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Case Study: Ed Misses the Banquet

1. How does the concept of constitutive rules help explain the misunderstanding between Ed and his manager?

The concept of constitutive rules refers to the implicit or explicit rules that govern how people behave and interact in particular social contexts. In this case, the annual company banquet is a social context with its own constitutive rules, such as attendance being mandatory or expected. The invitation to the banquet may not have explicitly stated that attendance was mandatory, but the fact that top management sees it as a "command performance" suggests that attendance is an expected constitutive rule. Ed, however, may not have been aware of this rule or may have interpreted the invitation as optional, given that it had not been RSVP. Ed's decision to attend his daughter's play instead of the banquet may have been perfectly reasonable and understandable to him. However, his manager's angry reaction suggests that he violated an important constitutive rule of the company culture by not attending the banquet. Therefore, the concept of constitutive rules helps to explain the misunderstanding between Ed and his manager, as they had different expectations and interpretations of the social context and its rules. By recognizing and understanding these rules, individuals can better navigate social situations and avoid misunderstandings or conflicts.

2. How might Ed use the informal network in his organization to learn the normative practices of the company and the meanings they have to others in the company?

As we learned, the informal network in an organization consists of relationships and communication channels that exist outside of formal structures and hierarchies. This network can be an important source of information about the company's culture and normative practices, as it provides a way for employees to share their experiences, opinions, and knowledge. To learn about the normative practices of the company and their meanings to others, Ed can start by building relationships with his colleagues and coworkers. He can seek out informal opportunities to talk with them, such as during breaks, lunches, or after-work gatherings. During these conversations, he can ask about their experiences with the company culture and norms and listen to their perspectives and opinions. Ed can also pay attention to the informal communication channels in the company, such as social media groups, email chains, or online forums. These channels can provide valuable insights into the company culture and how employees interpret and understand normative practices. Additionally, Ed can seek out informal mentors or advisors within the company who can offer guidance and support. These people can provide him with a deeper understanding of the company culture and norms and help him navigate any challenges or conflicts that arise. By using the informal network in his organization, Ed can gain a better understanding of the normative practices of the company and the meanings they have to others. This

can help him to navigate the company culture better, build relationships with his colleagues, and ultimately be more successful in his job.

3. How do the ambiguity and abstraction inherent in language explain the misunderstanding between Ed and his manager?

In the case of the misunderstanding between Ed and his manager, the ambiguity and abstraction in language may have played a role in their miscommunication. For example, the invitation to the company banquet only stated, "Hope to see you there," which can be interpreted in different ways depending on the individual's perspective. Ed may have interpreted this as an optional invitation, while his manager may have interpreted it as an expectation or requirement. Similarly, the phrase "command performance" used by top management to describe the annual banquet is also abstract and open to interpretation. While Ed may not have understood this phrase to mean mandatory attendance, his manager and other employees may have interpreted it this way. In addition, the lack of a formal RSVP may have further added to the ambiguity and confusion around the event's expectations and requirements. The misunderstanding between Ed and his manager can be attributed to the ambiguity and abstraction inherent in language, which allowed for different interpretations and expectations regarding the company banquet. This highlights the importance of clear and concise communication, particularly in a work setting where expectations and requirements can have significant implications for an individual's job performance and career advancement.

4. How would you suggest that Ed repair the damage done by his absence from the company banquet? What might he say to his manager? How could he use I-language, indexing, and dual perspective to guide his communication?

To repair the damage done by his absence from the company banquet, Ed can take several steps to demonstrate his commitment to the company and its culture. First, he should acknowledge his mistake and take responsibility for not attending the company banquet. This can help to rebuild trust and show that he values the company's expectations and norms. Ed can use "I-language" to express his feelings and intentions rather than blaming or accusing others. For example, he might say, "I realize now that I made a mistake by not attending the banquet. I apologize for any disappointment or inconvenience I caused." Also, He can use "indexing" to clarify the specific behavior or event that he is referring to rather than making sweeping generalizations. For example, he might say, "I understand that my absence from the banquet may have been perceived as a lack of commitment to the company culture." To acknowledge and respect the perspectives of others, even if he does not agree with them, Ed can use "dual perspective." For example, he might say, "I understand that a company banquet is an important event that signifies unity and loyalty, and I appreciate the importance of showing my support for the company in this way."

5. Do you think the banquet is a ritual? Why or why not?

It is possible that the banquet is a ritual within the company. A ritual is a set of actions or words that are performed in a symbolic way to express shared beliefs, values, or emotions. The scenario mentions that the annual banquet is seen as a

"command performance" that signifies company unity and loyalty and that management considers it an important event that employees are expected to attend. These statements suggest that the banquet serves a symbolic function beyond simply providing food or entertainment. However, it is also possible that a banquet is simply a social event or tradition rather than a ritual. Without further information about the specific actions or words that are performed at the banquet and the meaning they hold for those involved, it is difficult to classify it definitively as a ritual.