Frameworks for Feedback

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Communication is what we do
Feedback: type of communication

• How am I doing?

• How do people see me? How do people respond to me?

• Can I get my ideas across? Can I create consensus and buy-in?

• Am I successful at what I want to be successful at?
Agile, Lean, etc

• Retros
• Standups
• Code Review
• Continuous Integration
• Continuous Delivery
• User testing
Feedback works!

Rigorous inspections can **remove up to 90% of errors** from a software product before the first test case is run.

Defect detection rates:
- unit testing: 25%
- integration testing: 45%
- design review: 55%
- code review: 60%

Robert Glass
*Facts and Fallacies of Software Engineering*

Steve McConnell
*Code Complete*
We need to think more about ALL kinds of feedback.
Everything is feedback

• what is NOT said
• who is interrupted
• who speaks up
• who stays quiet
• who is invited
• body language
Let’s talk about feedback

1. How to (and why) create structure for feedback
2. Frameworks for feedback
3. How to give good feedback
4. Sensitive and difficult conversations
Create structures around feedback
More meetings?!?

- Giving **negative feedback is difficult** for everyone
- Positive feedback is also important feedback
- People are **motivated by progress**
- Ad-hoc feedback burdens the person with an issue
- Regular feedback **builds trust & safety**
Feedback Structures

• 1 on 1: Manager/Employee, Teammate, Pairing

• Group: Retros, Stand up, Post Mortem

• Indirect: Surveys, Written Reviews, Observation
Feedback Timing

1. **Pre:** How to work together & collaborate best, understanding each other’s communication & leadership style, what working on

2. **During:** Progress. How are things going? Are things going how we expected?

3. **Post:** How did it go? What can we do better next time?

4. **Cumulative:** Review from other feedback + **identify** patterns or changes
Frameworks to use for feedback
Give Feedback

• **Goal:** Better relationship. **No defensiveness**

• Talk about **actions and not the person**

• Don’t forget the **niceties**
Situation, Behavior, Impact

1. **Situation**: Set the situation
2. **Behavior**: Describe the person's behavior
3. **Impact**: State the impact of this behavior
4. **Recommendation**: Provide a recommendation
Don’t forget positive feedback

• Genuine

• 3:1 (up to 10:1)

• When combined with negative, should have the same context “You’re really good at this but I’m concerned about Y”
Feedback Sandwich

• **Praise**: Identify strengths

• **Issue**: What needs to be developed

• **Opportunity**: Where and how to improve
Note on Written Feedback

• Acknowledge what others have said

• Choose words carefully - avoid sarcasm, humor, & colloquialisms

• Tone down - everything is harsher in writing

• Written words are perceived as “official”
Types of feedback

1. Regulatory instructions: “follow this code styleguide”
2. Advisory comments: “you could rename this variable for clarity”
3. Descriptive observation: “you used this same conditional twice”
4. Rhetorical questions: “how does this relate to the classes purpose?”
5. Direct criticism: “you needed to use the strategy patten here”
6. Praise: “this refactoring makes the code much easier to read!”
7. Correctness: “this line of code will never execute”
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Managing Up

• **Observe** and determine management and communication values

• **Acknowledge** and praise what is important to them

• **Share** your perspective (impact)

• Do NOT tell them what you would do
Managing Up

• **Describe** problem with Situation, Behavior, Impact

• **Recommend** solution or approach
  
  • Include alternatives
  
  • Explain the implications
  
  • Discuss benefits

• **Develop** an action plan
Receive feedback

• **Goal**: better relationship & self-improvement

• **Listen**

• **Ask questions** to understand

• Thank you & **Follow up**
Mirror, Empathy, Validation

1. **Mirror**: Repeat what was said; Confirm your understanding is correct

2. **Empathy**: Show you understand why and what feel

3. **Validation**: Ask follow up question that shows you are listening
MEV: Mirror

• “I hear you say … Is that correct?”

• “When you said … would it be fair to say you meant … and felt …?”

• “Am I correct in understanding that when I did … you felt …?”
People want to feel heard.
MEV: Empathy

- **Curiosity** about people

- **Seeking to understand** a person’s reasoning and emotions without judgement

- Make **connections** between your experience and another person’s, even in different contexts
A person’s reasoning and emotions are VALID even if you don’t agree with them.
Empathy is a skill

• **Listen** and summarize

• Recognize and **name your own emotions**

• Shut off your inner narrator

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Request Feedback

• **Goal**: Get honest, actionable feedback

• **Regular requests** are more likely to illicit honest & comprehensive feedback
Start, Stop, Continue

1. **Start**: What should I start doing?
2. **Stop**: What should I stop doing?
3. **Continue**: What should I continue doing?
Listen.

Ask questions.
How to give good feedback
Good Feedback

• Actionable, Specific, & Kind

• Contextual

• Encourages team

• Within recipients scope of skills

• Speak from your own experience
Accountability

- Review previous action items
- Explain why
- **Acknowledge** all ideas, opinions
- Review results
Without a response, people will stop speaking.
The Hard Stuff
Power dynamics

- Power is influence
- Power is access to resources
- Formal or informal
- Words from a person with power have exponential impact
Power dynamics exist whether we acknowledge them or not.
Microaggressions

• Unintentional daily acts

• Reinforce stereotypes and oppression
Microaggressions

• Tone policing: “You’re so aggressive”

• Othering: Fantasy football for team bonding
Call out

• “That makes me uncomfortable”

• “Please stop talking about/doing that”
How to respond to being called out

• “Thank you for letting me know.”

• “Can I follow up with you about this? I’d like to better understand what I did wrong.”
Impact before intention
Non-violent communication

- **Facts**: What happened without commentary
- **Feelings**: Emotion it made you feel
- **Needs**: Human need that wasn’t met
- **Requests**: What you would like the person to do in the future
Diversity is a learning opportunity
Go forth & give feedback

- **Situation, Behavior, Impact, Recommendation**
- **Mirror, Empathy, Validation**
- **Stop, Start, Continue**
- **Facts, Feelings, Needs, Request**
  *(Non-violent communication)*

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