

LESSON 6-6: Healthy Communication

Receiving Critical Feedback

“We all need people who will give us feedback. That’s how we improve.”

- Bill Gates

“Feedback is a gift. Ideas are the currency of our next success. Let people see you value both feedback and ideas.” - Jim Trinka and Les Wallace

WELCOME & PRAYER

PREVIOUS LESSON FOLLOW UP

- What was the result of the action from the exercise in the previous lesson?

KICK OFF QUESTION

- Describe the best and worst feedback you have received in your life.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURES

“If you ignore criticism, you will end in poverty and disgrace; if you accept correction, you will be honored.” - Proverbs 13:18 (NLT)

“If you reject discipline you only harm yourself; but if you listen to correction, you grow in understanding.” - Proverbs 15:32 (NLT)

Discussion Questions:

- How do you determine what is good feedback and what is poor feedback?

BIG PICTURE

- There are triggers to our emotions that keep us from hearing valid feedback.
- You must overcome your emotions so that you can listen to the feedback.
- You must stay fully engaged to understand the feedback.

CONCEPTS TO UNDERSTAND

In the previous lesson, we discussed the three different types of feedback, as well as how it should be delivered. In doing so, we focused our attention on the “problem identification” aspect of feedback, knowing it has the potential to cause conflict. Today’s topic will also focus on problem identification, this time from the perspective of receiving the feedback.

There are three types of triggers that tend to disrupt our ability to receive feedback:

1. **Relationship Triggers** - You do not respect the giver because in your mind they lack credibility, they are deceitful, or have questionable motives.
2. **Truth Triggers** - Our perception is that the advice is bad, the evaluation is wrong, or the observation someone has of us is incomplete.
3. **Identity Triggers** - Feedback can threaten our self-worth and our view of what the future holds for us.

Relationship Triggers. Our perception of feedback is inevitably influenced by who is giving it. If we respect the person giving the feedback, then we are more likely to receive the feedback. However, if we do not respect the person or have a bias against them, we tend to not give credibility to their comments. To move past relationship triggers, we must separate “what” from “who”. This is difficult, because we typically let the relationship issue overpower our ability to hear the feedback. If feedback is ignored, we may never hear something that might be very beneficial for us.

Truth Triggers. To overcome truth triggers we must first properly understand the feedback. We normally think we are doing this already, but in reality, we tend to either accept or reject feedback before we know what it actually means. Managing truth triggers is not about pretending there is something to learn, or saying you think the feedback is right if you think it is wrong. You must work hard to really understand the feedback. Listen. And listen some more. Ask for examples so you can fully understand. You need to understand that the feedback represents their perspective of you, whether you think they are correct or not. Here is a soul-searching question to ask yourself: What have I done to give them this perspective?

Identity Triggers. All of us have a perception of who we are and what we want to achieve in the future. Some feedback challenges our personal identity and future goals, which can trigger an identity crisis. For example, you do not receive a promotion you felt you deserved. After receiving the news that you did not get promoted, you fail to hear anything else in the conversation. In reality, what you hear in the rest of the conversation could help you achieve the next promotion, but we tend to discount any feedback that is inconsistent with our picture of the future. To receive the feedback effectively, you must first put your aspirations on a shelf for the time being. Do not let your long-term goals interfere with your ability to hear what somebody needs to tell you now. Focus on listening and understanding the feedback.

Your Next Step. After you have processed the feedback for a period of time, a great next step is to seek additional counsel from someone who will tell you the truth. It is critical that you give the other person permission to tell you the absolute truth, even if it is brutal.

Discussion Questions

1. What triggers have occurred in the past that have interfered with your ability to receive feedback? What should you have done differently?
2. What are steps you can take to clarify your understanding of the feedback?
3. What blind spots do you have that others have helped you see? Who is someone who is willing to tell you the brutal truth?
4. When giving feedback, how could you help the receiver overcome these emotional triggers?

TAKE ACTION

- Over the next two weeks, practice your ability to “seek to understand” others in non-emotional, non-feedback conversations. You can do this by asking clarifying questions, as well as restating what you think you have heard from them. Improving this skill in these settings will help you deal with your emotional triggers.

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 Accountabilty-Tools for Resolving Violated Expectations, Broken Commitments, and Bad Behavior* by Patterson, Grenny, Maxfield, McMillan and Switzler
- *Radical Candor* by Kim Scott