

The Feedback Wheel

Based on Terry Real's Work

Purpose of Feedback Wheel: A structured conversation is an excellent tool for learning to negotiate difficult, challenging, conflict ridden conversations.

Something to Think About: In the face of these moments, most people can listen for about 5-6 sentences, maximum. When we feel unheard, we have a tendency to get louder, repeat ourselves, or pull in other details to re-engage the listener. We tend to over-talk believing that more detail will make a more "win-able" argument.

Before Beginning - Remember

- Get centered in your "Wise Adult" – meaning, get centered in the part of you that is flexible, understanding, non-reactionary, non-defensive, and considerate.
- Tone is the most important part of your message. If you can't drop the tone, don't speak now.
- If you are the speaker, give two – three sentences max. Think it through before you speak.
- Keep your side of the relationship clean. Own what you can. Listen with an open heart. Always say, "I" and not "you."
- Remember love. This is the person you love you are speaking to.

Set Up: There are Two Different Roles

1. The Listener Role

- You are like a customer service agent. If someone said to you, “My microwave is broken.” You wouldn’t say, “Well my toaster is broken.”
- Put your own needs aside. Think less about objective reality than about understanding your partner’s experience.
- Turn points of contention into curiosity. Let go of being right.
- Listening respectfully doesn’t imply agreement. They are two separate things.

2. The Speaker Role

- To speak succinctly and thoughtfully.

Steps for the Speaker

1. Make a contract first:

Ask “Is now a good time to talk?” Don’t have conversation without first agreeing that it’s a good time.

2. Just the facts.

In a sentence or two, say what happened without editorializing. Use the stems:

“I noticed _____” or

“When you_____”

3. State your thoughts and interpretations in a sentence or two:

“What I made up about it is_____”

or

“The story I tell myself about this is_____”

- This is where you explain your thoughts about why the conflict happened. This allows your partner to understand your thought process.
- It is important that you own this part as your own interpretation, not absolute truth.

4. State your feelings about this. Use short feeling words like “sad,” “scared,” “happy,” “angry,” or “hurt.”

- Be careful not to say, “I feel like...” because it is not a feeling, it is a thought. You want to say a feeling because this is the deepest part of your experience. Stating a pure feeling is the best way to express it. For example, “I felt lonely.” “I feel sad.”

5. “Make a request for what you would like instead.”

- This is the section that you need to think about what you want. Is your partner capable of your request? Is it feasible and reasonable? Be clear with your request.

Steps for the Listener

Lead with agreement. The more accountable you can be, the more you will decrease escalations. Find *something* you can own. Your job is to listen & acknowledge.

- 1. “What I hear you say is”** ● This validates to the speaker that you listened.
- 2. Acknowledge whatever you can** ● Acknowledge something in the speaker’s description that you can own or understand.
- 3. Give as much as you can**
 - In the speaker’s request, what can you give? What can you agree to?

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