

# CREATING A CULTURE OF FEEDBACK

Feedback done well within organizations is imperative to building trust, growth, and accelerating improvement. The ability to skillfully give and receive feedback is a requirement for personal and professional growth, and it reduces a lot of unnecessary conflict on teams.

Healthy teams build a culture of feedback where feedback is not viewed as criticism, but simply an opportunity to improve and contribute to each other's growth and success. Teams and leaders must establish an environment that is open and receptive to feedback, where it's productive, safe, welcome, and sought after. This guide will help to create a familiar structure and common language so that the process and experience is consistent across the team.

## Five tenets of a culture of feedback:

- Feedback is an opportunity, not a threat
- All feedback comes from a place of care, support, and investment in each other's success
- Feedback is given and received as coaching, not criticism
- Consistent growth requires consistent feedback
- In a culture of feedback, no one is exempt

Here are three simple questions to approach feedback and performance improvement:

### 1. What am I/you doing great?

It's important to acknowledge successes and progress that we've made and point out what's great. It's just as valuable to reinforce good behavior and growth as it is to address areas of opportunity to improve.

### 2. What are my/your biggest areas of opportunity to improve?

It's important here to be succinct, direct, and honest. That being said, the most skillful element of this step is the other person feeling like you're invested in their success. Feedback is not always an emotionally neutral space, it has to be framed up and approached from a place of care and partnership.

### 3. What would a 10 out of 10 look like from me/you?

Skillful feedback isn't just pointing out what's great or needs improvement, it also includes a clear vision and example of what absolutely exceptional looks like. It's much easier to hit a target if we know exactly what we're aiming at.

These are also effective questions to reflect on past situations like finished projects, a mistake that was made, a poor customer experience, etc. The 2.0 level of these is to have your team answer these questions of themselves. A great way to build accountability and empowerment is giving others the opportunity to self-reflect and discover answers on their own.

# Giving Feedback Skillfully

## 4 Simple Steps

### 1. Your biggest area(s) of opportunity to improve... (Name the theme, not the label or identity)

- An example of a theme would be "Listening skills."
- Avoid using a label or identity like "You're not a good listener."

### 2. How I've seen that show up is... (give detailed examples of behaviors or observations)

- For example: Being on your phone during meetings, having to repeat things to you, not making eye contact or having distracted body language, information getting lost, etc.

### 3. The impact of that is... (Outline the impact that they may not be aware of or intend)

- Depending on the context, share the specific impact on you personally, and/or how it negatively affects the team or project, their reputation or relationships, etc.
- **Remember:** this is not about shaming/criticism, it's about illuminating blindspots.

### 4. A 10/10 would look like... Give them a clear picture of what exceptional would look like from them in the future or the next time this comes up.

# Receiving Feedback Skillfully

## 4 Simple Steps

**1. Acknowledge & appreciate.** "Thank you for sharing that with me. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions to clarify and better understand your feedback?"

**2. Mine their feedback.** Here are a few possible questions to use:

- a. "Can you share some specifics around that for me?"
- b. "Can you give an example of a time when you saw that from me?"
- c. "What do you see as the impact this has on you, or us, or the team?"

**3. What would a 10/10 look like?** Going forward, how can I show up differently? What would exceptional look like from me in the future?

**4. Thank you & recap.** "I appreciate you sharing this. To sum up our conversation..."