LESSON 6-5: Healthy Communication
Giving Critical Feedback

"Criticism, like rain, should be gentle enough to nourish a man's growth without destroying his roots." – Frank A. Clark

"Feedback is the breakfast of champions." – Ken Blanchard

WELCOME & PRAYER

PREVIOUS LESSON FOLLOW UP

- What phrase did you develop to keep yourself in a current crucial conversation?

KICK OFF QUESTION

- What is the worst experience you have had while giving someone feedback?

PRIMARY SCRIPTURES

"So don't bother correcting mockers; they will only hate you. But correct the wise, and they will love you. Instruct the wise, and they will be even wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn even more." Proverbs 9:8-9 (NLT)

<u>Discussion Question</u>:

- How does this relate to a business environment where you must give someone feedback?

BIG PICTURE

- Feedback falls into one of three categories: appreciation, evaluation, or coaching.
- Feedback should be given in an honest, respectful manner.

CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND

In their book *Thanks for the Feedback*, authors Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen describe the three types of feedback:

1. **Appreciation**. Appreciation is fundamentally about relationships and human connection. At a literal level it says, "thanks." But appreciation also conveys, "I see you," "I know how hard you've been working."

2. **Evaluation**. This type of feedback is designed to let someone know where they stand. It is an assessment, ranking, or rating. Evaluations are comparisons between others or against a particular set of standards. Year-end performance reviews, a project review, or winning/losing an account are all examples of evaluations.

   Most companies have an employee evaluation system that they utilize. However, we sometimes merely focus on filling out a form and end up glossing over the opportunity to have a meaningful conversation about a person's performance. It does everyone a disservice to conduct "feel good" employee evaluations, where we talk about the positive aspects of someone's performance but not the areas in need of improvement. Likewise, some tend to focus on the negative rather than acknowledging the positive. A balance of the two is needed for feedback to be effective.

3. **Coaching**. Coaching is aimed at trying to help someone learn, grow, or change. The focus is on helping the person improve, whether it involves a skill, an idea, knowledge, a particular practice, or that person's appearance or behaviors. It takes place day-to-day or week-to-week during the normal course of business. Coaching typically takes one of two different forms:
   a. Skill Building: The focus is on identifying specific skills that will enhance performance (e.g. "If you hold the golf club this way you will shoot a better score").
   b. Problem Identifying: Some aspects of problem identification are black and white. For example, you are required to wear a hard hat when you are on the Worksite: it is not optional. Other situations are more complicated, such as not meeting a commitment. When the commitment is not met, the business and its clients are impacted in a negative way.

Each of the three types of feedback carry the possibility of creating conflict. For the sake of simplicity, lets focus on identifying problems in coaching. The problem ultimately occurs when one person does not keep their commitment to another. This could happen when a product is not delivered on time, a job did not meet a standard, or a phone call was not returned. In these examples, someone did not hold up their end of the commitment. When this happens, and coaching needs to occur, it is critical to remember the following:

1. Provide timely feedback
2. Clearly define the issue
3. Provide meaningful examples
4. Agree upon corrective action

The key to initiating a coaching conversation is the opening sentence (see Lesson 6-4 Crucial Conversations). The right opening sentence will invite the other person to be a part of the solution, rather than putting them in a defensive position. This is very difficult and takes much forethought to get right. Plan the conversation before you get into the heat-of-the-moment.

EXERCISE

Write down the name of a person in need of coaching. As it relates to the points discussed above, take time to plan your conversation. Be specific about the ways in which you might provide feedback to the person. Focus on developing your opening sentence:

Name _____

Clearly define the issue:	
What is our mutual purpose?	
How do we show mutual respect?	
Cautions:	
Feedback:	
Examples of the issue:	
Agreed corrective action:	
First sentence to start conversation:	

Discussion Questions

1. Recall a situation in which you had a bad experience giving feedback. Knowing what you know now, what could **you** have done differently?

2. What are some ways you can create a safe environment for giving feedback?

3. When giving feedback to co-workers do you tend to focus on appreciation, evaluation, or coaching? Do you have the proper balance? How does it differ with your spouse, children, and friends?

4. What methods of feedback do you need to improve? How do you think this could be accomplished?

Grow Build Lead

TAKE ACTION

- Implement the action from the exercise above and report back to the group at your next session.

CLOSING PRAYER

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- *Thanks for the Feedback – The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well* by Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen
- *Crucial Conversations-Tools for Talking when the Stakes are High* by Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzler
- *Crucial Accountability-Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behavior* by Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan and Switzler
- *Radical Candor* by Kim Scott