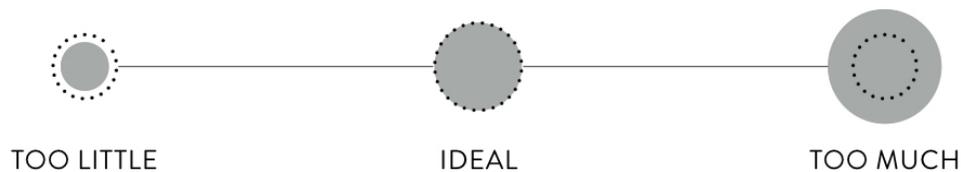


THE LONG VIEW

LEADERSHIP STYLE GUIDE

A technique I have found useful to give employees concrete and constructive feedback on style is built around what Aristotle called the “golden mean.” Aristotle believed that virtues live in the middle ground between two extremes, so that Bravery was the golden mean that lived between the extremes of Cowardice on one end and Recklessness on the other. I’ve found this helpful in providing feedback on leadership style issues because it doesn’t say to the employee, “You are a bad leader,” it says, “Here are the leadership dimensions we are talking about, here’s where you stand today, and here is the direction you need to be moving.” I call it a “napkin nudge” because I often write it down on a napkin or a sheet of paper and use it to nudge the individual to a more successful behavior. All I can say is, it works.



Plot where you currently stand, then set a personal goal to move closer to the Ideal



THE LONG VIEW

LEADERSHIP STYLE GUIDE

Below is an actual example of a “napkin nudge” I used to counsel a young leader on her personal style. We thought about some of the dimensions of her style that were really important to her success. I then put an X beside where I thought she was on each dimension and counseled her to move in a certain direction—towards the ideal. She then could think about concrete ways to move her profile, and to periodically check in on her progress. She was perceived as a bit timid and a micromanager, though surprisingly, she tended to overshare personal details in the workplace in a way that others found concerning. This exercise helped her to elevate and round out her style. I find that when I use very simple language and images like “pushy vs. pushover” and “in the weeds vs. in the clouds” that people grasp and accept the feedback more readily. The last one, “Fort Knox vs. Facebook”, is about how readily people share information at work. I use Fort Knox to mean too little, and Facebook to mean too much.

