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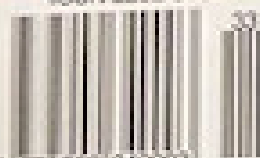
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RENÉE GIARRUSSO

communication and leadership expert and author of *Gift Mindset* and *Limitless Leadership*

In the loop

Creating a feedback culture by sharing the good and the bad.

Within the workplace, one of the best ways to promote self-awareness, growth and learning among employees is to foster a culture of feedback across the business. By being open to giving and receiving feedback we can expand our self-awareness, as well as the self-awareness of those around us.

Seeking and receiving feedback is an integral part of our development and growth. It can provide insight into areas to improve and help reinforce the achievements we are making.

Feedback is the portal to fostering open conversations, sharing of best practice and lessons learnt. In the process we can create empowerment that can maximise performance and a collaborative culture.

Analysts are showing that within the Fortune 500 companies a combined \$31 billion is lost from employees and staff not sharing ideas and lessons in the workplace. Too often we get caught up in juggling strategy, systems, technology, people, innovation and results. This can stifle a feedback culture, as we become caught up in the "doing" versus

the "being." By failing to make the time and headspace to give and receive feedback we risk not understanding and identifying growth opportunities and the reinforcement of the successes we encounter.

We need to adopt what I call a Gift Mindset; this helps us to look at both the challenging and positive experiences we encounter and embrace the lessons or "gifts" from these situations. This process can get us out of our own head and reinforce our uniqueness. Seeing how far we have come allows us to use

these lessons to progress ourselves and others. Take the time to deepen your self-awareness and acceptance of the lessons you have learnt from both challenges and successes and create a feedback forum to share these.

"Your lesson or gifts may be a survival guide for someone else"

When we create a feedback culture, people will become more open to sharing mistakes, taking risks and replicating success through the sharing of best practice. When there is connection and collaboration, we often feel more open to share and learn from our mistakes as we know we will be supported. By understanding our strengths, we can leverage these and build strength-based teams. By identifying weaknesses, we can manage these and bridge any gaps to strengthen in these areas. This can only happen if we get feedback from others.

VULNERABILITY AND COURAGE

The more open we are, the more vulnerable we become, and feedback is a way to drive this. Brené Brown's extensive research on vulnerability has brought to light its importance. We need to peel back the layers and understand our fears and feelings – these are connected to every success or challenge we experience. Future leadership belongs to the brave and if this means sharing our lessons and fostering a feedback culture, we have a compelling reason to do so. Courage is a skill set we need to foster and master. Two-way feedback can help create rapport and support deeper and more meaningful relationships.

One day many years ago, back in my corporate life, my manager told me that he struggled with numbers. I was taken aback: how could he possibly struggle with what was such a large part of the role that he was so good at? As a sales director, his role was largely driven by budgets, scorekeeping and forecasting. He openly disclosed what he had done to upskill in this area, and how he had learnt to love numbers. This resonated with me – firstly because numbers have never been my strong point, either; but, more importantly, I was impressed that he had openly shared his weakness with me. I'll never forget that conversation and the gift of growth he gave me. The lesson I took on board is to be open and honest and share what you need in order to be of service to others. I still can't say I love numbers, but I have learnt to like them. This lesson was a priceless reminder of how important it is to share ourselves with others no matter what level of the organisation you work in.

"You can't improve if you aren't aware of what needs improvement – and you can't celebrate on your own."

So where do you sit in implementing feedback as part of the way you work? A few questions to ask:

- Do you seek and give feedback? If not – why not?
- How are you challenging yourself to ask for feedback outside of your manager?
- What are you doing to make feedback a regular part of focus and growth for you and your team?

A team I've been working with has started 'Win Wednesdays', where they kick off the day sharing a win or success and how it came to be (the lesson). This can foster an open and sharing culture across the organisation, ultimately leading to higher morale and performance.

Sometimes people feel inadequate sharing challenges they have faced or mistakes they have made. They feel judged and anxious about the response they will receive, fearing rejection. They are coming from a place of fear, rather than a place of trust. We share more with those we trust, respect and have rapport with on a personal level, and this can be mirrored in the workplace if we foster these traits.

We need to embrace and own our challenges and welcome sharing these. All challenges are vital to our personal development. The more we test our capabilities and limits, the more we will learn about ourselves. If we focus on what it would be like fail and, therefore, revert to our comfort zone, there will be no growth.

I encourage organisations I work with to embed 'Win Wednesday' as well as:

- 'Motivation Monday' – sharing what lights you up, a great way to leverage strengths.
- 'Failure Friday' – sharing challenges and discussing the lessons learnt and how these can be used to progress as a team.

Making an event of sharing creates a sense of fun and theatre, and a safe space to be open and own your experiences as a team.

THE VALUE OF FEEDBACK

When asking for feedback, how valuable would it be to reach out and seek feedback from your peers, your team and not only your manager but their peers? This will increase your strategic agility and provide you with multifaceted

feedback from different perspectives. You will build your networks, gain different insights into yourself and take your growth to a new level.

FEEDBACK QUESTIONING MODEL

There are many ways to ask for and give feedback and one process we have educated many organisations in, is a simple two-step questioning approach. This gets you or the other person thinking and then you can add to their responses. Feel free to put this into your own language.

- What are you/ doing well? You can apply to the context of the conversation such as: "What worked well during that presentation?"
- What could you/ change or do differently? Using the words "change" or "differently" gets people to open up and prevents using the word "better."



"WE NEED TO EMBRACE AND OWN OUR CHALLENGES AND WELCOME SHARING THESE."

The results and engagement never cease to amaze me when leaders reach outside their normal lines of feedback and simply ask these two questions. We can't always see what is in front of us or our blind spots. We often need others to share what they see, and then we can take this on board and take our growth to the next level.

Ensure you give people feedback the way they like it – some people like a lot of feedback and some like it less often; some prefer to be given feedback privately versus publicly.

Bring in small ways to incorporate two-way feedback each day and as this builds it becomes the way things are done, therefore, building a feedback culture. ■