Becoming A Resilient Scientist: Developing Feedback Resilience (Part IV)

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Feedback

- Specific information about a person's current behavior in order to help him/her continue it or modify it
  - spoken and unspoken
  - formal and informal

- Three types
  - appreciation: done to elicit more of the same
  - coaching: there is a better way....
  - evaluation: here is where you stand

Thanks for the Feedback by Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen
We Need Feedback To Know…

- where we stand
- what we are doing well
- what we are not doing so well
- what others prefer, want or need that differs from what we are proposing
- how we can improve or make helpful change
- In summary, we need feedback….
  - to navigate important interpersonal relationships
  - to grow and learn AND we need to give feedback to others so they can grow and learn
Then, Why Is This So Hard?

- Because we are HUMAN – and it is natural to feel defensive when we are critiqued
- A lot of feedback is delivered poorly
  - because most of us do not get a lot of training in how to do this and we often did not have the best of role models
  - with too much sarcasm, frustration or anger
  - repeated too many times
  - with a lot of inaccuracies
  - too indirect or unclear
Then, Why Is This So Hard?

- Because we are HUMAN – and it is natural to feel defensive when we are critiqued
- A lot of feedback is delivered poorly
- It can be very difficult to hear critical feedback about something that we care about a lot and is a part of our “highly valued self”
Then, Why Is This So Hard?

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- A lot of feedback is delivered poorly
- It can be very difficult to hear critical feedback about something that we care about a lot and is a part of our “highly valued self”

- Therefore, we need tools talked about in the resilience, wellness and self-advocacy workshops so we can find ways to seek out, hear and respond to the feedback we receive AND so we can give important feedback to others.
To Become Feedback Resilient

- We need to develop self-awareness around...
  - our typical stress/feedback response
  - our cultural lenses and how we navigate hierarchical structures
  - our go-to cognitive distortions
  - our communication style and the style of the other party
  - feedback triggers that come up for us in the moment
  - our emotional regulation, especially around discomfort, frustration, embarrassment and anger

- Four tools for developing the self-awareness we need to grow and make change
  - journaling
  - mindfulness
  - talking with mentors, peers, friends and family
  - therapy
Some Fun To Start

- If I had to describe my communication style in one word it would be............
And One More

- If I had to describe the communication style of my PI (or boss or another important person at school), it would be…….
Four Communication Styles

- **Responsiveness** = the degree to which you are perceived by others as attending to their needs in the interaction.

- **Assertiveness** = the degree to which you are perceived by others as attempting to prevail and get your way in the interaction.

Communication Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSERTIVENESS</th>
<th>RESPONSIVENESS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DRIVER/DIRECTIVE</td>
<td>AMIABLE/SUPPORTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Get right to the point</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lack outward warmth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Interrupt a lot; not good listeners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Like to control agendas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Make quick decisions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPRESSIVE/EMOTIVE</td>
<td>ANALYTICAL/REFLECTIVE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Fast-paced and use gestures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Takes initiative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Controls flow of discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Has trouble listening</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Encourages informality</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Shares emotions and feelings</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Easily reaches out</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Listens attentively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use warmth to connect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Avoids using power</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Decisions are slow and people-based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Controlled and outwardly unemotional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Likes order and time to prepare</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Often hold their opinions back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Express measured opinions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Seems hard to get to know</td>
<td></td>
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**Note:** The diagram does not show the high level of assertiveness for the EXPRESSIVE/EMOTIVE style.
Key Take Home Messages

- We all have a go-to or default style (or styles)
- It can be difficult to stretch to use (and be on the receiving end of) some of the styles
- There are benefits and liabilities to all four styles
  - strengths over-used become liabilities
- The goal is that we
  - are aware of our go-to style(s)
  - that we work to use other styles as appropriate
  - flex to the style of others to improve communication
Potential Strengths of Each Style

- **Amiable/Supportive**
  - warm
  - diplomatic
  - caring

- **Emotive/Expressive**
  - persuasive
  - enthusiastic
  - fun-loving

- **Analytical/Reflective**
  - logical
  - systematic
  - serious

- **Driver/Directive**
  - efficient
  - decisive
  - candid
# Strengths Over-used Can Become Liabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Driver/Directive</td>
<td>An abrasive person who makes rash decisions without seeking input, often alienating others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expressive/Emotive</td>
<td>A poor listener who is impatient and impractical and who never honors commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amiable/Supportive</td>
<td>A nice person who never takes a stand and avoids conflict at all costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical/Reflective</td>
<td>A stand-offish cold person who is not a team-player and takes perfection to an extreme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s Your Default Style?

- Amiable/ Supportive
- Expressive/ Emotive
- Analytical/ Reflective
- Driver/ Directive
Which Style Do You Have the Hardest Time Working With?

POLL

RESPONSIVENESS

high

ASSERTIVENESS

high

Amiable/ Supportive

Expressive/ Emotive

Analytical/ Reflective

Driver/ Directive
For You To Journal About

- Start by thinking about you…
  - What is your dominant style(s)? What about your PI (or any other important people in your life)?
  - When does your dominant style(s) work well for you? When does it not work so well?

- Now think about your PI (or another important person in your life):
  - How might you adjust to the style of your PI? What would you ask of them to adjust more to your preferred style?
  - Can you imagine having a discussion about this with them?
Styles And Feedback

**Amiables may/will**
- not take initiative to give you feedback
- soften the feedback, in a helpful or unhelpful way
- focus on showing they care, during and afterward
- Ask a lot of questions about how you feel

**Expressives may/will**
- get easily off topic
- repeat themselves
- talk over you and cut you off
- ask you a lot of questions
- allow the meeting to go long
- want to talk about the feedback again

**Analyticals may/will**
- not take initiative to give feedback
- need time to prepare in advance
- need time to think during the discussion
- not provide a lot of detail unless requested

**Drivers may/will**
- get right to the point and be very direct
- want to drive the agenda
- talk over you and cut you off
- end the meeting quickly when they have said what they have to say
- not want to revisit the feedback
Some Helpful Strategies

Amiable
- Ask for feedback and point out that you value and need it
- Ask clarifying questions to draw them out
- Acknowledge appreciation feedback and ask for critical input as well

Expressive
- prepare for the intensity
- match their energy in expressing your appreciation and opinion
- be kind as you introduce areas where you don’t see things the same way
- attend to both task and relationship

Analytical
- ask for feedback by email and give them time to prepare
- be comfortable with some pauses and don’t jump in right away
- Ask straightforward questions and give them time to respond

Driver
- prepare for the intensity
- maintain boundaries and suggest talking at another time if necessary
- use firm but respectful language back, when agreeing or disagreeing
- use short responses – “understood”, “will do”, “can I clarify?” etc.
Types of Feedback Triggers

- **Trigger** – something that causes a strong emotional response in us
- **Truth triggers**: we question the accuracy of the feedback
  - try to focus on the general accuracy and don’t get caught by the “always” and “nevers”
  - if some parts of the feedback are accurate and parts are not, separate them in your mind

Thanks for the Feedback: the Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well; Stone and Heen
Types of Feedback Triggers

- Truth triggers: we question the accuracy of the feedback
- Relationship triggers: we question, or don’t like/trust, the person providing the feedback
  - ask if I felt different about this person, would I feel different about the feedback
  - Look for your gain (to learn from the feedback)

Thanks for the Feedback: the Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well; Stone and Heen
Types of Feedback Triggers

- Truth triggers: we question the accuracy of the feedback.
- Relationship triggers: we question, or don’t like/trust, the person providing the feedback.
- Identity triggers: we question the feedback because of our identity, the identity of the giver, or a combination of both.

- NOTE: At times, there are ALL challenging for ALL of us.

Thanks for the Feedback: the Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well; Stone and Heen
Attributional Ambiguity

Uncertainty about whether the feedback you received was based on group membership or personal ability (see Crocker et al., 1991)

Is the feedback a valid response to my performance or is it driven by a response to my group membership?

Shown to occur for...
- Race/Ethnicity
- Gender (especially women)
- Physically attractive individuals
- Overweight individuals
- Religious affiliations
- Individuals with mental or physical health issues
- Socio-economic status
- and others
Attributional Ambiguity

- Occurs for both positive and negative feedback
  - “Am I getting this **positive** feedback, because they feel sorry for me or because they don’t want to appear prejudiced?”
  - “Am I getting this **negative** feedback, because they are biased and acting on their prejudice?”

- The ambiguity temporarily ”buffers” self-esteem from negative feedback
  - but can be problematic in the long-term
Key to Overcoming Attributional Ambiguity

TRUST
Helpful Questions To Ask Yourself

- Who is the person telling me this? What is the status of my relationship with them (What is the status of “the bridge”?)
- Is this about me or “ME” or a bit of both?
- What part of this feedback might be driven by identity issues and potential bias? And what is just feedback that I prefer not to hear?
  - What is the truth in the feedback?

And… Remember BOUNDARIES
Emotions and Feedback

Some uncomfortable emotions (to have and/or to be the recipient of during feedback interactions)
- discomfort
- embarrassment
- frustration/irritation
- anger

First principle - Emotions are important data points. Remember….

- Awareness – accurate Interpretation, emotional Regulation
- time is our friend
Accurate Interpretation and Emotional Regulation Are Key (I)

- **Discomfort**
  - The message – “I am uncomfortable so I should stop”
  - Alternate message – “this is uncomfortable, and I need to stick with it”
  - Remember:
    - growth mindset
    - you do hard things all of the time

- **Embarrassment**
  - The message – “I cannot believe this happened; I need to hide”
  - Alternate message – “I wish this had not happened, I need to find support”
  - Remember:
    - self-compassion
    - perfection does not exist; we all make mistakes
Frustration/Irritation/Anger (I)

- **Frustration**
  - “the feeling of being upset or annoyed, especially because of inability to change or achieve something”

- **Irritation**
  - “the state of feeling annoyed, impatient, or slightly angry”

- **Anger**
  - “a strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility”

(Oxford dictionary)
Frustration/Irritation/Anger (II)

- View these emotions as a rheostat and early warning system
- Appreciate that others may see it differently than you
- Messages being sent:
  - I am being blocked from....
  - this is not going the way I planned it to go
  - I did not get the response I wanted about....
  - I am not being understood...
  - I thought this would be easier/go smoother/have a different outcome
  - I was wronged/disrespected/demeaned....
Frustration Tolerance

- The ability to deal with delays, address obstacles, and to put hassles and slights into perspective so they can be dealt with or let go of.

- Is a learned skill
  - starts with self-awareness (sensing a theme?)
  - best to practice in a low stake situation (one benefit of a hobby)
  - requires us to embrace letting go
  - requires us to develop our assertiveness skills

- Some helpful strategies
  - journal about what frustration looks and feels like for you
  - Find ways to pause and regroup
  - Use imagery and/or if – then questioning leading you to ask questions such as does this really matter? is there another approach? would a break help? is this worth getting heated about? etc.
How Good Is Your Anger Management

- This assessment was helpful (and eye opening) to me

- What is so useful about understanding your anger phenotype?
  - we want early warnings and insight into our triggers and hot buttons so we can design specific strategies that work for us
  - gives us a language for talking about this with important people in our lives
  - gives us a sense of how complex handling anger is, which helps with self-compassion
Things It Makes Us Ask Ourselves

- When someone makes me angry, I try not to show my emotions, and pretend to tolerate it.

- When I feel angry, I give myself a 'time out' (I walk away to calm down).

- When someone asks me to do something I really don't want to do, I agree - and then I'm angry at myself later.

- When I'm angry, I hit something (or I want to hit something).

- After I've been angry, I think about what I could or should have done to control my anger better.

- I can forgive people after they've hurt or angered me.

- I have an activity, hobby, or routine I use to release my feelings of anger.
A Working Feedback Model

Feedback Occurs In Three dimensions:

**The Past**
What happened to bring us to now?
Two components: Data + interpretation

**The Present**
What is going on right now?
Triggers
Emotions
Physical sensations
Distortions

**The Future**
What should I do going forward?
Two Components: Behavior change + follow-up

Focus here so you can learn about the past and eventually get to discussing the future
Your Goals

- Deal with the present moment (this takes practice!)
  - take slow deep breaths and relax tension in your body to stay calm
  - inoculate yourself by remembering communication styles (yours, theirs)
  - calm your distortions and triggers by gently acknowledging them and then parking them for now
  - hold off on responding if angry or upset; ask for time if you need it
  - Offer a thank you for the feedback (you can do this and also acknowledge how hard it is to hear)

- Understand the past
  - Ask clarifying questions (if safe to do so)
  - Use active listening skills to show you heard the feedback
  - offer to provide context or an explanation if warranted –

- Look to the future
  - offer and ask for suggestions for behavioral change
  - request a follow up meeting to assure appropriate action
Some Reminders (I)

- Know your feedback and stress response and develop go-to strategies for staying calm in the moment
- Pay attention to physical signals and notice what is happening for you in the moment; pay attention to the other person as well
- Ask for time if you need it; if given time, prepare
- Do not get snagged by gross over-statements, generalizations and draconian pronouncements
  - Rebutting “always” and “never” is rarely your best option
  - Know that most draconian statements come from the other’s anger and their go-to cognitive distortions
Some Reminders (II)

- Practice asking calm clarifying questions to more fully understand the events leading to the feedback and to be clear about behavioral changes that will address concerns.

- Learn to differentiate between your feelings, the distortions you are telling yourself and the actual feedback

- Accept that you can’t control
  - how others see you
  - how others deliver feedback

- Appreciate that your goal is to disregard what is not helpful and focus on what is (Boundaries!)

- Find your growth mindset
  - Reach out for support
And Important to Appreciate

- Our first response to feedback is often to shut-down, disbelieve, become defensive, feel under attack (that is our amygdala doing it’s thing)
- Receiving feedback and staying with it is much more complicated when the feedback comes from someone valued

NOTE: It makes sense that we struggle more with developmental (negative) feedback, but at times we can struggle to hear positive input as well.
After A Difficult Feedback Interaction

- Seek support and guidance for talking through what happened, how you feel and what you might like to do.
- Spend some time focusing on the feedback interaction and not on the feedback:
  - Take a positive inquiry approach and start with what you handled well and what you are proud of.
- Focus on the intent – to help you improve, and not only the impact – it didn’t feel good (to a point).
- Revisit the feedback when you are calm and can focus.
- When you feel the feedback is wrong, focus on the perception that lead to the feedback:
  - ask yourself if there is something you can do to change the perception.
A Useful Model For Dealing With Anger

Use modified version of the HEARD model by Disney:

**Hear:** Let the person talk or tell their entire story without interruptions.

**Empathize:** Convey that you understand how that person feels. “I’d be angry too!”

**Apologize:** If you are in the wrong, avoid becoming defensive and sincerely apologize. Otherwise, you can still emphasize, “I am so sorry that you have to go through that.”

**Resolve:** Resolve the issue or help resolve. Ask what you can do to improve or help the situation.

**Diagnose or Discuss:** After the issue has been resolved and everyone has calmed down, get to the bottom of what happened so it won’t happen again.

Modified from: https://longerdays.com/4-methods-for-turning-angry-customers-around/
Remember

- You may need to ask for feedback to get feedback
  - Be clear and precise in your ‘ask’
  - Consider this strategy: What am I doing well? Where do I need to improve? Is there anything you want me to do that I am not currently doing?
- Best to request a meeting by email to give them time to prepare

I’ve been in your lab now for …. It would be helpful to me to get your input about …. This will help me have a successful rotation and contribute to the science here. Thanks; I can meet whenever is convenient for you.
Some Thoughts On Giving Feedback To Your PI

- Really depends on your PI; how open they are and how committed to mentoring you they are
  - supportive PI? Deal first with your own internal barriers
  - unsupportive PI, seeking support and guidance as you decide a way forward is key
  - program and university leadership can be good sources of support and guidance and can help you access other institutional resources

- The stakes are high and ignoring problems do not make them go away.
Question Your Catastrophic Thoughts

- Catastrophic thoughts trainees have shared
  - S/he won’t accept me into their lab (for someone rotating)
  - S/he will never write me a good letter
  - S/he will fire me today
  - I will get kicked out of graduate school
  - S/he will block my long-term success in science

- Question these thoughts
  - how accurate are they?
  - what does past history tell me?
  - what unique circumstances increase or decrease my vulnerability?
  - Who can I go to for guidance, support and safety
Some Imagery Hacks That Helps Me

rain gear!
giraffe..giraffe..giraffe
the bridge
Want To Talk More About the Material?

- Join us for a small group facilitated discussion next week

  NOTE: in my opinion, the small groups are the most valuable part of what we offer
Journaling For Later

Think of a time when you received difficult feedback about something you really cared about. What happened for you. If you were able to stay calm, what strategies helped you in the moment and beyond? What is generally not as helpful to you and why do you think that is?

Think of a time when you had to give someone you cared about difficult feedback. What strategies did you use so that you could stay calm as you talked with your friend/colleague/collaborator/PI? What went well; what did not go well and why do you think that is?
Please take a moment now to give me feedback so I can learn from all of you....

Click on the link in the chat to complete the post-lecture evaluation NOW.

This should take less than 5 minutes. It is voluntary and completely anonymous.
Helpful Readings – Personality and Work styles

TYPE TALK AT WORK
How the 16 Personality Types Determine Your Success on the Job
From the authors of Type Talk
Otto Krogger with Janet M. Thuesen and Hite Rutledge
With a New Foreword

CLASH!
Everyone should read this book.
—Carol S. Dweck, PhD, author of MINDSET

PEOPLE STYLES AT WORK
Making Bad Relationships Good and Good Relationships Better
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Robert Bolton & Dorothy Grover Bolton