

From time to time Karla has overheard comments of her coworkers about the good times they've had together at various parties and outings that they plan. She can't help thinking about the fact that she is never included. Last week as Karla approached the employees' lounge, she heard someone saying, "... at Rachel's party last Saturday" Karla stopped dead in her tracks. She felt as if someone had punched her in the stomach. What a blow to discover that even her friend, her only "real work friend," had thrown a party and had excluded her.

Daniel has noticed that during the past week Karla has seemed quieter and more withdrawn than usual. He is concerned because he believes that Karla's success as a salesperson is largely due to her outgoing, cheerful personality. When he gets a chance to talk privately with Karla, he says, "Is everything okay, Karla? You've been awfully quiet the past few days."

1. What surface problems do you notice?
2. What root problem(s) might underlie the surface problems?
3. If you were Karla, what would you do?
4. If you were Daniel, what would you do?

Case Study 7.3 Karla Gets Promoted

Continuing the story of Karla, African American salesperson, fast forward one year. Daniel was promoted to an executive position at the headquarters office and recommended Karla as his replacement. Karla has mixed emotions about taking the job, feeling that the employees still do not accept her as a social equal but they do seem to respect her sales ability. She is hoping that they will accept her as manager and that she will be able to win their respect for her leadership ability.

During her first six months as manager, Karla sensed a degree of resistance from the employees. She has seen them joking and laughing, glancing over at her as though she were the butt of the joke. Sometimes they seem to be dragging in their heels in responding to her requests. Sometimes she must follow up and repeat the request a time or two.

During the past month, Karla has noticed some distinct changes. Employees suddenly seem more cooperative, amiable, and respectful. A couple of them have even invited her to social events after work. Karla realizes that it is time for her to conduct yearly performance reviews of all employees. She feels somewhat conflicted about how to rate the employees. She is really enjoying their changed attitudes and behaviors and does not want to jeopardize the improved relationships.

1. What surface problems do you notice?
2. What root problem(s) might underlie the surface problems?
3. Should Karla base the performance reviews more on current behaviors or on previous behaviors?
4. If you were Karla, what would you do?

Case Study 7.4 Assistant Manager Doug

Doug is assistant manager of the Nashville branch of Angelo Shipping Company. He's been an employee there for 12 years, since he was 23, and he was promoted to assistant manager a year ago. Last month Doug learned of an upcoming opening in the Atlanta headquarters and applied for it. He believes he has all the necessary qualifications for the position as well as an exemplary performance record. Although there are many African American men working as manual laborers for the company, none are full managers or executives.

John, an executive in the headquarters office, is interviewing applicants for the management position and will make a recommendation to the executive team. Of the