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The Neuroscience of Feedback with the NeuroLeadership Institute

September 19, 2017



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WHO IS THE NEUROLEADERSHIP INSTITUTE?

A research-driven leadership institute with IP
in development since 1998 & operations in 24 countries



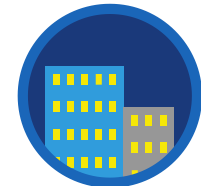
A NEW LANGUAGE FOR LEADERSHIP



Research



Education



Solutions

THREE PRACTICES



WHAT WE MEAN BY 'FEEDBACK'



Conversations
that help
people improve

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Between
manager and
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Everyday or
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Conversations
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Between
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Everyday or
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Includes informal
and formal, digital
and real time

IS IT TIME FOR A FEEDBACK REVOLUTION?

Engagement is highest with **weekly feedback**

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Fewer than **20% of employees** get feedback weekly

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Engagement is highest with **weekly feedback**

Fewer than **20% of employees** get feedback weekly

Of those, **27% say the feedback is useful**



(Gallup, 2016; Globoforce, 2011)
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IS IT TIME FOR A FEEDBACK REVOLUTION?

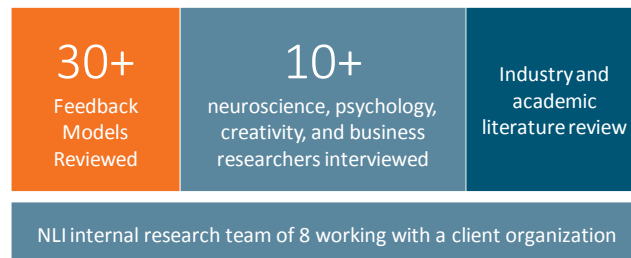
Feedback does nothing,
or makes things worse,
more often than it improves performance.



Kluger & DeNisi (1996)
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NLI RESEARCH PROJECT

What we did



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A TYPICAL FEEDBACK SITUATION

For example...



Someone presents poorly to a client



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THE CURRENT (IMPLICIT) HYPOTHESIS

Managers need to be reminded, encouraged, cajoled into giving more feedback, and trained to do so.

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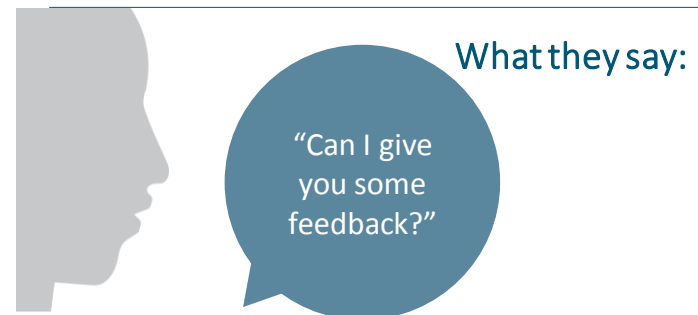
Managers need to be reminded, encouraged, cajoled into giving more feedback, and trained to do so.

Yet, after over **40 years of training** programs, this is still a huge problem globally.

WHAT OUR RESEARCH FOUND

A number of common perceptions about feedback are wrong.

MISTAKE 1: WE THINK WE HATE FEEDBACK

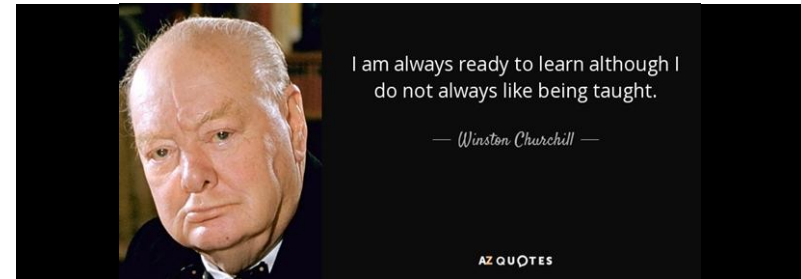


MISTAKE 1: WE THINK WE HATE FEEDBACK

What we hear:

"Can I
criticize your
work so I can
feel better
about
myself"

MISTAKE 1: WE THINK WE HATE FEEDBACK



MISTAKE 1: WE THINK WE HATE FEEDBACK

We think we hate feedback...

Yet perhaps we just don't like it when it comes
unsolicited from other people.

MISTAKE 2: IT'S BEST TO FOCUS ON ERRORS

We are built to detect errors,
so that's how we focus

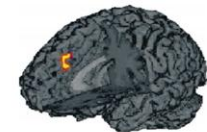


Fig. 1. Area of the anterior cingulate cortex engaged by response conflict

We believe:

- Poor performance is from not knowing one's errors
- People will change once informed of an error

MISTAKE 2: IT'S BEST TO FOCUS ON ERRORS

Yes, it can be helpful to outline errors.

Yet, without knowing **what to do more of**,
we can over-focus on what not to do.

MISTAKE 3: FEEDBACK MUST BE GIVER-DRIVEN



In the old world of work,
managers knew more

MISTAKE 3: FEEDBACK MUST BE GIVER-DRIVEN



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Prosocial motivation: It
feels good to feel helpful

MISTAKE 3: FEEDBACK MUST BE GIVER-DRIVEN



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Prosocial motivation: It
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Status & autonomy
boost to the giver

The "I told you so" effect

A NEW APPROACH

**STOP
GIVING
FEEDBACK**



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A NEW APPROACH

**START
ASKING
for FEEDBACK**



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ASKING IS BETTER FOR YOU

1. Both sides feel less threatened
2. You get feedback more quickly and regularly
3. You can ask many people, reducing bias
4. You can get the specific feedback you need



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GETTING SPECIFIC FEEDBACK

Ask for both types:



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WHAT HAPPENS NOW

Someone presents poorly to a client



Feedback from one person, often well after the fact.
It's uncomfortable for both, often too general or too detailed. The feedback is easily discarded for being biased.

WHAT'S POSSIBLE

Someone presents poorly to a client



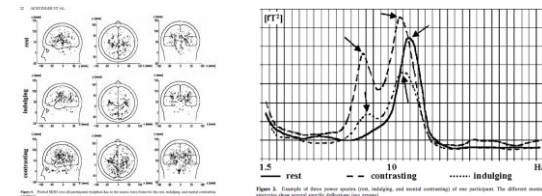
Feedback sought from 2-3 people. Immediately.
Uncomfortable but manageably so. Receiver gets the exact information needed, and can try to improve immediately.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN FEEDBACK WORKS?



MENTAL CONTRASTING

Mental contrasting engages prefrontal, temporal, and occipital areas; significantly greater activity than indulging in positive fantasies.



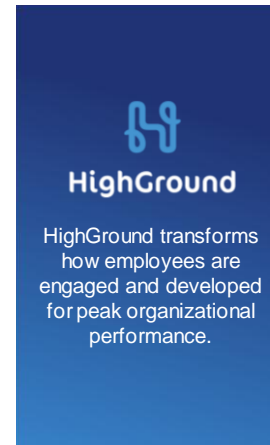
Achtziger, A., Fehr, T., Oettingen, G., Gollwitzer, P. & Rockstroh, B.

HOW DO WE GET EVERYONE ASKING?

- Start from the top
- Emphasize this is what top performers do
- Show people clearly what this looks like
- Build into work streams and technology



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4 Companies Embracing a Feedback Culture



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Patagonia drives higher quality conversations and they are using analytics to uncover the anatomy of the best feedback.

40



LLamasoft employees learned to step outside their comfort zones and challenge each other with critical feedback.

41



Virtuoso wanted to better connect its employees to managers and peers.



Frequent conversations allow Waypoint Homes employees to understand what's expected of them at all times, and they update goals and expectations regularly.



SEPTEMBER 14, 2017
What Are You Doing to Build a Diverse Workforce?
 In the last few months, workplace diversity has become a regular topic in the news and an urgent priority for business leaders. All businesses, regardless of size, are being challenged to build a diverse workforce. ...

Photo by Andrew Marlin



SEPTEMBER 13, 2017
Why It's Important to Give a Bad Employee Good Feedback
 If you've worked or will long enough, you've probably heard of someone who is a "bad employee." It's someone who is "disengaged," "unmotivated," "unproductive," and even ...

Photo by Andrew Marlin

Learn more on the HighGround blog.

[Check out videos](#) of these featured companies doing feedback right.

Key Takeaways

- Feedback should fit into the context of your company culture
- It starts at the top with executive sponsorship and participation
- Encourage crowdsourcing feedback. Asking for feedback from multiple people reduces bias
- Asking for feedback is less threatening for both sides, will be more likely to give proper feedback and take more action on the feedback
- Managers are key – must be enabled to coach v. critique and advocate for their teams



Contact Us To Learn More
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