



"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others."
~ Tony Robbins

Session Objectives:

1. Avoid 3 common feedback pitfalls that create defensiveness and resistance
2. Understand how mindset affects giving and receiving of feedback
3. Learn the key elements of assertive communication



What is your greatest feedback challenge?

3 Most Common Pitfalls

1. Unclear _____
2. Ineffective _____ &/or _____
3. _____ communication

FEEDBACK: MINDSET & PRACTICES

Criticism Versus Feedback

"Constructive criticism" is NOT a helpful way to think about providing feedback. Criticism is, by definition, *judgmental and condescending*. There is no way to make criticism "constructive."

Feedback, rather, is providing information (insights, observations, examples) used to *improve performance*. It comes from a place of clear intentions and strong values.

As you consider providing feedback, coach yourself first! Think about what is bothering, troubling and or concerning you and be clear on your intentions. This starts with a mindset of assertiveness.





Being Assertive

Assertiveness is a **social skill that relies heavily on effective communication while simultaneously respecting the thoughts and wishes of others.**



Consider something you'd like to say to someone you work with, but you are unsure of how to say it:



Common Blocks and Challenges

1. We don't know what we _____
2. We're unsure of our emotions
3. We may feel our _____ don't matter
4. We want to be liked at all costs; worried about _____
5. We become flustered, not _____ effectively
6. Or have experienced excessive _____ in the past
7. We're scared of saying the wrong thing
8. We fear _____
9. Or are afraid of what people will think

~ Richard Banks, Author

ASSESSMENT: Explore Your Communication Style

~ Based on the Compendium of Questionnaires and Inventories, Sarah Cook; HRD Press, Inc.
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Instructions: Use the scale below to rate each statement. Circle the number that best represents your behavior at work. There are no right or wrong answers.

4 = Most always 3 = Often 2 = Seldom 1 = Hardly ever

1. When I am not happy about a situation, I drop hints to other people about my feelings.

4 3 2 1



Giving & Receiving Feedback, Part 1



2. If I realize the person to whom I am speaking is not listening, I stop talking.	4	3	2	1
3. When someone does not agree with what I'm saying, I raise my voice to make my point.	4	3	2	1
4. I don't always feel it is my place to share my opinion or perspective when I disagree.	4	3	2	1
5. I feel embarrassed when someone compliments me.	4	3	2	1
6. I express my opinion to others in an honest & direct way when it is appropriate to do so.	4	3	2	1
7. I share my feelings to help others understand my perspective.	4	3	2	1
8. I like to be in control of the situation.	4	3	2	1
9. If I don't agree with a task that I have been given, I procrastinate in doing it.	4	3	2	1
10. Even if I haven't told them directly, people can tell from my cues that I am upset or angry.	4	3	2	1
11. I am not afraid to be rude to other people.	4	3	2	1
12. I am confident in negotiating with a request that I cannot meet.	4	3	2	1
13. I use humor or sarcasm to make a point.	4	3	2	1
14. I prefer to comply with the majority decision, even if it's not convenient for me.	4	3	2	1
15. I believe I have the right to say "no" to other people's requests.	4	3	2	1
16. If someone else is wrong, I tell them so.	4	3	2	1

Scoring

Transfer the score you have given to each statement on the appropriate line below. Then total each column.

2. _____	1. _____	3. _____	6. _____
4. _____	9. _____	8. _____	7. _____
5. _____	10. _____	11. _____	12. _____
14. _____	13. _____	16. _____	15. _____
Totals: _____	_____	_____	_____
Passive	Passive Aggressive	Aggressive	Assertive





Communication Styles Overview

	Passive	Passive Aggressive	Aggressive	Assertive
Defined	Involves avoiding conflict, expressing oneself indirectly, and often putting others' needs ahead of one's own.	Involves expressing negative feelings indirectly, often through sarcasm, backhanded compliments, or nonverbal cues.	Is characterized by expressing one's needs and opinions at the expense of others, often in a confrontational and dominating manner.	Involves expressing one's thoughts, feelings, and needs openly and honestly while respecting the rights and opinions of others.
Characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty expressing thoughts and feelings. • Avoidance of confrontation. • Tendency to agree with others to avoid conflict. • May lead to unmet personal needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indirect expression of anger or frustration. • Difficulty confronting issues directly. • Sarcasm and subtle criticism. • Unwillingness to express needs openly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insistence on one's own viewpoint. • Lack of consideration for others' feelings. • Tendency to blame and criticize. • Interrupting and dominating conversations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and direct expression of ideas. • Confidence in expressing one's needs and opinions. • Active listening to others. • Respectful and considerate of others' perspectives.
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It's not a big deal; we can do it your way." • "I guess I'm okay with whatever everyone else wants." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Oh, great job on the project. I didn't know perfection was possible." • "I guess I'll just do everything myself since no one else seems to care." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "My way is the only right way to handle this situation." • "You never understand what I'm saying; it's like talking to a wall." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I feel uncomfortable with the way this project is progressing, and I'd like to discuss possible improvements." • "I appreciate your input, but I have a different viewpoint that I'd like to share."

Use Assertive Communication

= Equal rights, direct, respectful, aligned words/tone/body language

- Use _____
 - I want...



Giving & Receiving Feedback, Part 1



- I think...
 - I need...
 - I expect...
- Use _____ as opposed to subjective one
- Make _____ and avoid vague directives
- Be clear in communicating what is important to you in terms of standards, expectations, and behaviors
- Express your _____ honestly, without being dramatic, avoid exaggerated statements
 - I feel _____ because _____

ACTIVITY: Change the Language

For each of the following feedback statements, identify whether they are passive or aggressive. Then craft an assertive statement.

Feedback Statement	Passive	Aggressive	Assertive Element of the Feedback
1. You clearly don't care about follow up. I shouldn't have to chase you down for basic stuff.		X	<i>I think reliable follow up is important to our customers. I want you to provide information on a timely basis.</i>
2. It's probably nothing, but I noticed you've been late a few times recently.	X		<i>Being on time is an important part of providing good service to our community and supporting each other as a team. I've noticed you've been late three times in the last two weeks.</i>
3. You might want to think about talking less in meetings.			
4. You're always late—do you even care about being professional?			

Giving & Receiving Feedback, Part 1



5. That report was a mess. I don't know how you thought it was okay to submit that.			
6. Some people mentioned your emails can come across as a little harsh.			
7. You're way too defensive every time someone gives you feedback. It's unprofessional.			
8. Your presentation was fine, but maybe next time keep it shorter.			
9. I was wondering if you had considered following up sooner with the customer?			
10. There's no excuse for missing deadlines—if you can't handle the deadlines, say so.			
11. Not a huge deal but maybe watch how you respond to feedback in team meetings.			
12. I know you've been juggling a lot, so I understand why the deadlines slipped.			
13. Your customer service skills are seriously lacking—you shouldn't be handling customer requests like this.			





How can you be assertive in the feedback you wrote down page 2?

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."
~ Nelson Mandela

Receive Feedback Gracefully

13 Ways We Deflect

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Play _____ | 8. Attack |
| 2. Take _____ | 9. _____ |
| 3. Minimize | 10. Deflect |
| 4. _____ | 11. Invalidate |
| 5. Avoid | 12. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 13. Exaggerate |
| 7. Counter | |

Circle the ones that may affect you.

Our "Threat" Response: SCARF ~ David Rock

S _____
C _____
A _____
R _____
F _____





Examine Your Mindset

Mindset #1

A Cautionary Tale

- ☐ Know that when individuals assess their own mindset, they have a tendency to _____ that they are open, and _____ the times they are _____.
- ☐ When individuals assess the mindset of others, they have a tendency to _____ the times they are _____ and _____ the times they are _____.

3 Types of Closed Mindedness

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Open Mindset Reality Check:

Reinforce your openness

- Ask others for their _____ of your openness
- Notice when you are feeling _____, examine the facts
- Consider your mental _____
- Examine your _____ habits

Mindset #2: Fixed or Growth

Agree or Disagree?

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 5. |
| 2. | 6. |
| 3. | 7. |
| 4. | 8. |





Shifting to Growth Application: Examples

1. "That's just the way we've always done it."
2. "I'm not in a position to make a difference."
3. "If we try something new and fail, we'll get blamed."
4. "We're government—not a business—we can't afford to think differently."
5. "I'm not a 'people person'—I'm just here to do my job."
6. "The public doesn't understand how hard our jobs are."
7. "They'll never be satisfied, no matter what we do."
8. "Most people just want to game the system."
9. "They should already know how to do that—it's not our job to teach them."
10. "It's not my job to fix the bigger issues—that's someone else's problem."

Discuss:

- Where might this mindset show up in our agency?
- What effect might it have on our team or on our customers?
- What would a growth mindset version of this sound like?

What to do Instead: Be Graceful and Composed





Notice your _____



Seek to _____; ask



Express _____



Tips to Breathe (aka take a Pause)

- Breathing brings oxygen to your brain. It allows you time to bring your thoughts and emotions to the surface.
- When you're experiencing strong emotions, being calm, collaborative and focused on problem solving is extremely challenging.
- Pauses can be seconds, minutes, or a day; if you need time to process--take ownership over the timeframe; set a time to follow up.
- Breathing and pausing allows you to respond rather than react. This is a choice that must be made deliberately.

Notice Your Thoughts

- ⇒ Be an observer of your thoughts and reactions when others provide feedback.
- ⇒ Negative emotions are caused by your thoughts.
- ⇒ Remember the SCARF model and examine what might be triggering a threat response.
- ⇒ Be open about your fears (if possible) and/or understand yourself what you are making the feedback "mean" about you.
- ⇒ Recognize if or when you go into "self-criticism mode" (aka beating yourself up over mistakes and/or actions).

Seek to Understand

- Remain calm.
- Try to separate the content from the messenger and/or the way the message was delivered. *Find the nugget of truth or learning.*
- Avoid reacting defensively and/or attempting to rationalize your actions.
- Ask questions to understand.
- Press for details or examples (in a non-defensive manner).



Express Gratitude

Feedback is a gift and those that can give and receive it have the strongest and most trusting relationships with others. Be graceful and grateful for the opportunity to learn.





Or when you don't know what to say...

Here are some phrases to say when you're caught off guard:

- "Thank you for sharing your point of view. Let me process this for a bit."
- "That's an interesting perspective. Tell me more."
- "I appreciate you sharing your thoughts with me."
- "I didn't realize that. Thank you for letting me know."



My **Action Plan** to strengthen my ability to give and receive feedback is:

- 1.
- 2.

For ongoing ideas, tips and techniques, plus positive energy monthly—subscribe to our newsletter or podcast....The Intentional Leaders Podcast with Cyndi Wentland. Let's Connect! *(scan with your mobile phone)*

