



CANADIAN BAPTISTS
of Ontario and Quebec

UM...THANKS FOR THE FEEDBACK



TRANSFORMING



RESOURCING



NETWORKING



PLANTING

“Um... Thanks for the Feedback”

Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well

by Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen

Two parts of Feedback

- Giving Feedback
- Receiving Feedback

As a Pastor, you can't control all the feedback you are given. But you can control how you receive it.

Two Core Human Needs

Accepted, respected and safe (*Come... just as you are!*)

Learning and Growing (the Gospel invites us to be transformed – Rom. 12:1-2)

Questions:

*What was a time that you received feedback that you did not take?
What was the reason?*

Triggers

See -Truth Triggers

The feedback itself seems wrong or off target, based on incomplete information or poorly aligned with what we're trying to do. We don't take the feedback because it's unfair or lousy.

We -Relationship Triggers

Regardless of the feedback itself, there's something about our relationship with the person giving us the feedback that is throwing us off. The giver may be colossally ungrateful for your efforts, or not appreciating what we do well. Or maybe we just don't trust their expertise or their motives.

Me -Identity Triggers

We feel too overwhelmed by the feedback to really engage in the conversation.

It undermines how we see ourselves, or threatens our sense ourselves of safety or well-being. We can't learn because we can't think, and the feedback becomes distorted.

Dealing with identity triggers means being able to see the feedback you get at “actual size.”

Separate Appreciation, Coaching and Evaluation

Appreciation (thanks)

Coaching (here's a better way to do it)

Evaluation (here's where you stand)

Questions:

*What was a time you wanted appreciation for something
and you got coaching or evaluation?*

How did you respond?

Truth Triggers - When the feedback is wrong, unfair, unhelpful

1. First understand – *Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood*
2. See Your Blind Spots

Relationship Triggers

1. Don't Switchtrack: Disentangle What from Who
 - we take up the relationship issues and let the original feedback drop
2. Identify the Relationship System
 - feedback in relationships is usually about a bigger dynamic than simply you *or* me.

Identity Triggers

1. Learn How Wiring and Temperament Affect Your Story – we all deal with stress differently
2. Dismantle Distortions –learn to keep feedback in perspective, work to correct distorted thinking
3. Cultivate a Growth Identity – do you see a situation as a challenge or a failure?

Three tips that will help.

- 1.** Don't ask: "Do you have any feedback for me?" Too broad. Too daunting. Instead ask: "What's one thing you see me doing – or failing to do – that's getting in my own way?" That lets people know you actually want the feedback, and gives them permission to be honest.
- 2.** Don't just tap people you like and who like you – they can't help you with your edges because they don't see your edges. You live or work well and easily together. It's the people we struggle to get along with who are often in a position to offer us something valuable about ourselves. They see our edges because they are so wonderfully adept at provoking them. Asking them about one thing you're doing that's getting in the way will not only elicit valuable insight into what you can do to reduce the friction, it will also be a bold step toward improving that relationship.
- 3.** When you're really struggling with feedback that seems fundamentally "off," divide a sheet of paper into two columns and make two lists. On the left, list all the things that are wrong with the feedback. What they are saying isn't true, it's unfair, they're one to talk, when they gave it was inappropriate, how they gave it was pathetically unskilled, why they gave it is suspect. Now on the right make a list of things that might be right about the feedback. Too often we use all that is wrong with the feedback we get to cancel out the possibility that there is anything right about it. Your feedback might be 99% wrong, but that 1% that's right might be just the insight you need. And once you get good at listening for what's right, not just what's wrong, you'll do that in your conversations themselves more easily – getting curious about what they mean that might be helpful. That's when you can really accelerate your own learning and improve your relationships.

1. Know your tendencies

You've been getting feedback all your life, so there are no doubt patterns in how you respond. Do you defend yourself on the facts ("This is plain wrong"), argue about the method of delivery ("You're really doing this by e-mail?"), or strike back ("You, of all people?")? Do you smile on the outside but seethe on the inside? Do you get teary or filled with righteous indignation? And what role does the passage of time play? Do you tend to reject feedback in the moment and then step back and consider it over time? Do you accept it all immediately but later decide it's not valid? Do you agree with it intellectually but have trouble changing your behavior?

2. Disentangle the "what" from the "who"

If the feedback is on target and the advice is wise, it shouldn't matter who delivers it. But it does. When a relationship trigger is activated, entwining the content of comments with your feelings about the giver (or about how, when, or where she delivered the comments), learning is short-circuited. To keep that from happening, you have to work to separate the message from the messenger and then consider both.

3. Sort toward coaching

Some feedback is evaluative ("Your rating is a 4"); some is coaching ("Here's how you can improve"). Everyone needs both. Evaluations tell you where you stand, what to expect, and what is expected of you. Coaching allows you to learn and improve and helps you play at a higher level.

4. Unpack the feedback

Often it's not immediately clear whether feedback is valid and useful. So before you accept or reject it, do some analysis to better understand it.

When you set aside snap judgments and take time to explore where feedback is coming from and where it's going, you can enter into a rich, informative conversation about perceived best practices—whether you decide to take the advice or not.

5. Ask for just one thing

Feedback is less likely to set off your emotional triggers if you request it and direct it. So don't wait until your annual performance review. Find opportunities to get bite-size pieces of coaching from a variety of people throughout the year. Don't invite criticism with a big, unfocused question like "Do you have any feedback for me?" Make the process more manageable by asking a colleague, a boss, or a direct report, "What's one thing you see me doing (or failing to do) that holds me back?" That person may name the first behavior that comes to mind or the most important one on his or her list. Either way, you'll get concrete information and can tease out more specifics at your own pace.

6. Engage in small experiments

After you've worked to solicit and understand feedback, it may still be hard to discern which bits of advice will help you and which ones won't. We suggest designing small experiments to find out. Even though you may doubt that a suggestion will be useful, if the downside risk is small and the upside potential is large, it's worth a try.

When someone gives you advice, test it out. If it works, great. If it doesn't, you can try again, tweak your approach, or decide to end the experiment.

NEXT STEPS



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