

Giving Feedback

Stages of Competency

No Competency

You withhold feedback. You let it fester, and it can become passive-aggressive behavior.

You are aggressive with your feedback in ways that can break trust between you and the person you are speaking with.

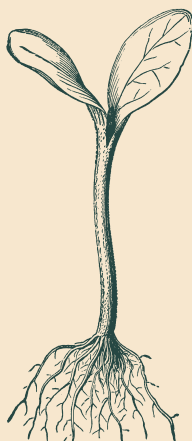


You frequently notice that your feedback is not accomplishing the desired outcome.

Self - Level 1 Competency

You are unaware of the motivation behind your feedback, and your feedback is erratic. Sometimes you offer feedback to satisfy your ambition and/or professional aspirations, sometimes they are in alignment with the mission/purpose of the organization, sometimes you can't identify the motivation at all.

You react to your own discomfort while giving feedback, in ways that distort your message, and you break trust more often than not. You indirectly hear that people's experience of your feedback is deflating.



Your feedback only takes your own point of view into account.

Your feedback rarely accomplishes your goals.

You do not seek to gain experience/proficiency with multiple avenues of feedback, and use one format when another format would be more appropriate to the situation. Examples include: offering feedback "in the moment" in a meeting; sending an email when speaking in person is warranted; communicating before exploring for assumptions, etc.

Others - Level 2 Competency

Your feedback takes your organization/business' perspective into account (the circumstances within which the recipients of your feedback (a person, project, etc) operate). You consider the influences (agreements or lack thereof, budget, collaboration struggles, etc) acting upon the situation?

Your feedback successfully intervenes in alignment with your goals most of the time.



You are sometimes aware of the motivation behind your feedback, and it is mostly in alignment with the larger goals of the project and/or organization.

Your feedback builds trust between you and the person/people involved with the object of your feedback some of the time.

Group - Level 3 Competency

There are socio-economic complexities embedded within the act of giving feedback (professional feedback has been used to exacerbate hierarchies between groups that navigate unequal power dynamics). You attend to these complexities when you offer your feedback.

You are aware of the motivation behind your feedback most of the time, and can consciously modulate the tone of your candor to ensure the greatest opportunity for effective feedback integration.



You have formal and informal data from your team that the intention of your feedback and the impact of your feedback aligns most of the time.

Your feedback builds trust between you and the person/people involved with the object of your feedback most of the time, and you notice vulnerability between you and the person to whom you are giving feedback.

System - Level 4 Competency

In your role within the feedback system, you work to change systemic burdens that exacerbate the socio-economic complexities embedded within the act of giving feedback.

Your motivation for giving feedback consistently aligns with the mission of the organization/business while also supporting your colleagues to perform at their highest ability.



Your feedback successfully intervenes in alignment with your goals almost all of the time, and when it doesn't, the learning from that experience shows up almost immediately in a change of behavior on your part.

Vulnerability increases when you give feedback. Your colleagues are excited when you offer them feedback, because the trust between you is so strong.

Increasing competency in giving feedback supports diversity, equity and inclusion by ensuring you:

Don't withhold feedback that interrupts systems of oppression

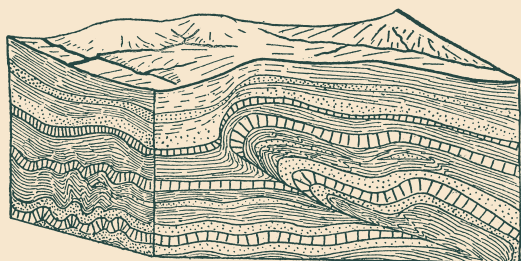
Use your privilege (of positional power, professional seniority, etc) to give feedback in situations where others may not have the psychological safety to do so



Explore dynamics where feedback in the workplace is used to reinforce inequitable structures

Investigate places where your feedback is laced with bias (this is especially important for power-holders)

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Receiving Feedback

Stages of Competency

No Competency

You hear feedback and you immediately create and accept an inner dialogue against it, developing reasons why it is not relevant or internalizing shame.



You may even repeat the feedback to others you know will reinforce your point of view, to ensure your defensive stance is "right".

Self - Level 1 Competency

You are attached to your perspective about the feedback and make no attempt to understand the other person's point of view. This is true for both positive and critical feedback - you regularly disregard positive feedback if it interrupts a view of yourself you're attached to that's serving you.



You hear the feedback and can repeat it back to the other person, but it sounds like a script because there's no internalizing of the information. You are not "bought in".

Others - Level 2 Competency

You experience curiosity about the other person's point of view, even if their feedback (positive or negative) is difficult to hear.



You are sometimes aware of the motivation behind your feedback, and it is mostly in alignment with the larger goals of the project and/or organization.

You hear the feedback and can repeat it back to the other person, and there's a "felt sense" by the other person that you have really heard the feedback.

Your feedback builds trust between you and the person/people involved with the object of your feedback some of the time.

Group - Level 3 Competency

If you notice yourself becoming defensive you are able to pause before you engage in a defensive way.



You empathize so effectively on the feedback received that you are able to add your own perspective about your behavior or the situation to their feedback.

System - Level 4 Competency

You generate new ideas from the combination of their feedback and your perspective on it - you move beyond empathy into the realm of generative creation.



The interaction makes you feel more connected to them and creates a vulnerability loop.

If you do not understand the feedback - because you have such different lived experience, perspective or context than the other person - you seek the context needed to understand. You check in with the person/situation proactively until you do understand.

If you notice yourself becoming defensive you are able to pause, refocus on the purpose of the feedback, and re-engage the conversation from a place of humility.

Increasing competency in receiving feedback supports diversity, equity and inclusion by ensuring you:

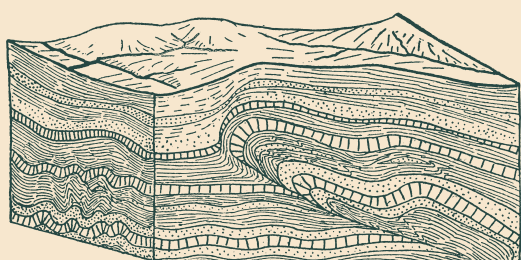
Learn to welcome the growth opportunity uncomfortable feedback provides

Understand moments when shifting your actions is the way to maintain right relationship, especially when others have helpful perspective on your behavior



Investigate places where further self-reflection capacity could be supportive to you and those around you

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Integrating Feedback Stages of Competency

No Competency

You are not able to use feedback to change your current behavior or structures over which you have influence. Others would describe giving feedback to you as “in one ear and out the other.”



This behavior could be compromising your relationships and your professional environment, especially if you hold a leadership position.

Self - Level 1 Competency

You are able to tolerate receiving feedback and signal that you have received it, either verbally or in written form. It is a straight repeat of what you’ve heard, without any indication that you understand the implications of the feedback on your actions or the situation.



It is a straight repeat of what you’ve heard, without any indication that you understand the implications of the feedback on your actions or the situation.

Others - Level 2 Competency

You are able to verbally or in written form share the implications of the other person’s feedback on your actions or the situation, and the impact on you and/or others. However, you do not change your actions or structures under your influence in accordance with your words.



However, you do not change your actions or structures under your influence in accordance with your words.

Group - Level 3 Competency

You are able to verbally or in written form share the implications of the other person’s feedback on your actions or the situation, and the impact on you and/or others - and you begin to change your behavior. You shift structures under your influence, in accordance with the feedback you have received.



You shift organizational structures under your influence, in accordance with the feedback you have received.

System - Level 4 Competency

You see beyond the specific context and circumstance of the feedback you’ve received to the larger structures and systems influencing it.

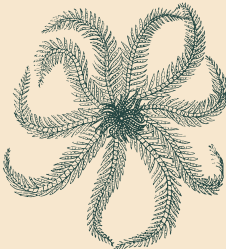
You act in an ongoing way to shift “root problems” of which the feedback is a symptom. If the system you work within isn’t allowing you to make changes, you frequently and proactively communicate that to appropriate stakeholders, and share the reasons why.



You are willing to put your social capital on the line to encourage feedback integration, and put accountability systems in place. You might even be willing to leave the circumstance or situation if it’s an environment that is resistant to integration of feedback.

Increasing competency in integrating feedback supports diversity, equity and inclusion by ensuring you:

Mitigate the harm done within systems of oppression when you receive the same type of feedback repeatedly without meaningful action or change



Act. Many instances of DEI tension arise from conversation, dialogue and ideas that do not move to action. Integration is about action.

Confront the often uncomfortable process of ongoing action and what it reveals about existing biases.

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