What is feedback?

Messages sent in response to another’s communication

Sender → Message → Channel → Receiver

Feedback Loop

Evaluative Feedback
- Stating our opinion about some matter being discussed (making judgments based upon our own system of values)
  - Positive Evaluative Feedback
    -
  - Negative Evaluative Feedback
    -
  - Formative Feedback
    + ... -
What differentiates formative feedback from other types?

TIMING

When are you most vulnerable to becoming upset?

H A L T

Hungry

Anxious

Lonely

Tired

Alcoholics Anonymous

Why do we get defensive when receiving “constructive” feedback?

Defensiveness: the process of protecting our presenting self

- Perceived as wrong or unfair
- Dislike the source
- Contradicts the receiver’s sense of identity/security
### Types of Defensive Reactions

- Attacking the critic
  - Verbal Aggression
  - Sarcasm
- Distorting critical information
  - Rationalization
  - Compensation
  - Regression
- Avoiding dissonant information
  - Physical Avoidance
  - Repression
  - Apathy
  - Displacement

### At work....

We may not get practice fielding “official” negative feedback

- Managers *say* they favor positive feedback
- Performance reviews
  - Frequency
  - Method

### Asking for Criticism

- **Why?**
  - Think of criticism as being in your best interest
  - So you will avoid surprises
- **When?**
  - Ask only when you want an honest response
- **How?**
  - Specify the kind of criticism you are seeking
  - Avoid contradiction between your verbal & nonverbal cues
  - Give reinforcement to those who take your requests for criticism as honest requests
  - Make sure you understand what you heard
# When Responding to Negative Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Don’t</th>
<th>Why Not?</th>
<th>Say Instead:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Get angry</td>
<td>Boss becomes angry &amp; distrustful of you if you do:</td>
<td>“I want to be sure I understand.” (Paraphrase)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Calm down</td>
<td>“Is this what you are saying?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Meet again &amp; apologize</td>
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<td>• Ask for specifics</td>
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<td>Cry</td>
<td>All the boss remembers is tears if you do:</td>
<td>“Do you mind if I give that some thought and we talk later?”</td>
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<td>• Ask for a follow-up meeting</td>
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<td>• Apologize for becoming emotional</td>
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<td>• Focus on specifics and next steps.</td>
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<td>Deny it</td>
<td>Boss doubts your credibility if you do:</td>
<td>“This comes as a surprise. Can you give me some examples?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Meet again</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Explain that you failed to see the big picture at first</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ask for specifics</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Blame others</td>
<td>Boss loses respect for you if you do:</td>
<td>“I hadn’t considered looking at it that way. Could you tell me a little more about how you see that?”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Focus on yourself (What can you learn from the feedback?)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Then meet again</td>
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## Responding to Criticism (nondefensively)

- Seek more information
  - Ask for specifics
  - Guess about specifics
  - Paraphrase the speaker’s ideas
  - Ask what the critic wants
  - Ask about the consequences of your behavior
  - Ask what else is wrong
- Agree with the critic
  - Agree with the truth
  - Agree with the critic’s perception

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## Suggestions on giving PRAISE

- Make sure that the behavior/event is praiseworthy
- Name the behavior you are praising
- Use “I” messages
- Make sure your nonverbal affect communicates your positive feeling(s)
Considerations when giving constructive criticism

- When to give it
- How to word it
- Timing and appropriateness of it
- What to focus on
- Suggestions for solutions

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Providing constructive criticism: **When**

- Ensure the person is sincerely interested in hearing criticism
  - Is an honest appraisal being sought?
  - Is this a situation where the individual is looking for positive affirmation? ("fishing for compliments")
- If so, use your nonverbal cues effectively
  - Avoid contradiction between your words and your nonverbal cues*
  - Look sincere and as if you care about the person*

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Providing constructive criticism: **Wording**

- Plan your wording:
  - Be tactful
  - State criticism positively, if possible
  - Use "I" statements
- State your concern for the other person along with your criticism (if appropriate)
- Avoid mind reading
### Providing constructive criticism: **Timing/ Appropriateness**
- Make sure behavior/event is significant
- Try to preface a negative statement with a positive one whenever possible
- Consider “triaging” your criticism
  - Most important first?
  - Easiest to correct first?

### Providing constructive criticism: **Focus on Behavior**
- Restrict criticism to recent behavior
- Direct criticism at behavior the person can do something about
- Describe the person’s behavior carefully & accurately
- Be as specific as possible*

### Providing constructive criticism: **Solution-Orientation**
- If possible, include a statement that shows how the person could correct the problem/behavior
- Brainstorm, with the person, creative ways to address the issue/behavior
- Avoid ordering
  - Instead, identify alternatives
Accepting Praise

- Understand...
  - People rarely give “empty” praise
  - Praise is often unsolicited
  - People are giving their opinions ...
    - ... & are looking for validation of their opinions/perceptions
- So...
  - Support the person’s perceptions
  - Accept praise gracefully
  - Ensure your nonverbal supports your verbal

Ask yourself...

- Is it true?
- Is it fair?
- Is it necessary?

If not, don’t say it.