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
- etc
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

- How to (and why) create structure for feedback
- Frameworks for feedback
- How to give good feedback
- 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: Forms, Written Reviews, Observation
Feedback Structure

Timing

• Pre: Understanding each other’s communication/leadership style, how work together/collaborate best, what working on

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

• Post: How did it go? What can we do better next time?

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

- Talk about actions and not the person
Situation, Behavior, Impact

• set the situation
• describe the person's behavior
• state the impact of this behavior
• 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”
Receive feedback

• Listen
• Ask questions to understand
• Thank you & Follow up
MEV

• Mirror: Repeat what was said; Confirm your understanding is correct

• Empathy: Show you understand why and what feel

• 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
Request Feedback

• Goal: Get honest, actionable feedback

• Regular requests are more likely to illicit honest & comprehensive feedback
• Start: What should I start doing?
• Stop: What should I stop doing?
• Continue: What should I continue doing?
• What should I increase doing? Decrease?
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.
#4 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.
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.