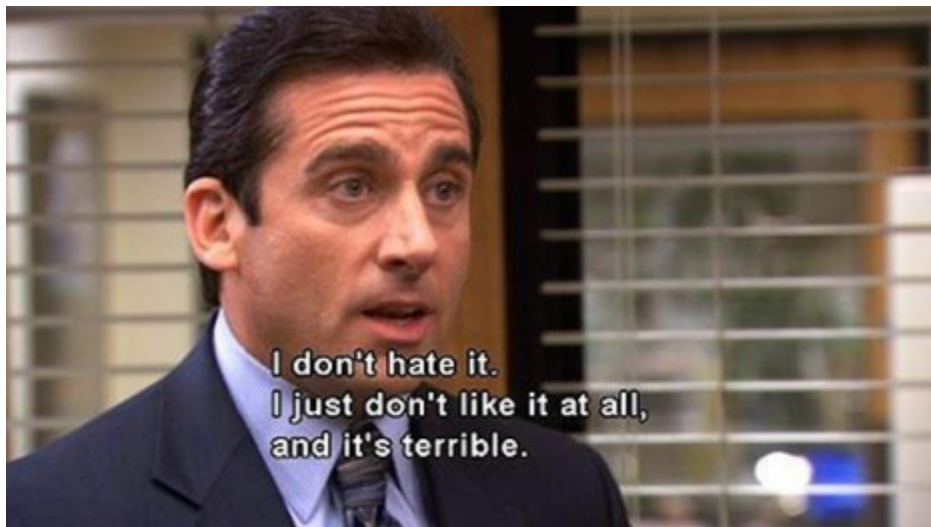


May 18, 2023



The Office NBC

This quote from the “World’s Best Boss” is EXACTLY how I used to feel when it came to giving feedback. In my corporate career, I had more than one instance where I was elevated to a new role, and colleagues who had been my peers were now reporting to me. Oh, the number of times I avoided giving developmental feedback because it just felt so icky!

Maybe you’ve been there yourself. Perhaps you’ve worried that the recipient:

😞 Won't like you

😞 Can't handle it

😞 Won't actually do anything with it

Even though I have absolutely thought all of the above at one time or another, I learned the hard way that by avoiding giving feedback, I was preventing my direct reports from learning, growing, and ultimately shining. (In fact, I dare say, it's what now helps make me a great coach!).

I'll never forget when I was given oversight for a department that had been operating rather independently for years. And wouldn't you know, the most senior person in that group, who had previously been both my peer and friend, was now my DR.

This team was full of bright, motivated individuals who were truly best in class. Yet I observed areas where I felt they could have been performing in a more efficient manner, and I was too scared to speak up because I didn't want to rock any boats. They were doing great work! Why say anything that could potentially feel upsetting? So I kept my mouth shut.

And guess what? The workload spiraled, and I eventually had no choice but to have a sit down to share what I felt was working well and where I thought there could be improvements. Once we had a real dialogue about processes, my DR actually asked me, "Why didn't you say anything earlier? This all makes sense. I'm not sure we can implement everything right away, but here's where we can start."

The dynamic between her and I ended up being a healthy and productive one, but I still kicked myself! There had been so much wasted time in letting things run status quo because I was too scared of what turned out to be a not-as-difficult-as-I-thought conversation.

So, what have I learned to make the art of giving feedback feel less scary and more effortless? Here's a three-step approach that may help you as much as it's helped my clients and me!

1 **Positive Feedback:** provide comments on a **specific strength** to reinforce what the recipient should keep doing.

💡 Perhaps instead of “Great job in the meeting this morning!” an alternate approach could be “I loved the idea you shared this morning and I’d love to discuss further how we might be able to implement it.”

② **Developmental Feedback:** One of the key ideas is to prioritize and limit this type of feedback to the **most important issues**. Consider the feedback’s potential value to the receiver and how you would respond – could you act on the feedback? Too much feedback provided at a single time can be overwhelming to the recipient.

💡 The SIR Method is one of my favorites: Situation, Impact, and Result. By staying focused and succinct in these three areas, you have a reliable way to keep the feedback relevant and actionable.

③ **Collaboration.** After you’ve shared your specific, timely feedback, it’s a good time to **ask the other person if they have any questions or thoughts**. Some people may want to brainstorm actionable solutions right there and then, which you can do together if you’re comfortable doing so. If they want to follow up at a later date, let them know that’s okay too.

💡 After offering feedback, make a conscious effort to follow up. Let recipients know you are available if they have questions. And remember, when possible, conclude with a positive comment. This can help to bolster confidence and keep the developmental areas in perspective.

The key takeaway with feedback is that it’s to help our teams learn and grow. And added bonus: it can help reduce our stress as well!

Let me know if this helps in your next feedback conversation!

With gratitude, Tracy

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If you know someone who could benefit from reading the above, please feel free to forward along! ➡

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I recently guested on *The Imposter Syndrome Files* podcast, where host Kim Meninger and I discussed - you guessed it - imposter syndrome, as well as all things leadership.

[Listen here!](#)

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I offer 1:1 coaching, group coaching, and team facilitation, and tailor offerings to the specific needs of you/your workplace. [Contact me to learn more.](#)

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