

# Lessons from Goldilocks

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Being the mother of thirteen-year old twins, I have had the pleasure of reading the tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears more than a few times over the years. Despite the many poor choices that Goldilocks made on that fateful day when she trespassed onto the bears' property and made herself at home, there is one valuable leadership lesson that I take away.

Goldilocks was very good at discerning what was just right. Not too hot, not too cold. Not too hard, or too soft. She was sensitive to striking just the right balance.

As leaders, we can learn from Goldilocks. We can begin to notice where we may be under-using or over-using a particular strength or competency. We can begin to notice where our portfolio of behaviors and thinking patterns may have narrowed over time, and identify ways to expand our range and strike the right balance, based on each situation.

One leader with whom I work had risen through the ranks through a combination of being very smart and outspoken. She was seen as someone who often had the right answer. As she progressed into senior leadership, feedback from others made it clear that she was over-using her strength of debate and under-utilizing the skills needed for collaboration and facilitation. Once she became aware of the need to re-calibrate, she was able to put a plan together to help her shift her thinking and behaviors over time. She began to ask herself, "What does this specific situation call for?" Her development then focused on becoming a versatile leader with a full range of skills and competencies to draw upon, based on the unique needs of each situation.

## *Coaching Questions:*

Where may you be over-using a strength, and applying it in situations where it is not ideally suited?

What skills or competencies do you need to develop to expand your range?

Think of a situation you're facing that feels challenging. What is "just right" in terms of how you want to show up in that situation?