



Feedback: Friend or Foe

Appropriate feedback is vital to the growth of any leader and their organization. Studies show that leaders have greater effectiveness when constructive (aka critical) feedback is presented frequently, accepted, and appropriate action is taken. This exercise is to help you avoid “CEO disease: the information vacuum around a leader created when people withhold important (and usually unpleasant) information.” (Daniel Goleman, et al., *Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*)

The secret to great feedback is creating a safe environment where critical information can be shared. Leaders have a powerful effect on those they lead by catalyzing personal authenticity and growth, which in turn motivates others to do the same. This is what we call “building resonance.”

Exercise: Giving and Receiving Quality Feedback

- A. **Choose a leadership task:** Think of a task you would like to improve or a skill you would like to check up on. This could be anything from speaking publicly, to meeting new people, to building rapport, or to getting organized. The more specific you are, the better the feedback will be.

- B. **Choose someone to observe you:** For the first time, pick someone in your leadership sphere that will give you honest feedback. Be sure to communicate that your desire to grow in this area is the reason you are asking for feedback. Remember, you must be adamant about avoiding “CEO disease.” Therefore, your demeanor (attitude, appearance and manner) will set the tone for how open others are to giving you quality feedback.
 1. Ask them to give feedback that is **specific, affirming, and part of the solution**.
Example: You’re voice was a little too soft. The people in the back of the room had a hard time hearing you. However, you did a great job in bringing the story to life. Perhaps next time you could have someone in the back of the room give you a non-verbal signal to speak louder.

- C. **Debrief as soon as possible:** Immediately following your leadership task, get feedback. (Do not wait more than a day. The quality of feedback rapidly diminishes over time.)
 Ask questions like...
 1. What did you observe that I specifically did well?
 2. What did you observe that seemed to need some improvement?
 3. Do you have any suggestions of what I could do differently next time to improve this skill or task?

- D. **Accept feedback with a grateful heart:** You may need to do a “heart check” before your leadership task to be sure you are at a place to receive feedback. Thank the person for their honesty, even if it’s hard to hear, and if needed, take this feedback to the Lord for confirmation.

*Don’t be easily fooled into thinking you do this all the time in your performance reviews. This is *dramatically* different! You are **asking** for feedback and **building** resonance within your team and it’s not tied to a salary. You are modeling excellence.