

The Stories We Tell Ourselves: Feedback Communication

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Reflection

Reflect on a time when you received feedback that was difficult to absorb, or left you feeling hurt. What communication skills would have made a difference? and why?

In one of my previous workplaces, I received a feedback from my employer that seemed quite unexpected. During the meeting, I remember feeling hurt and disappointed. It gave me a sense that my employer did not appreciate my work. So, I continued hearing what was being said after but not sure whether I was listening any further. I remember becoming defensive at times. I looked away in disagreement and had an anxious posture.

When I look back at this interaction, I feel I could have coped with the situation better if I practiced the art of active listening. By doing so, I would allow myself to distance from my emotional brain that jumped me in to defend myself. This would have made a big difference since, my mind would not be engaged with the heard component and crafting a response. I realise now that I did not allow myself the time to think and summarize the information I received.

Listening is hard work and requires focus and attention. I needed to summarize what was being said and recognize the emotions of my employer behind what he was saying. I would have benefitted by asking clarifying questions to identify the gaps which I could fill in for the future. A simple technique of breathing, swallowing, and saying thank you at the end would enable me to take the feedback in a constructive manner and manage my emotions better.

I have learned that feedback is nothing but the feedback giver's perception of a specific behavior. Feedback is an

opportunity for growth and I need to listen and accept the other person's point of view without any judgment. However, It does not necessarily mean that I should agree with the feedback.

I learned the importance of pause both while giving and receiving feedback. This is essential as it allows us to collect our thoughts well and get over the emotions that might prevent us from the hidden gem of growth in the feedback.

I realize that it is a great opportunity if someone takes the time to give me feedback. The value of Feedback lies in improvement hence, it should not be taken as criticism. We can even request feedback from people whom we know we can trust.

Finally, I must close the loop by letting the person know how I used the feedback and what did I do with it along with the reasons. As a professional, I will be receiving feedback from nearly everyone, my colleagues, patients, administrative staff and even the world wide web! I need to take this wholeheartedly to improve and excel in whatever I do.