

Ending Script

Supervisor: I wanted to discuss how we were going to handle the ending and evaluation process over the next few weeks. Frankly, given how we have been not getting along, I suspect it's tempting to not continue to work together. I feel, however, that it is important for us to have some conversation about our work together, where it went wrong, how I might have been more helpful to you, and how you may have been more helpful to the situation. I was concerned about raising this discussion with you, and almost decided to pass it up, but I think I owe this to you and I genuinely want to hear your views. It may be helpful to me with future supervisees, and I might be able to help you in terms of your future supervisors.

Worker: I don't think it would be helpful at all. To be honest, I never liked you from the beginning, and I believe you had it in for me right from the start.

Supervisor: What do you mean that I had it in for you from the beginning?

Worker: You were always on my back and always critical of my work. Frankly, I couldn't do anything right as far as you were concerned.

Supervisor: When I think back to my start here, I think we were all under a lot of pressure. The firing of Ted [the previous supervisor] and my being brought in and told to "straighten out this unit" probably made it tough for me to connect with how staff was feeling. In retrospect, I think I came on too strong and probably made you feel more defensive. I could have been more supportive, but the reality was that the unit was not in very good shape.

Worker: We all knew there were problems, but you didn't help with your critical attitude.

Supervisor: Granted, but when I got this out on the table in my second month here, everyone else agreed to start over except you. I feel I was able to overcome my start and make good connections with the rest of the staff, but I never felt I was able to get past your initial anger. Even when I asked you about it, you told me I was mistaken and kept your wall up. I finally decided to let it go and work out a relationship in which we could get along at a tolerable level, but that was a mistake. I should have confronted you earlier on this, and I think you could have been a little more open with me.

Worker: You are the supervisor – it was your job to straighten things out.

Supervisor: I can accept responsibility for my part in the process, but frankly, I'm not hearing you taking any responsibility for yours. Even when I tried to open up this conversation, your first response was to be put off – to tell me it wouldn't do any good at all to talk about it. I know it's too late for us to resolve this, and I don't expect you to leave here feeling too good about our work together – I know I'm not happy about it either – but I think I at least owe you some honesty. I may have made some mistakes,

Ending Script (continued)

but you're not that easy to supervise either. To be honest, I was so mad at your attitude, I almost decided to pass up this conversation.

Worker: Well, maybe you should have done just that.

Supervisor: The issue for me now is that you are ending with your clients and the agency in the next few weeks, and I want to discuss your wrapping up your caseload and transferring your clients to their new workers without becoming a battle between us. Believe it or not, I would like to try to help you with this ending if you will let me. I know you care about your clients and would want to end well with them. I think you need some time to think about this conversation and that's why I'm raising it today. I will give you a chance to respond at our next conference, and then I would like to begin a review of your caseload and a discussion of the steps we need to take to ease the transition.

Adapted from Shulman, L. (2010). *Interactional Supervision*. pp. 158-160.

