

EVERYDAY FEEDBACK WORKBOOK

GET GOING WITH HONEST
HELPFUL FEEDBACK TO AND
FROM YOUR TEAM MEMBERS

Anna Carroll, MSSW



Everyday Feedback Press

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ANNA CARROLL, MSSW

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If you are looking for the best way to provide great results from your team and to motivate and retain great people, there's no better way than everyday feedback.

This workbook will guide you through the skills and behavioral changes you will need for delivering frequent, honest, helpful feedback to everyone on your team.

Bullseye. You are armed perfectly for success.

CHAPTER ONE

WHAT ARE YOUR FEEDBACK SHOWSTOPPERS?

Which of the following feedback barriers are the most challenging for you?

- The stress you experience when giving feedback
- Lack of skills or best practices for how to give feedback
- Time management: seeing feedback as very time-consuming
- Concerns that your manager or your company's overall culture doesn't support honest feedback
- Beliefs about how giving honest feedback will affect you and others

As you consider your showstoppers, you may feel overwhelmed at first. Most leaders can recognize more than one area of discomfort, and that's a great start. Recognizing the need for a whole new approach to feedback is an important step. If you consider your own situation more thoroughly, you'll also realize how much more is possible and how to build momentum for a positive "feedback turnaround."

As it turns out, feedback is a topic that is full of surprises. The parts that seem so difficult (like learning a good method for giving feedback) aren't really as challenging as you may think, while less obvious factors (such as stress hormones flooding your brain when giving feedback) require a new approach.

Use the tool that follows to determine which of these challenges apply to you and how you would rank each obstacle.



Everyday Feedback Tool: Your feedback

showstoppers

Instructions: On a scale from 1 to 10, rank how much of a barrier these factors are to giving great feedback (1 being most relevant and 10 being least relevant). Use a separate sheet of paper

Rank	Barrier
	There is no time to prepare.
	It's hard to set up meetings with employees.
	Feedback is unfamiliar in our company culture.
	Feedback triggers fear, and I avoid it.
	My direct manager does not emphasize feedback.
	I need more skills for providing feedback.
	I believe negative feedback hurts morale.
	People have worked here a long time and are not used to receiving feedback.
	Honest feedback would discourage talent in this group.
	Other _____

Look at the areas you scored as most relevant. These will be important priorities for you as you learn and adopt an everyday feedback process.

Here are some new ways of thinking about the showstoppers that may apply to you.

The Support Showstopper

The degree of support you have for giving feedback to your employees is shaped by your boss's way of doing things, the recent and historical behavior of past leaders in the organization, and the unspoken expectations of people in management roles.

If you feel there is little support for feedback in your organization, you are not alone. Based on research of more than 250 organizations of varying sizes and global locations and personal experience, I estimate that more than three-quarters of companies' cultures are "feedback avoidant," as admitted by executives, mid-level managers, and most emphatically, by individual employees.

What if the president of your company is horrible at giving feedback and avoids it at all costs? What if you are the CEO of a company with no history of feedback and the management team you inherited is feedback-challenged? In these situations, it might be easy to assume that feedback is unwelcome and that you should adopt the "feedback avoider" mindset in order to survive in that environment. Maybe you've

already given up on the idea of offering open, helpful feedback to anyone in the company. Maybe you are only giving feedback to your employees when it's required of you.

Give feedback anyway. Just because leaders aren't ready themselves, it doesn't mean they won't admire feedback done properly—by you. I know, I know. You may be thinking, *“Why should I take this big risk when my bosses aren't doing it?”*

The answer is simple: Feedback is incredibly powerful and it creates positive results.

The real truth is that leaders are rarely fired for giving helpful feedback or for investing in their people through coaching.

And since everyday feedback leads to great results every day, your group will stand out for its excellence. Other leaders will be asking for your secret.

The No-time Showstopper

Lack of time is only a challenge when you start giving feedback after a tradition of not giving it.

At first, people aren't expecting it from you and you will need to sit down with each direct report and explain it in a positive way. After the initial half-hour meeting with each person, you will develop credibility and trust. Your team members will see that you are helping, not hurting, them, and that you want their feedback in return. After that point, your feedback conversations will only take a few minutes, sometimes only seconds. In a short time, you will recognize that giving frequent feedback actually saves time, because the work will go more smoothly and quickly. In the **Six Steps to Everyday Feedback** covered in later chapters, we'll explain exactly how to start giving feedback and how quickly you'll realize the time savings.

The Beliefs Showstopper

Your beliefs and individual psychology also influence your relationship to feedback, as do your quirks, assumptions, and areas of comfort and discomfort. Are you an introvert or extrovert? Are you detail-focused, impatient, sensitive to criticism, hyperaware of others' feelings, ready for change, or ready to run? Have you been a

conflict-avoider most of your life, or are you argumentative or short-tempered? Are you only comfortable giving feedback to high performers?

What are your beliefs about feedback? Is it scarier for you to give or to receive feedback? Maybe you're not scared at all, but are perhaps seen as threatening by others who misunderstand your positive intent by being honest?

In order to dig deeper into your own personal beliefs (and how these beliefs may have limited you in the past as you tried to give feedback to your direct reports), use the following list of descriptors to identify which belief systems are most relevant for you:

- Analyzer—organized and observant; you value data over emotion
- Empathizer—encouraging and helpful; you view corrective feedback as hurtful
- Charger—fast-paced and results-oriented; you see coaching as inefficient
- Motivator—visionary team cheerleader; you choose team versus individual

conversations

The Stress Showstopper

The last few decades of brain research have revealed how much of our leadership and problem-solving ability is hijacked when we experience stress. If there is any element in the typical work setting that triggers stress, it is feedback.

A leader unschooled in how to give everyday feedback feels the effects of their emotional, largely unconscious “lower” brain flooding the upper, “logical” brain with fight-or-flight hormones and the message, *“Find a way to get out of this. It’s very scary!”*

The exact forms of stress you experience differs according to your belief systems. Some feel that giving feedback equals pain—either inflicting pain on others who will feel hurt or angry when asked to improve; inflicting severe stress on oneself as feedback-giver; or losing time and flexibility in order to have time-consuming conversations with everyone you manage. This

stress response associated with delivering feedback is now well-documented by researchers viewing brain patterns of people giving and receiving feedback. For instance, if you are an ambitious manager with very high standards, your discontent with personal failure may be an underlying factor in your impatience with employees. The belief that *“no one is going to make me fail,”* creates a strong fight-or-flight hormone response when an employee makes a mistake. You may want to fight—that is, tell the employee what is wrong and demand their compliance—while avoiding an honest two-way conversation about how they could improve.

This becomes the opposite of helpful, constructive feedback and coaching. In Chapter 5 you will be able to assess which stressors most affect you and learn ways to alleviate them.

The Skills Showstopper

Finally, there is the pragmatic “how-to” knowledge that many leaders haven’t mastered. How do you start the feedback conversation? How do you incorporate examples? How

diplomatic should you be when an employee is performing poorly?

Believe it or not, this is the easiest challenge to overcome. Once you recognize the stress and negative beliefs that are getting in your way, you will truly want to change the way you provide feedback.

It then becomes easier to pick up the skills. It's similar to starting a healthy diet—once you feel great about becoming fit and healthy, it's almost second nature to choose berries over brownies.

If you're like every supervisor or manager I've ever met, you've endured a course on how to give performance feedback. And every course starts with the admonition to do it regularly instead of waiting for annual performance reviews. But managers rarely apply the feedback skills shown in videos or described in books. You may see model managers demonstrating the "sandwich" approach to performance review (i.e. tell the employee something positive, bring up a problem area, and end with more praise), but this "principle" and other feedback skills go out the

win-dow when you dread the experience. Nothing you see in training is useful if you're associating feedback with pain.

The big solution to the skills deficit is to overcome the pain. After you've had a chance to reflect on your beliefs, stress points, and sources of your pain, you can reset your association with feedback to a more comfortable and positive experience. You will find the COIN™ tool, offered later in this workbook, to be simple to use once you see feedback in a positive light.

***Q:** Based on the items that you ranked in the Feedback Showstoppers tool, which items do you need to address and how can you accomplish this? (Example: My company culture is unaccustomed to feedback, so I need to explain why we are suddenly giving feedback.)*

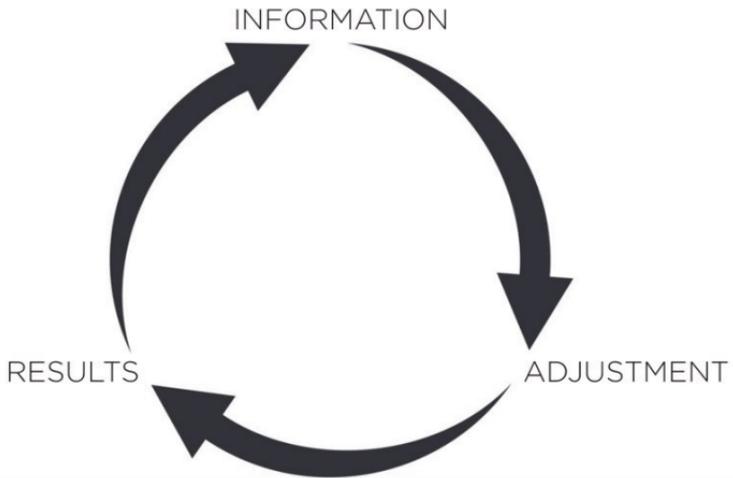
Record your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

CHAPTER TWO

WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT FEEDBACK AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR YOU

What is feedback, really?

Although the term “feedback” is seen and heard often, whether in reference to online customer surveys or as workplace jargon for “criticism,” it’s actually a much simpler and more fundamental notion. Feedback is information from past actions that is used to guide future actions. The movement of the information from past to future actions is called a feedback loop.



Your role

As a manager, you must help each employee make sense of and prioritize all the information they are receiving and continuously answer the burning question, “How am I doing at my job, and how do I need to change what I am doing in order to improve?” Put yourself in their shoes:

Q: *What feedback information do you personally wish you had received from your boss and others about how to do your job better?*

Record your answer on a separate sheet of paper.

Employees are starving for feedback

If you are currently a manager, it is probably the case that your responsibilities are diverse and you feel pressure on many fronts. What you may not realize is that your team members are starving for the information they need to do better work.

Employees of all ages and ability levels want more feedback. In Gallup's massive longitudinal study on the employee engagement of workers at all levels and across the globe, there is no more important indicator of satisfaction and willingness to stay at a company than whether or not someone in the workplace (usually a manager) has talked with employees recently about how they are doing on the job. In 2011, the Gallup organization reported that a quarter of global employees in the same survey stated that they received no feedback at all from their supervisors, and this was a major factor in their workplace dissatisfaction.

It would be easy to assume that the only kind of

feedback employees want is “happy talk” and “atta-boys,” but this is untrue. People want to know exactly what they need to do to perform well on the job. An engagement study in a 2014 *Harvard Business Review* article, “Your Employees Want the Negative Feedback You Hate to Give,” showed as much. Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman concluded that people are twenty times more likely to feel engaged with their jobs after receiving corrective feedback than they are when receiving no feedback!

Younger, ambitious, and other feedback-hungry workers

Younger employees are adamant about receiving honest, frequent feedback. Millennials, who comprise almost half of the world’s employees, overwhelmingly want more feedback than they are getting. “Info Babies,” younger workers growing up with real-time information at their fingertips, are accustomed to sharing personal status updates, photos, blogs, Twitter posts, etc., resulting in feedback from online communities within hours, minutes, or even seconds. They are accustomed to instant data access, and also want

instant access to crucial feedback from their managers.

Q: *Which of your team members have already expressed a desire for more feedback from you? Who else on your team would appreciate more feedback, even if they've not asked for it?*

Record your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

So performance reviews aren't enough?

Performance reviews are considered “slow feedback,” as they only occur once a year. Most employees do not want to wait 51 weeks to hear how they need to improve. More than 80 percent of employees and managers say the feedback they receive in their annual performance reviews offers no value and/or contains “surprises” not mentioned by their manager before the review. Employees become very upset when this happens, and it can lead to disengagement and high turnover.

Where fast feedback happens

At the post popular employers, feedback is a far more regular occurrence. Young employees are calling for feed-back on a weekly or even daily basis, and the most innovative employers are delivering it. Impatient with the annual review process, Twitter, Facebook, Adobe, Accenture, and other innovators lead cultures of rapid feedback, where no one is forced to guess what others are thinking. Some of these companies have totally eliminated their traditional performance evaluations.

Employers giving great feedback have a recruitment advantage

People want to work in places where their managers care about their development and coach them frequently, and where they will not be left to fail. In fact, a manager's willingness to give frequent feedback—both positive and corrective—is one of the greatest differentiators between companies where younger workers want to stay and those they want to get away from as fast as possible.

The promise of feedback transparency

No matter what your generation, there is a huge upside to giving and receiving everyday feedback. In addition to keeping people happier on the job, feedback loops stimulate improvements and produce better results for the company. The five most powerful things about transparency:

1. Higher levels of performance emerge.
2. People begin to trust their leaders.
3. Relationships are improved.
4. People acquire skills and develop their careers faster.
5. People have more fun and less stress.

Everyday Feedback Tool: Feedback Loop Diagnosis

Question 1: *As you think about your business goals, in what areas would you like to see the fastest improvement or change? (Example: Need people to gain faster expertise with new technology.)*

Question 2: *For each of these goals, what information is missing for the people involved? (Example: Less experienced people don't have access to role models for how to improve.)*

Question 3: *Of all the above, which area is the most urgent for your everyday feedback effort? (Example: Faster launch of new products)*

Record your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

Everyday Feedback Tool: Informal workplace happiness survey

Instructions:

1. Conduct four to six interviews with a broad selection of employees in your group.
2. Ask about their engagement with the work.
3. Determine what's working well now and what managers can do to get better performance from their teams.
4. Ask yourself what is missing in the area

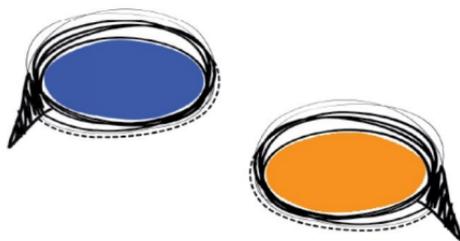
of feedback.

Recreate this chart on a separate sheet of paper to record their answers.

	What's Working Well?	What's missing?
1.	<i>Example: Company has a sense of play and fun.</i>	<i>Example: Feedback is infrequent.</i>
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

I hope and anticipate that reading these chapters brings you new treasures from giving and receiving feedback! For 9 more chapters & 9 more tools, visit Amazon order the ebook or print version.

— Anna



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EVERYDAY FEEDBACK WORKBOOK

Get Going With Honest Helpful Feedback To And From Your Team Members

Have you been reluctant, too busy, or at a loss for how to offer honest suggestions to your team members, bosses, or employees? The Everyday Feedback Workbook offers leaders and individual contributors at all levels information, techniques, and encouragement to make frequent feedback your most powerful leadership strategy.

This step-by-step feedback guide teaches you:

- The brain science behind fear of feedback and current trends that have rapidly escalated the role of feedback in learning, improvement, and success.
- Why feedback in your team is so powerful.
- Why you and your team have been avoiding and under-delivering feedback.
- How to overcome your greatest personal barriers to making feedback happen.

12 planning and practice tools will charge up your motivation, give you the skills to make feedback easy, and coax your confidence. You will see the results quickly, not only in measurable business outcomes, but in appreciation and better relationships with co-workers.

What people are saying about Everyday Feedback

This tool brings the power of feedback to life...a fantastic resource.

— Michael McKeown, Director of Human Resources, **Horseshoe Bay Resort**

We adopted Everyday Feedback, ... and are seeing huge business benefits.

— Dane Groeneveld, Regional Direct, **NES Global Talent**

PayPal has gained great value from Everyday Feedback!

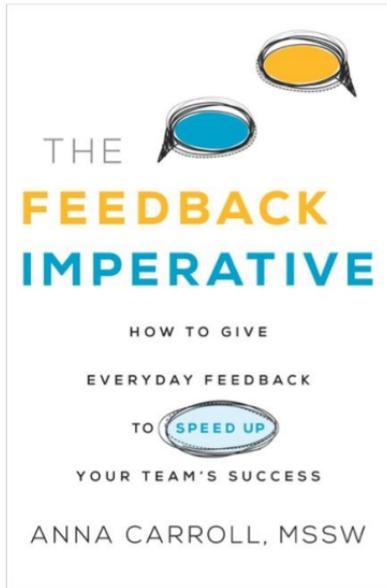
— Aimie Aronica, Head of Technology Engagement, **PayPal**

A concise and effective tool... It provides context, inspiration, and great actionable content.

— Mark Holzbach, Co-Founder of **Zebra Imaging**, Creative and Tech Community Connector

Anna Carroll, MSSW, is an executive coach and organizational consultant specializing in workplace feedback. She writes, speaks, researches and trains people on how to get over their barriers to implementing fast, effective, and motivating workplace feedback.

To get more information or sign up for the Everyday Feedback newsletter visit www.everydayfeedback.com



THE FEEDBACK IMPERATIVE

How to Give Everyday Feedback to Speed Up Your Team's Success

Feedback is more crucial to your people and your business than ever before. Younger and hard-to-retain employees demand it and your information-intensive business can't wait for once-a-year reviews to build talent. Yet, fast and frequent feedback conversations are missing in most organizations.

This well-researched but easy-to-understand guide will help you recognize the specific reasons why feedback is so challenging and the specific things you can do to launch great feedback in your group. You will be able to assess your own feedback mindset, strengths, fears, and weaknesses, and learn simple methods for giving the most helpful feedback. Also “Six Steps to Everyday Feedback” equips you and your colleagues to unleash real-time feedback in the whole organization.

“The Feedback Imperative helps us understand how to get where we need to be, quickly.”

—Carlton Inniss, Administrator of Hospitalist Services, **Austin Regional Clinic**

“This is a book that should be a must-read at all levels of an organization; it is an important tool in front-line supervisory training programs. It is also an excellent reference for people at the executive level.

While many books have stressed the need to give feedback, *The Feedback Imperative* addresses the roadblocks that prevent meaningful feedback and ways to overcome fears.”

—Elliot Kaplan, Director, Quality Assurance, **Superior Completion Services**

“Many of us carry baggage about feedback based on early experiences with teachers, parents, and ineffective bosses. *The Feedback Imperative* offers tools that can help reframe feedback so that it’s no longer something we associate with our fears about being judged, but rather a process that creates a space for rich, productive conversations with colleagues.”

—Lisa Kimball, Executive Producer, Plexus Institute and Founder, **Group Jazz**

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