FEEDFORWARD, NOT FEEDBACK:
THE POWER OF PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIPS

RESOURCES & REFLECTIONS
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WHY FEEDBACK FAILS

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WHY FEEDBACK FAILS

- FIGHT
- FREEZE
- FLIGHT

RELAXED  STRESSED

FEELS JUDGEMENTAL MAKES US HELPFLESS
CREATES FIXED MINDSET

THE FORGETTING CURVE

-50%
-90%
Giving prescriptive directions produced uniform results....

...while open-ended language led to creative solutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAH, BUT...</th>
<th>YES, AND...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problems</td>
<td>Potential</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>Breakthroughs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shrink ideas</td>
<td>Expand ideas</td>
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<td>Dead end</td>
<td>On ramp</td>
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<tr>
<th>SILENCER</th>
<th>AMPLIFIER</th>
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<td>“That will never work.”</td>
<td>“What if we tried this?”</td>
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<td>“I don’t see that happening.”</td>
<td>“How might we do this?”</td>
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<td>“We aren’t staffed for that.”</td>
<td>“Let’s try to reallocate.”</td>
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IMpact area: resilience

Actions
Beliefs
Consequences

Challenge beliefs with data
Shift the narrative
Prepare the path
SELF-ASSESS: MY FEEDBACK “FAIL”

Recall a time when the feedback you wanted to give did not bring the results you wanted. Then write a summary of your feedback encounter below. Use the questions below for guidance.

EVENTS
➔ When did it happen?
➔ Where did it happen?
➔ Who was involved?

OUTCOMES
➔ What happened next?
➔ What do you regret?
➔ Did the situation get resolved?
Revisit your feedback “fail.” Using the WRAP approach, how might you reframe your message? Use the organizer to plot the conversation you wish you had.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT / WHERE</th>
<th>REASON</th>
<th>AFFECT</th>
<th>PROMPT</th>
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Tina is the principal of one of the largest schools in her district, a position she’s held for nearly three years. During the past few weeks, she has grown increasingly frustrated with John, a veteran school psychologist who has been with the school for close to two decades and who has a reputation for being a smart but difficult co-worker. “He certainly has a strong record with students, but his temperament with colleagues is an issue,” she says. “He frequently butts heads with teachers from other departments and, occasionally, members of the administration.” As a member of the student support department, John reports directly to Tina.

Tina felt like she had been upfront with John about her concerns. “It’s not like he doesn’t know how I feel,” she says. “We’ve had this conversations several times over the past month, both during formal and informal meetings, and I’m still not seeing any improvements.” Tina decided to use John’s upcoming review to get things back on track. She drew up an improvement plan for John and braced herself for what she knew was going to be a hard conversation. To prepare herself, Tina called on her years of experience as an army officer. “I grew up in a military environment where there’s no bluff,” she says. “When you’re at work, you’re at work. You need to be strong for the people around you and take your feelings out of it.”

A week later, Tina and John met for his review. Tina went through her written comments, pausing occasionally to ask John if he recalled the specific incidents referenced in her evaluation. (John acknowledged that these incidents occurred but remembered them differently.) Tina then outlined steps in the improvement plan, including action items she had created for John. As Tina spoke, John looked visibly agitated, but said very little. Tina closed the conversation with a suggestion they have another follow-up two weeks later to discuss John’s conduct with his colleagues.

“It’s my job as the principal to make sure people stay on course,” Tina says. “And it may not be fun to be the one to do that, but ultimately that’s how we get the outcomes we need.”

beliefs

**Read and reflect on the case study.** Using the organizer, identify any specific words, actions and beliefs that you feel could be improved using any of the sentiments and/or strategies we’ve explored so far.

**WORDS**

**BELIEFS**

**ACTIONS**
Look at this list of feedback “potholes” – common phrases that sink performance. Do you find yourself using any of these in your conversations with students or colleagues? What if you tried paving it over with these alternatives?

**INSTEAD OF THIS POTHOLE...**

- Can I give you some feedback?
- Good job!
- Here’s what you should do.
- Here’s where you need to improve.
- Your communication skills need improvement.
- This can never work.
- You have to stop doing x.

**TRY PAVING IT OVER:**

- Can I share my reaction?
- What was going through your mind when you did x?
- Have you considered this?
- I really liked when you did this – here’s why.
- Here’s where I started to lose you.
- I see a potential obstacle here – do you agree?
- When you do x, I feel y.

**ASSESS:**

Where do you find yourself creating the most holes in your everyday communications? When is that happening? With whom?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
PARTNERING FOR LONG-TERM SUCCESS

WHAT ARE YOU EXCITED ABOUT RIGHT NOW?

WHAT’S YOUR “SUPERPOWER”?  

WHEN DOES SCHOOL MAKE YOU COME ALIVE?

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

TELL ME ABOUT BUMPS ALONG THE WAY.

WHO HELPED YOU?

WHAT MADE THIS POSSIBLE?

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED?

WHERE ARE YOU HEADED?

HOW WILL YOU GET THERE?

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________
What behaviors and beliefs do you want to start adopting? Stop practicing? Continue to hold?
your journey starts now

The path to progress is best traveled together.

I’m grateful for the opportunity to study and grow with you. To lead is to learn, and you’ve affirmed the importance of being a life-long learner.

Good leaders don’t force a new reality on their employees. They help them *find new ways to face their reality* – to see themselves for who they really are, and to help them become the people they were always meant to be.

Developing performance partnerships take time and practice...but remains within every leader’s reach.

I look forward to being a part of your journey and future success!

With gratitude,

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