

Receiving Feedback

HOW2

PINPOINT



When we give feedback, we notice that the receiver isn't very good at receiving it. When we receive feedback, we notice that the giver isn't very good at giving it. Interesting.

Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen

The source

This PinPoint is based on the book *Thanks for the Feedback* by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen. The authors wrote a similarly seminal work titled *Difficult Conversations*. Both books are part of the Harvard Negotiation Project.

Pull beats Push

Pushing harder rarely opens the door to genuine learning. Far better for teachers to pull — being curious about their performance and inviting others to contribute feedback.

It would be great to have brilliant coaches who give feedback skillfully. But in the meantime, better to train people in the skills of receiving feedback.

Three types of feedback

One of the main problems in communicating feedback is in getting wires crossed. This is where giver and receiver of feedback are working on different types of feedback.

So the very first task of receiving feedback is to know which one you're dealing with. We need all three as they satisfy different aspects of ourselves. But we need to know which one is being used at the time.

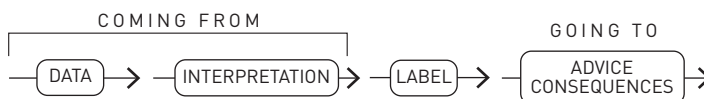
- **Appreciation:** to acknowledge, see, connect, motivate, thank.
- **Evaluation:** to rate, rank.
- **Coaching:** to help others expand knowledge, sharpen skills, improve capability.

REFERENCES

Stone, D. & S. Heen (2014)
Thanks for the Feedback,
Viking, New York

Rooting out the label

There's no place for labels in feedback. They're vague and offer no specific help in looking back (what you noticed) or looking forward (what you need to do). Below shows you how they develop.



Three types of triggers

Feedback is made considerably ineffective by our triggers — our emotional reactions that are real obstacles to learning. These triggers reveal a lot of information about ourselves. There are three main types.

■ **Truth Triggers:** *feedback is wrong, unfair, unhelpful.* Maybe, but first get to understand it.

□ IDENTIFY THE TYPE OF FEEDBACK
Find out which of the three types it is.

□ FIRST UNDERSTAND
Discover the other person's point of view. Check the data.

□ SEE YOUR BLINDSPOTS
Try to see what others see.

■ **Relationship Triggers:** *I can't hear this feedback from you.*

□ DON'T SWITCHTRACK
Disentangle What from Who.

□ IDENTIFY THE RELATIONSHIP SYSTEM
How is the relationship adding to the problem?

■ **Identity Triggers:** *the feedback is threatening and I'm off balance.*

□ LEARN ABOUT YOUR STORY
See how you're wired to react.

□ DISMANTLE DISTORTIONS
See the feedback at actual size.

□ CULTIVATE A GROWTH MINDSET
Recognise that challenge is the fastest track to growth.

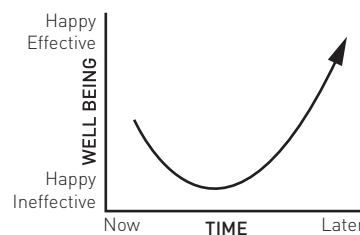
Get going: 5 actions

Here are five quick ways to solicit feedback, test out the advice, accelerate your listening and gauge your progress.

■ **Name one thing**
Ask for one very specific thing you can work on immediately.

■ **Try small experiments**
Try It On: go through the feedback in the privacy of your mind.
Try It Out: experiment, as the downsides are minimal and the upsides, potentially, huge.

■ **Ride out the J curve**



You have to recognise that, often, when learning a new skill, you get worse before you get better. Plan, expect and prepare for it.

■ **Coach your coach**
Discuss the coaching process that best helps you learn. And collaborate to put it in place.

■ **Invite them in!**
Seek out *honest mirrors*. Don't just look for agreement from your friends for comfort.



Training managers how to give feedback can be helpful. But if the receiver isn't willing or able to absorb the feedback, then there's only so far persistence or even skillful delivery can go.

Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen



We're not only blind to certain things about ourselves; we're also blind to the fact that we're blind.

Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen



If you want to lead a learning organisation, improving the quality of feedback is job one.

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