

Giving Deliberate Feedback *for Leaders*



A Spiral Impact®

Handbook

by

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How to use this book:

This is simple 'how to' handbook intended to be a supplement to Spiral Impact: The Power to Get It Done with Grace.

For best results review the table of contents below before you proceed.

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Introduction

Feedback happens. Be deliberate.

People interpret all sorts of messages out of casual remarks, random gestures, and silence, particularly from people in leadership roles. Feedback happens whether we intend it to or not.

For example:

- Unaddressed poor performance, may signal, “My performance is great!”
- Unacknowledged communication, may mean, “I am not important” or “you don’t care.”
- No comment, may signal agreement OR disagreement
- Allowing inappropriate behavior may indicate it is okay.
- A random facial expression could mean disapproval, approval, or just gas!

Great leaders give deliberate feedback - with a particular outcome in mind.

Leaders guide people to develop and grow, even if it means guiding people to change jobs or careers. Giving deliberate feedback in a meaningful way is a gift.

Deliberate feedback comes in three forms:

1. **Positive recognition**
2. **Performance improvement guidance**
3. **Ending the relationship**

First take note of the basic skills necessary to master any type of feedback, turn the page.

Basic Skills for Mastering Feedback



The content of this booklet comes from the larger concept: Spiral Impact. I urge you to further study this methodology in the book ***Spiral Impact: The Power to Get It Done with Grace Blackbelt Edition***.

The following concepts are crucial to delivering great communication of any kind, especially feedback.

1. **Center** is an internal state of clarity and balance. Become the calm eye of the storm. 95% or more of communication of an emotional nature is nonverbal. Mastering the ability to be centered will make these feedback sessions easier for you. And, will cause your employee to feel more at ease.
2. **Fewer words have greater impact.** When delivering feedback make your sentences concise. Your message will get lost with too many words. Avoid repeating yourself. Make space for listening.
3. **Write it down and rehearse** these conversations. This helps you clarify your message. As you begin find someone you can rehearse with, or audio record yourself.
4. **Silence is golden.** Get comfortable with silence. This gives your employee time to think and respond. And, adds power to your message.
5. **Lead the person to reach their own conclusions.** When you can ask good reflective questions, people often can come to their own conclusions. This engages them in the solution. And, is less stressful for you.

#1. Positive recognition



Recognizing behavior and attitudes consistent with your organizational or team intentions moves your people toward success. Do it frequently.

Research indicates people need between 4-7 positive recognitions for every 1 piece of feedback for improvement. This may sound overwhelming; it is well worth the effort.

We tend to advance into the direction we focus. If we always focus on what is wrong...we get more of 'wrong.'

Clear intention is what creates the power to spiral towards results, rather than struggle in circles.

Positive recognition is
specific and
connected to goals

Suggestions to implement

- **Look for behaviors** - to recognize, even if small
- **Make it a habit** - set a daily goal
- **Seek feedback yourself** - make it part of the culture
- **Remember the giants** - your superiors will also benefit from positive recognition
- **Connect to organizational intention**, goals, vision

Examples: Positive Recognition

Her posture instantly straightened as she smiled when she heard the words, “I admire how you took charge and handled all those details.”

She was doing her job; I didn’t have to say anything. In the future, I know she will be motivated to handle details because she knows she is valued. She is helping our quality goals.



One of our customers sent a thank you note for the fantastic work we provided for them. I recognized this an opportunity to celebrate the specific people on the project. An e-mail went out and the note was framed and hung on the wall. Our customer service goals were met.



As we implemented a new computer system, many things went wrong. There was plenty of opportunity to point fingers and blame. Instead, we focused on solutions. All along, I encouraged the project manager. The issues were out of our control, I chose to focus on what was working, and lessons learned. Our commitment to grow new leaders was met.



It was a monthly staff meeting, nothing out of the ordinary. Our accountant provided his usual great report helping us non-financial people understand. I sent him a note afterward, thanking him for consistent great work. Helping us with our profit goals.

2.

Feedback for Performance Improvement One-page Overview

This is a general outline, refer to the following pages for e.g.

REFLECT:

What is your intention for this communication as it connects with the values and vision of the organization? What is the issue? How does it relate to their goals.

Have you made sure they:

- Have the appropriate knowledge/training
- Know what is expected
- Have the aptitude for the position
- Are motivated or invested in being there

What are the employee's performance goals and career aspirations?

How does this impact the organizational goals and stakeholder needs?

Conversation:

First rehearse and be sure to be centered.

Intention/Opening: Set the tone and connect (e.g. page 9)

Discovery: Ask open ended questions to guide them to their own awareness and conclusions.

Impact: Restate the impact that was revealed in Discovery.

Restate Intention and share desired outcome: State what you want instead of what you don't want

Accountability:

Summarize the understanding *together*:

1. **Who** is doing **what**?
2. **When** will this be done?
3. **How** will it be communicated and to who?
4. **What** happens if the situation happens again?

Document this conversation in writing.



Feedback for Performance Improvement

Many leaders think of feedback as ‘constructive criticism.’ Rethink feedback as conversation to help your people improve and reach their goals. Solid performers want to improve; they want your feedback.

Being the calm eye of the storm and clear is an essential part of spiraling toward positive results. Before rushing in:

REFLECTION

a. What is your intention for this conversation? What is the situation prompting the communication?

b. Have you made sure he or she:

- Has the appropriate knowledge/training
- Knows what is expected
- Has the aptitude for the position
- Is motivated or invested in being there

- How have you verified the above?
- You cannot change aptitude. If lacking, it is time to move the person somewhere else.
- Unmotivated people may be in the wrong place

c. What are the employee’s performance goals and career aspirations?

d. How does this situation impact:

- The intention/ vision/values of the team or organization?
- Your stakeholders, specifically?



CONVERSATION

Be sure

- You are centered and calm
- The environment is private
- The timing is shortly after the behavior or event

a. Intention and Opening

A clear beginning to a feedback conversation eases both parties by providing a relevant connection.

Begin with intention and possibly an acknowledgement, consider one or more of the following.

Consider:

• Intention

- The specific intent of the conversation
- The organizational or team agreement
- The organizational goal or vision
- Supporting their goal or aspirations

• Important to you

- Helping you succeed and accomplish your goals
- Open communication is important to me
- Being transparent is important to me

• Positive and specific about the person

This can be tricky and should be already communicated by [Positive Recognition](#), page 6. Only for your high performers, do not do this with a low performing individual, it may confuse the message.

- I admire your commitment to...
- You handled really well...
- I appreciate your....

Then say, “I’d like to learn more about how you see <insert your intention or the situation>”



b. Discovery

Ideally the most effective way to influence performance is to guide the person to come to their own solutions through asking open-ended questions.

Rather than telling, ask questions to engage them in solutions regarding the situation you've identified.

Examples (you need to provide context):

- Would you help me understand how you are seeing this?
- How would you like this to move forward?
- What other methods have you considered?
- Would you help me understand your thought process?
- How do you think this impacts our values and vision?
- What do you see as a solution?
- What additional tools or training do you think would help?
- If you were me, what would you do?

If they respond, "I don't know."
Ask, "If you did know what would it be?"

c. The Impact of the issue

State the impact the issue has on team/organizational goals and stakeholder needs.

Examples:

- Our customers are complaining about waiting
- The profit numbers are down
- The morale of the team is down
- Our quality scores are not meeting our goals
- This diminishes the professionalism of our office
- We are all feeling the heat and feeling overwhelmed
- Trust seems diminished



d. Revisit Intention and the Desired Outcome

Restate your intention from above, then desired outcome or behavior that you want, instead of what you don't want. Be specific.

Examples:

- Our customers need to be greeted at 8 o'clock.
- Our dress code reflects our ideas about professionalism; we all need to abide.
- We need the month end reports delivered on the 27th.
- Make sure all conversation is out of earshot of the customer.
- When you have extra time please ask how you can help others.

e. Accountability

There is no end to this process, think spiral - continuum.

Summarize the understanding together:

- a. **Who** is doing **what**?
- b. **When** will this be done?
- c. **How** will it be communicated and to who?
- d. **What** happens if the situation happens again?

Document this conversation in writing.

This will clarify the verbal understanding, often people hear different things when talking is the only communication.

Example 1: Performance Improvement

Situation - Mark is a high technical performer; his people skills are terrible. He intimidates others and creates an awkward feeling in the department.

Reflection: Are you sure he or she:

- Has the appropriate knowledge/training
- Knows what is expected
- Has the aptitude for the position
- Is motivated or invested in being there

He is very well trained technically, not in soft skills. I've talked to him about being nicer and he hasn't. I am not sure if he has the aptitude for people.

How does this impact organizational goals?

People are scared to engage with him; innovation is stopped.

Conversation

First rehearse and get centered.

Intention:

Mike, helping you succeed and accomplish your goals is important to me. And, I'd like to talk with you about something in this regard. Is this okay?

Discovery:

How do you best engage with your co-workers to solve problems?

<listen> Does that work well? <listen>

Do you feel your co-workers are comfortable asking you

questions? <listen> Can you tell me more about that? <listen>

Your role requires good communication skills, are you open to improving in this area? <listen>

Impact:

I've noticed your communication style has created a barrier for people to ask you for assistance and therefore, our ability to innovate.

Restate Intention (above) Desired outcome:

Your co-workers need to be comfortable approaching you with questions and requests for assistance.

Accountability: *I've identified resources to assist you to make these changes. Are you open to and committed to improving in this area? <listen> I'd like to meet weekly to discuss progress.*

Example 2: Performance Improvement

Situation: Brit is a midlevel manager who meets her financial goals. Yet, she yells a lot. She doesn't model organizational values of respect and trust.

Reflection: Are you sure she:

- Has the appropriate knowledge/training
- Knows what is expected
- Has the aptitude for the position
- Is motivated or invested in being there

Because of her behavior, I don't believe she really understands our 'people' goals. She doesn't model the behavior we are asking everyone else to model.

How does this impact organizational goals?

It undermines all of our 'people' initiatives. How can we expect everyone else to treat people well, when she is a yells?

Conversation

First rehearse and get centered.

Intention:

Brit, alignment with our stated values is really important to me, I'd like to learn how aligned you see yourself with those values

Discovery:

Tell me what you understand about our people initiatives?

<listen>

How do you model these? Examples?<listen>

What happens when you slip up and speak loudly?

I've received feedback that concerns me about your lack of modeling these behaviors. How do you explain this? <listen>

Impact:

As an organization our integrity is questioned when our leaders yell at employees and don't model our values through their behavior.

Repeat intention from above and desired outcome:

What I need is for you to commit to an action plan to modify your behavior to be consistent with our values

Accountability: *I have identified resources to help you. I need your commitment to engage. And, let's meet bi-weekly to discuss your progress.<listen>*

Example 3: Performance Improvement

Situation - Alex is a good performer. The problem is Alex has personal hygiene issues that are quite distracting.

Reflection: Are you sure she:

- Has the appropriate knowledge/training
- Knows what is expected
- Has the aptitude for the position
- Is motivated or invested in being there

Alex's only problem is personal hygiene. And, it seems to be getting worse.

How does this impact organizational and personal goals?

It creates awkwardness and people don't seem to want to be around her. She is losing opportunities as a result.

Conversation

First rehearse and get centered

Intention:

Alex, My intention is to support you to achieve your goals. This is awkward, but there something I need to let you know

Discovery:

Has there been something change in your life?

Are you aware of an odor that seems to follow you?

Impact (you may opt out of this part as it being obvious):

I am concerned this may be getting in the way of your progress here.

Desired outcome:

What I need is for you to remedy this as soon as possible.

Accountability: *This may not be necessary.*

Example 4: Performance Improvement

Situation - Max is a good performer when he is present, but he calls in sick frequently. I can't depend on him to show up. I lose sleep worrying about it and carry the extra workload myself.

Reflection:

- Has the appropriate knowledge/training
- Knows what is expected
- Has the aptitude for the position
- Is motivated or invested in being there

I note he doesn't know what is expected and appears unmotivated to show up. His attendance records verify. I am not sure he is really sick.

How does this impact the organizational goals?

Customer service and team morale is suffering.

Conversation:

First rehearse and be sure to be centered.

Intention

Max, My intention is to provide great customer service and have a happy staff. I've noticed your attendance has been inconsistent and I'd like to learn what needs to happen to improve this and understand your commitment to the team.

Discovery

Is there something going on that you need help with? <listen>

What do you like about working here? <listen>

How do you think your absence impacts our customer service,

<listen> impacts the other team members? <listen>

Impact:

When you are absent, it creates a huge void in our ability to serve our customers, and stresses the rest of the team, including me.

Repeat your intention and state desired outcome:

<Repeat above> We must keep honestly communicating, so we fill the void when you can't be here.

Accountability:

I need your commitment to communicate with me so we know we can care for our customers. Let's plan on talking weekly.

Ending the relationship



If you've sincerely provided performance improvement feedback as outlined and he or she is not improving, then perhaps it is time to guide him or her to a position elsewhere.

I personally believe there are not bad people, there are people in jobs that are a bad fit. It is all about fit. If your employee has:

- No passion, energy, or interest in the work
- No aptitude for the work
- Not responded to the feedback for improvement

Perhaps it is time you end the relationship.

Check:

- Be informed of your company policies about termination.
- Safety matters - if this could be a volatile conversation be sure to have someone with you and your security department informed.

The conversation is simple, DO NOT rehash the past at this point.

Example:

Roger, we've had a lot of conversation. This is not new information. Your role here is just not a good fit for you or for us. And, I'd like to help you make the most graceful transition on to something that brings out the best in you.

Then share the specific details of the departure.

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