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It Took Steve Jobs Less Than 60 Seconds to Share the Best Leadership Advice You'll Hear Today

Resist the urge to fix all your team's problems, and do this instead

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Back in the spring of 1992, [Steve Jobs](#) was invited to speak to a group of students at the MIT Sloan School of Management. (According to MIT, the lecture was a bit of a surprise, the result of the efforts

In the talk, which lasts a little over an hour, Jobs shares a number of stories from his time at Apple and NeXT (the startup he founded after leaving Apple), along with the lessons learned through both good times and bad. (Hat tip to [Lorie Corcuera](#), through whom I discovered the video.)

Steve Jobs President & CEO, NeXT Computer Corp and Apple. MIT Sloan Distinguishe...



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One of those lessons comes through loud and clear just after the 51:00 mark. At that point, a student asks Jobs the question:

What's the most important thing that you personally learned at Apple that you're doing at NeXT?

Before answering, [Jobs stops to think it through](#). You can almost see the wheels turning as he engages in deep thought.

After what seems like an eternity (and in reality, lasted over 20 seconds), Jobs answers the question:

I now take a longer-term view on people. In other words, when I see something not being done right, my first reaction isn't to go fix it. It's to say, we're building a team here. And we're going to do great stuff for the next decade, not just the next year, and so what do I need to do to help so the person that's screwing up learns—versus how do I fix the problem.

When someone on your team struggles with a problem or makes a mistake, it can be difficult not to jump in and solve it for them. But as Jobs points out, that's not going to help the person--or the company--in the long run.

Much better is to use those mistakes as teaching opportunities.

For example, you could share instances in which you've committed similar missteps, and what you learned from them--while recognizing that the individual may still choose to address the problem differently. But sharing these lessons allows you to share your own experience, and may spark new ways of thinking. By being vulnerable to your team; they'll begin to see you as a coach or mentor.

You can also use those employee mistakes as teaching opportunities. How so?

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Your people need to know you've got their back. This is important because mistakes will be made, regardless. When you encourage and build up, rather than dishearten and tear down, they'll be motivated to continue giving their best. That's emotional intelligence in action.

So remember, mistakes aren't bad; they're inevitable. When they happen, take the long-term view by being encouraging and supportive, and finding ways to share your experience.

Your people will thank you for it.

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