

Read through each scenario and consider the leader's intentions and choices. Then imagine how the leader's signals could be interpreted by the audience, what type of gap might occur between intent and impact, and how that gap could be resolved.

Scenario 1A:

John considers himself an empathic leader. He prides himself in his active listening and strong connections with his direct reports. He often recognizes their accomplishments in meetings and strives to build a collaborative and supportive tone as a leader. He prioritizes giving positive feedback and avoids feedback that he considers negative, as he does not want to demotivate or add stress to anyone on his team. If a direct report creates a situation that needs remedy, John jumps in to offer a possible solution and help manage the response and mitigate fallout.

What possible gap might occur between intent and impact? How could the leader resolve that gap?

Scenario 2A:

Elena has stepped into a new leadership position with a larger team and more responsibility. Two months in, she is finding that her schedule provides very little time between meetings, and she is getting concerned about upcoming deliverables. She wants to be accessible to her team and her boss as much as possible, so she always has channels open to email and direct messaging, including during meetings, both with groups and one-on-one. To be open and transparent, Elena often lets her direct reports know how much is on her calendar and that she will need to respond to messages during their weekly connection points.

What possible gap might occur between intent and impact? How could the leader resolve that gap?

Scenario 3A:

Kris is a rising high potential within the organization and has been seriously considered but passed by for a few recent leadership openings. He is young – often the youngest in the room – and wants to make sure that he respects others' experience and expertise, so he is quick to defer to other voices. When speaking up in meetings, he shares opinions cautiously and checks in frequently with his audience to see if they are in agreement. When sharing his accomplishments, he focuses on collaborative team efforts and is careful not to brag or boast. Kris would like to move forward as a leader but feels as if something might be holding him back.

What possible gap might occur between intent and impact? How could the leader resolve that gap?