for this? Or do you just know it off the top of your head?
Brandon Jonker:	I mean, I have prepared ... I mean, I did this for eights years, so this is literally just off the top of my head.
Lawrence Neal:	I always notice you and Luke are just so well prepared on stuff like this. Maybe a lot of it is like you said, it's habit. It's something that you've been doing for years, so it's ingrained. I'm still always impressed, and learned from you guys.
	Brandon, thank you so much. This has been really, really useful. I think the members are going to really enjoy this, and take a lot from it. I certainly have. Is there anything else you want to add finally, or is that it for you?
Brandon Jonker:	I think that's it. As always, we always kind of end with this and say this, but thank you Lawrence. I appreciate everything you do, and I think you're doing a great thing for this industry .
Lawrence Neal:	Cool. Oh, and actually, one thing I forgot is what's the best way for people to find out more about you and contact you?
Brandon Jonker:	Sure, email's best for me. I mean, LinkedIn works too, just Brandon Jonker. You can search me on LinkedIn, or my email is just brandon@jonkercc.com.
Lawrence Neal:	Cool. Okay, well look, thanks for joining me today, Brandon. Really appreciate it.
Brandon Jonker:	Thanks, Lawrence.
Lawrence Neal:	Cheers.