**. Concrete Experience: A High-Stakes Firing**

At my previous job as an HR Manager, I was faced with a difficult decision: to terminate an employee. The employee, a high-performer named Sarah, was consistently exceeding her sales targets. However, her behavior was toxic. She would publicly belittle colleagues, ignore requests from other departments, and even take credit for other people's work. I had received numerous complaints from her peers and supervisors. I held a meeting with her, and she was furious. She denied all allegations, accused her colleagues of jealousy, and threatened to quit. After careful consideration and with the support of her manager, I terminated her. I felt a mix of relief that the issue was resolved but also unease, as I was concerned about her reaction and the impact on the team. I was not sure if I had handled the situation in the best way possible.

**2. Reflective Observation: A Turning Point**

After the termination, I noticed a significant change in the workplace environment. Within a few weeks, the team's morale and collaboration improved dramatically. The team members seemed more relaxed and communicative, and there were fewer interpersonal conflicts. This led me to reflect on the situation and ask myself some questions. Was I too quick to terminate Sarah? Could I have done more to help her change her behavior? Why did it take so long for the team to report her behavior? What did this incident say about my leadership style? I realized that my focus on Sarah's performance had blinded me to the negative impact she was having on the entire team. I also realized that my fear of conflict had caused me to delay addressing the issue, which had prolonged the team's suffering.

**3. Abstract Conceptualization: Learning the Lesson**

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This experience taught me a profound lesson about the importance of **psychological safety** and **emotional intelligence**. I learned that a high-performing employee with a toxic attitude can cause more harm to an organization than an average performer. I also learned that I need to be more proactive in addressing negative behavior, even if it is from a high-performer. I realized that my job as an HR manager is not just to hire and fire, but to create a safe and supportive work environment where everyone can thrive. I also learned that a leader’s silence can be as damaging as a toxic employee’s actions. I understood that my role is to empower employees to speak up and to create an environment where they feel safe doing so.

**4. Active Experimentation: My New Approach**

Moving forward, I will implement a new approach to managing employee relations. I will no longer tolerate negative behavior from high-performers. I will be more proactive in addressing interpersonal conflicts, even if they seem minor. I will also make it a priority to create a culture of psychological safety where employees feel comfortable reporting issues without fear of retaliation. I will conduct regular check-ins with managers to discuss employee relations and provide them with the tools they need to address conflicts. I will also develop a training program for new managers on how to handle difficult conversations. I will use this experience as a case study to train new HR managers and leaders on the importance of prioritizing team culture over individual performance.