

CORE: A Practice for Action

Linda Clark MHRM, SPHR, SHRM-SCP, CDTLF™

This resource helps you, as you give feedback, support the person receiving it, and also maintain accountability. Set this conversation up early so they can take the notes during the conversation. We know that ending the feedback session with a hearty "So, what are you going to do?" doesn't result in change. This keeps a dynamic conversation going and supports agency, autonomy, and accountability for the person receiving the feedback. Remember, people can struggle with appreciation, coaching, and evaluation feedback styles.

Consume

- Do they understand the worksheet and that while you're giving the feedback their goal is only to consume. Write down what they hear you saying in the middle, and then any thoughts in the margins that their brain is adding.
- Do they understand that you will not judge what they're writing, and that you're interested in the best possible outcome?
- Are you being specific with your feedback, focused on the success of the recipient?
- Are you offering appreciation (let's repeat this awesome behavior!), coaching (let's change, refine, modify), or evaluation (performance evaluation, ranking)? Any reason to believe this message might be difficult?
- Have you thought about times you've received feedback like this, or experienced this emotion to help you reach empathy?
- Do you believe in the recipient's potential? If not, let's stop for a few and think about this.

Organize

- Now that you've finished providing the feedback, don't fall victim to the drama of immediacy causing the conversation to briskly move along. Don't forget that while you're done delivering the feedback, that's only half of the cycle. You still want to get to action.
- Help them sort out the Message, the words that you said, vs. the Story, what they may add. This is a powerful exercise in trust and vulnerability between you. It's ok to let them see your commitment and focus on their improvement and strengths. This step is such a priority in this process.
- Ask if they want to share their notes for support in choosing priorities, understanding the feedback, and separating the aspirational goals from what may seem to be irrational additional information. Don't be surprised at the appearance of comments in the Story such as: I'm not enough. I can't do this. You don't trust me. Lean into this opportunity to clarify the truth and facts of your goal of improvement. Try using "Tell me more" or "And what else?" to encourage discussion.
- Be sure you're practicing empathy here. We've all had moments of struggle with feedback. Remember that even appreciation can feel uncomfortable. We may not be used to receiving it. We may have a history of hearing appreciation and then the REAL feedback comes, so compliments make some people quite wary.
- Stay away from statements like, "This isn't personal, it's just business." When we want engaged people, doing their best, it is deeply personal.
- Help them understand any priorities, boundaries, or sequence of events that you need.
- Tread carefully with potentially shaming language such as: I can't believe you're being so sensitive. I don't understand why you didn't see this coming. Surely you know better?. Be clear, be empathetic, believe in their potential.



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Respond

- A successful tactic here is space. Instead of insisting on immediate responses and action plans, this is another opportunity to add space, patience, and generosity to the process.
- Your willingness to allow time to think and process, and the privacy of their independent thought may be very welcome.
- When we believe in someone's potential, the feedback conversation can be very connected and trusting. If we do not believe in the feedback or the possible success of outcome, recipients can usually sense that lack of faith. Haven't we all felt that at some point?
- The response step may not require your involvement. We're coaching them to respond to you, and then they may also need to connect with others. My experience has been that I am deeply supportive in the Consume and Organize steps and Respond | Execute is often where they need less support.
- It helps to have boundaries here. Remember, we are hoping that their response is authentic and comes from a place of growth. Forcing it at this point can simply create disconnection.
- Consider setting a reconnection time to keep attention focused on action and moving forward.

Execute

- At the end of the day, we give feedback to support improvement. We want an amazing behavior repeated again and again. We want to refine, adjust, correct a behavior. We want to begin or end a behavior. Look for execution steps.
- Be careful rewarding great plans. Look to reward steps towards action. Be outcome-focused.
- Help with coaching language around goals. When will they do it? Do they have what they need? Is there support they need from you? Is there support you need in this process?
- Reward those that try. Watch for moments of curiosity and confidence as they take those initial steps. Remember, if we're working on changing behavior and performance, that's not an instant fix. Badgering someone is never the answer.
- Pay attention to your focus, follow-up, and additional feedback that might be needed.
- Pay attention to when you feel someone is, and is not, coachable. This is a great opportunity for self-awareness and growth.
- Consider asking for feedback from them as well as part of a continuous conversation. Examples of ways to ask include: What is one thing I could do to provide better support for your success? What is an area of focus for my own growth?

