We’ve Got it all Wrong!
Redesigning the Feedback Process so it’s Meaningful

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Introductions
Pair Up

1. Share your name, where you work, and what you do.
2. Share one piece of advice that has stuck with you.
3. Share why you are here in this session.
Feedback is essential for growth
Feedback is a process of exchanging information about past behavior, delivered in the present, which may or may not influence the future.

Source: Charlie & Edie Seashore
Feedback

✓ Is information
✓ Consider it neutrally – it’s neither positive nor negative
✓ Is a process
✓ Can be conscious and/or out of awareness
✓ It is everywhere – all the time

Source: Charlie & Edie Seashore
What beliefs prevent you from giving feedback?
What beliefs prevent you from receiving feedback from others?
• With feedback, people tend to use it to confirm their own beliefs, not to challenge them.
• When data and their model/worldviews don’t match – most people discard the data
• We will not even wait to ignore feedback, but actively take steps to prevent feedback from happening in the first place.
  • e.g. hiding from people we don’t want to talk to or receive feedback from
The Giver’s Myth

If feedback has all the correct ingredients in its delivery – if it is clear, specific, timed right, non-judgmental and speaks only to behavior – it will be accepted as given.
The Giver’s Myth

If we follow and practice the script they will understand and change their behavior - because we assume that the feedback is always useful.
• No matter what it appears to be, feedback information will almost always say something about the giver, not necessarily the receiver.

• The receiver has to want it – if people don’t want your feedback, you’ll never succeed in reaching them, no matter how smart or wonderful you are.

• Receivers sense the existence of hidden motives in feedback – so if you are really interested in giving feedback, first check in on your own intentions.
As much as giver’s want to influence it...

What to do with the feedback is solely in the hands of the receiver.
Hierarchy of Filters – influence how we receive feedback

Power & Authority

- Perception of power and authority of the giver.
  - Position
  - Authority
  - Power of delivery
    - Volume
    - Enunciation
    - Tone
    - Intensity

Feedback
Feedback

Investment that the giver desires for their message to be heard in a particular kind of way.
Hierarchy of Filters – influence how we receive feedback

- Power & Authority
- Intention
- Emotion

Feedback

Perception of the emotional state of the giver.

Be sure to notice your emotional responses to their emotional wrapping.
Hierarchy of Filters – influence how we receive feedback

- Power & Authority
  - Intention
  - Emotion
  - Style

Each of us has our own unique style. What we think is clear and straightforward, to others is not.
Hierarchy of Filters – influence how we receive feedback

Each receiver has their own interpretation of the giver. The story they perceive about the giver
Discussion

1. Think about some feedback that you received and the information was influenced by these filters.

2. Describe the impact they have on you receiving the feedback.

3. If you were to redesign the feedback from the giver, what would you adjust?
It is always a choice

• The ways we attempt to integrate the feedback we receive is always a choice.

• We can choose to interpret feedback as criticizing, demanding, contradictory, complimentary, inaccurate, worthless, “right on” or demeaning.

• Or, we can experience feedback as empowering.
Own the Feedback Process

Why not ask for what you want?
For my feedback to be effective, you and I first have to determine exactly what you want.
Goals

Feedback works best when you know your goal and ask people specifically about that goal
1. Think about a goal.
2. What specifically are you trying to accomplish?
3. What information will help you know how you are progressing toward the goal?
4. Who can help give you feedback?
5. What do you want from them?
6. What are your next steps?
Discussion

1. Think about a person you want to give feedback to.
2. What is your intention surrounding the feedback?
3. How might you set up the feedback process exchange?
“I’m getting the feeling that you’re trying to tell me something, but I can’t figure out what it is. Can you help me?”
The Feedback Fallacy

Ask: How can we help each person thrive and excel? And that the answers take us in a different direction.

Research is clear: Telling people what we think of their performance doesn’t help them, it actually *hinders* learning.
Problem 1: Theory of the Source of Truth
That other people are more aware than you of your weaknesses and that the best way to help you is for them to show you.
Problems with Feedback

Problem 2: Theory of Learning
The process of learning is like an empty vessel – you lack certain abilities you need so your colleagues should teach them to you.
Problems with Negative Messages

• Your brain response to critical feedback is a threat and narrows its activity.

• Bottom line: focusing on people’s shortcomings or gaps doesn’t enable learning. It impairs it.
Discussion

1. When you receive a compliment what is your automatic reaction?

2. When you receive criticism, what is your automatic reaction?
We learn better...

• Research shows that learning happens when we see how we might do something better by adding some new nuance or expansion of our own understanding.

• Learning rests on our grasp of what we’re doing well, not on what we’re doing poorly and certainly not someone else’s sense of what we’re doing poorly.

• We learn the most when some else pays attention to what’s working within us and asks us to cultivate it intelligently.
Problems with Feedback

Problem 3: Theory of Excellence

A belief that great performance is universal, analyzable, and describable – and that once defined, it can be transferred from one person to another, regardless of who each individual is.

• Excellence is almost impossible to define
• Each person’s version of it is uniquely shaped and is an expression of that person’s individuality.
Focus on What is Going Well

Thinking about things that are going well will alter their brain chemistry so that they can be open to new ways of thinking or acting.

Start with Present: “What are three things that are working for you right now?”

Ask about the Past: “When you had a problem like this in the past, what did you do that worked?”

Future: “What do you already know you need to do? What do you already know works in this situation?” Assume they already know the solution.
If you want feedback, ask for Advice

Since feedback is often associated with evaluation. The past is unchangeable and the future is full of possibilities.

Instead, ask people for advice. Advice is focused on improvement and is future – oriented.
Negative Feedback Rarely Leads to Improvement

When people received negative feedback, they tend to move away from the person(s) who offered it and look for new and different relationships.

Even though the theory is that negative feedback is supposed to help, it’s perceived as a threat.

People need to feel that they are valuable and they know they need to improve.
References

Questions?

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