



Who would you rather be in this picture? The person on the giving end or the receiving one?

Ideally, of course the answer is neither.

And while this picture is a bit of a caricature, it's not so far off from how a lot of people feel when they know they have to give or receive feedback.

There's a lot of fear.

In the work that I do with supervisors, managers and leaders, feedback is almost always one of the biggest points of struggle. I always say to them what I'm about to say to you.

The mechanics, the tricks, tools, and strategies that we're going to learn about to give and receive effective feedback are the easy part.

This is the work.

This is the hard part.

Checking your mindset. Addressing the fear and facing it.

Until you're able to do that, all the tips, tricks, strategies and tools are not going to help you. You need to work on this first as you're also learning the rest.

I recognize that any kind of fear is connected to emotion, and I know that emotions are not generally swayed by logic, but I do want to highlight a couple of pieces of logic.

First, remind yourself that people want feedback, that people are not receiving enough feedback, and that when they're receiving it, they're performing better.

You're not being asked to do something that harms people. It's the opposite. You are being given the opportunity to help people, people who are telling you they want to be helped much more than they are telling you they are being helped.

They're telling us that they want feedback and they're not getting it.

Some of these data you've seen before, and I want to highlight a couple of new ones, particularly that top right corner because critical feedback is really what trips a lot of us up. Most of us don't have too much trouble giving praise to other people, but when it comes to having to share something critical, that's where we get stuck.

Look at how high that number is. Almost everybody is saying when it's delivered appropriately and effectively critical feedback is welcome, because it helps people grow.

Look at the one at the bottom left. Your staff are telling you that they would work harder, they would be more motivated if they receive more praise.



We don't tend to think of praise as feedback, but it is a central part- arguably the biggest part of feedback.

Right there in the middle Gallup tells us that 40% of people are actively disengaged- that doesn't mean apathetic. It doesn't mean they're just writing out their time. It means they are checked out when they don't receive enough feedback.

Again people want this. People benefit from it. And you have the opportunity to provide it.

On the receiving end you will benefit from it if you're able to work through whatever it is that's preventing you from soliciting it.

It's really important to remember that this is a skill. A lot of times when it comes to any difficult conversation what you'll hear people say is well, 'I'm just not confrontational' or 'that's just not my personality.'

And my response is always, 'this isn't a personality trait. It's a skill. Because it's a skill it means you can get better at it.'

It's likely that in the beginning, you're not going to be very good at it.

Anytime we're trying something new, we shouldn't have an expectation that we're going to be great at it. Skills take time so we need to know what we're about to face.

Often when we face a fear and we fall or we stumble or we make a mistake we use that as a reason to stop. We use it as a reason to reinforce the fear. I'm going to caution you from doing that. Instead I'm going to encourage you to expect it.

You are going to be uncomfortable. You are going to make mistakes. You are going to stumble through it.

But if you stick with it, when you stick with it, you're going to get better at it, which is going to increase your confidence, which is going to remove the discomfort. It all builds upon itself, but you have to give yourself time to go through that process.

You need to identify what it is for you.

So let's talk about the giving end. These are some common reasons why people say they don't like to give feedback.

There's the confrontation one.

They don't want the other person to get defensive.

They don't know what to say.



They want their staff to like them.

They don't want to come off as stupid or nervous or incompetent.

They don't want to act like they're better than anyone else.

Or it just simply feels too hard.

Do any of these sound familiar to you?

Is it something else entirely? Whatever it is, be honest with yourself. Identify where your hang-up is. Then you need to work on the mindset of shifting it to a mindset that helps you.

Because ultimately you're doing this because you want your staff to be their best. You want them to reach their goals. You want to help them see what they can't see. You want to be honest with them and build a relationship with them. Whatever story you're telling yourself, rewrite it.

Literally rewrite it.

If your concern is you don't want people to get defensive, remind yourself that you cannot control other people's reactions.

Remind yourself that you are doing this because it is your job and because you care about helping your staff grow.

Changing your mindset isn't something you do once that sticks forever.

Wouldn't that be nice?

Every time that old story pops in you need to retell yourself your new one.

So what is your new story going to be?

And what about on the receiving end? Is your reaction similar or different to when you're giving feedback?

Do you think things like, 'when I receive feedback it makes me think I'm not good enough.'

Or 'who are you to tell me?' Or 'I'm a fraud.'

Or 'you're reminding me of this other critical person in my life.'

So what story are you telling on the receiving end? Because here's the thing.



You don't have to believe everything you think.

You probably can't prevent those thoughts from coming in, but you can absolutely push them back out. You can hear the thought, stop it in its tracks and form a new one.

So what's your new thought going to be when one of these or all of them or whatever it is for you pops into your head.

What new story are you going to write?