Community Foundation for Monterey County Training: Giving & Receiving Feedback

Melanie Rivera, Breaker28

Tiny bit about me/this training

- **Coach-sultant and trainer to senior leaders** focused on leading with H.E.A.R.T. - in a way that's Healthy, Equitable, Anti-racist, Real and Trust-Centered both as a partner at the Management Center (through July) and via my own firm, Breaker28.
- **Come to this work as an HR Executive** for a few nonprofits and with a background in OD, Talent Management and DEI (most recently as a Partner with The Management Center).

Focus areas for today

- Feedback Myth-Busting
- Prerequisites for Equitable and Effective Feedback
- Help team members RISE with Feedback:
  - **Reflect** on the patterns and draft talking points
  - **Interrogate** and interrupt bias and preference-based criticism
  - **Say the thing**: directly with care, compassion, and firmness
  - **Engage** with your team member and end well - with clear next steps, accountability plan, and reaffirming the relationship.
- Creating space for upward feedback
- Summary & close-out

Feedback Myth-Busting

- **Critical feedback doesn't decrease morale** long-term unless you give it poorly.

- **Giving tough feedback** doesn't require a mean tone or "edge." Warm-firm is a thing.

- **Feedback isn't always a gift.** Sometimes, when steeped in bias and traditions or unevenly dispersed, it can be a tool of injustice.

Prerequisites for Equitable Feedback

- **Professional trust:** in your competence, *character*, common focus, *consideration*.

- **Proactive, explicit communication:** Of what's expected, *what good looks like, guard rails,* the how, etc.

- **Self-awareness:** To spot patterns in your management, *interrogate bias*, and *tweak your approach* to your staff member.

- **Attention to Timing, Quantity, and Ratio:** When, how much, and good to bad ratio all matter.

Feedback's intention: to help your team RISE

Feedback exists to help your team rise: to help them deliver better in their roles, show up as stronger collaborators and leaders, and reach their potential.

Old/Traditional Management

New Way

BREAKER

Help your team RISE!

1. **Reflect** on the patterns and draft talking points
2. **Interrogate** and interrupt bias and preference-based criticism
3. **Say the thing**: directly with care, compassion, and firmness
4. **Engage** with your team member and end well - with clear next steps, accountability plan, and reaffirming the relationship.

Reflect on patterns >> questions to ask

- What 1-2 behaviors or approaches have I experienced that I most want to raise to their awareness? What outcomes or changes am I hoping to drive by raising this feedback?
- What data do I have to support this observation? Are there ways my data might be skewed or wrong?
- Why is this worth bringing up? Why prioritize *this* particular piece of feedback right now? How does my work or experience suffer because of this pattern of behavior?

Interrogate bias >> three questions...

Who's Getting What Feedback?	Is This Worth Saying?	If My Favorite Staffer Did This, What Would I Do Differently?
Who on your team is getting the most praise? The most constructive feedback? No feedback at all? Is there a pattern across identities or personality types here? Where is this person in those categories.	"See something, say something" isn't always true - there's lots of feedback managers *could* give but they don't. Prioritize things really getting in the way of their success or your relationship.	Sometimes if people are dancing on our buttons, it's easy to overstate their missteps. Think about your highest performing or favorite staffer - do they get a pass for things like this?

Interrogate preference-based feedback

Is the feedback a requirement of the job - or just the way *you'd* prefer it? Might you be wrong?

Mini Case Study

Lanita is a new manager of a long-underperforming finance team in a medium-sized nonprofit. In her first few months, she's noticed that Ben, a fellow new member of her team, is making lots of mistakes, turning things in late, and all-around seeming to be overwhelmed in the role (although his resume implies he's done the job before). Ben's feedback is that the place is a hard place to do his job because team members don't turn in expenses and reimbursements on time, and no one on the team is able to help him learn because they're all so slammed (including you). Your manager brings up Ben's underperformance at your check-in and tells you to "handle it." **How do you process this situation and determine what feedback to give?**

Say the Thing & Engage

How you give feedback matters as much as what's said. Don't just guess, take the time to get it right.

- **Show your cards.** Begin the conversation by naming your intent and/or affirming the relationship.
- **Past, present, future.** Name what you were hoping to experience, what happened instead, and what you'd hope for (or need to see) in the future.
- **Bring them in.** Ask their perspective and reactions to what you've shared. Make space for their point of view and genuinely listen.
- **Align on what's next.** Come to a shared agreement of what's next and when you'll check in on progress.

Let's Practice (8 minutes)

Script the feedback you'd give to Ben.

- **Show your cards.** Begin the conversation by naming your intent and/or affirming the relationship.
- **Past, present, future.** Name what you were hoping to experience, what happened instead, and what you'd hope for (or need to see) in the future.
- **Bring them in.** Ask their perspective and reactions to what you've shared. Make space for their point of view and genuinely listen.
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Receiving Feedback Well

- What do you know about your growth edges when it comes to receiving feedback?

How to handle tough feedback

1. **Assume positive intent and good faith.** In most cases, managers, peers, & staff provide feedback to help you succeed or due to a real need they have.
2. **Listen openly, watching your non-verbals.** Listen calmly, and practice keeping your face and body in a relaxed, open posture. When in doubt, practice this.
3. **Don't defend; carefully clarify.** Once you've listened, offer a repeat-back of what you've heard and ask any clarifying questions you have in a flat, curious and non-defensive tone. Take notes.
4. **Ask for processing time if you need it.** If feedback is a lot to take in, ask for processing time and to regroup later once you've reflected on it.
5. **Look for the kernel of truth.** When you find yourself immediately dismissing feedback, challenge yourself to look for even a kernel of truth in it.
6. **Decide what to do with it.** Decide what's the right next step for the feedback: to act on it and close the loop, do more research, or shelf for a later time.

Get more feedback by asking better questions + creating containers

1. **Ask more targeted questions.** Any feedback for me isn't nearly as good as:
   a. How am I getting in your way?
   b. What should I stop, start, and keep doing to manage you better?
   c. On a scale of 1-10, where would you put our working relationship right now? (When they answer) What would it take to get to one number higher?
2. **Create structures.** Invite staff to call a 2x2 if they need one, and offer it at least every month.
3. **Lead with what you see.** If you know you made a mistake, own it first - it makes it easier for them to agree or raise additional feedback.

Scenario: Getting More Feedback

(Still Lanita!)

*You've been in your role for about 3 months, and you can't help but feel like the finance team is tip-toeing around you - especially after Ben left last month. The team is a little better at the work, but every now and then something important slips - and you usually find out about the mistake when it's too late or from someone else on leadership (because their team was affected). One hunch you have is the team is afraid to point out mistakes because they think they'll get fired, but you can't be sure. You also know your directive and candid style can sometimes come across a little abrupt, especially across lines of race and gender. **Given what we've discussed today, how do you find out what's happening?***

Key Points in Review

- Feedback can build or break morale - how you give it matters.
- Even if your feedback is accurate, you've got to have sufficient trust for it to land with most team members.
- Help team members RISE with Feedback:
  - **Reflect** on the patterns and draft talking points
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  - **Say the thing**: directly with care, compassion, and firmness
  - **Engage** with your team member and end well - with clear next steps, accountability plan, and reaffirming the relationship.
- Useful upward feedback won't just happen - we've got to create the conditions and be gracious feedback recipients if we want to get it.

Next steps

- These slides will be available via CFMC, as well as a link to a free self-assessment on feedback.
- For more information about Breaker28, connect with me on LinkedIN or email melanie@breaker28.com.