

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

George Bernard Shaw



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Appreciation Activity

- Pair Up
- If possible, do so with an individual you have spent some time getting to know while you have been here
- Sit together and engage in the following



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Appreciation Activity

- Turn to the person you've met here and give them open, honest, and positive feedback about some aspect of who they are and how it makes you feel.



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Appreciation Activity Debrief

- Please share examples of what was said.
- Were the emotions expressed or implied?
- Describe your physicality.



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Great Feedback, not...

Chris De Santis
www.cpdesantis.com
chris@cpdesantis.com



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...Great, Feedback

Chris De Santis
www.cpdesantis.com
chris@cpdesantis.com



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Setting the Stage

- Feedback has a biological component
- Generational habits shape our expectations of feedback
- We need to leverage our strengths as in what activities strengthen you, supplement our weaknesses as in what activities weaken you, and engage with others to reduce our blind spots
- Feedback implies there were stated expectations
- What do raters REALLY know?
- When feedback works (and when it doesn't)



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Conversational Intelligence

Level I We tell and ask others, with the intention of confirming of what is already known. **Transactional**

Level II We advocate and inquire in the hopes of influencing others to adopt our views. **Positional**

Level III We share with others and we discover with others, we open and as a consequence there is trust. **Transformative**

"Conversational Intelligence"
Judith Glaser



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Conversational Intelligence The Mistakes We Make

- Ignoring another's perspective
- Fixation on being right
- Tell Sell Yell
- Allowing emotions to affect listening
- Disengaged listeners



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Feedback Generational Habits

Boomers

- Annual ritual
- Management by exception
- Competitive environment

Generation X

- Event related and timely
- High on facts, less on the superlatives

Millennials

- Frequent and proportionally appropriate
- Bias toward dialogue



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Why we want some Feedback

The Four Stage Developmental Model:

1. Unconscious Incompetent
2. Conscious Incompetent
3. Conscious Competent
4. Unconscious Competent



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Embrace Your Lopsidedness

- Focus on developing your strengths and being competent in your weaknesses
- If it ain't a fatal flaw then just be competent or delegate it
- It's your bundle of a few strengths that will determine your future success, so they should be your focus
- Surround yourself with teammates who are strong where you are not



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The Expectations Meeting A Level III Opportunity

- **They understand your Why** (I love what I do because...)
- **They know and understand your Why for them** (My goal/job/desire is to make you become the lawyer you wish to be)
- **You know and appreciate their Why** (who do they hope to be/do)
- **They know and appreciate the group's Why** (the vision and purpose of your team/specialty/firm)
- **They explore the How** (your responsibilities to each other)
- **They understand the What** (your expectations and their proficiency)



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Types of Feedback

- Coaching (here's a better way to do it)
- Appreciative (thanks)
- Evaluation (here's where we stand)
 - Measurable Skills
 - Abstractions



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The Problem with Abstract Feedback

- Telling a person what we think of their performance doesn't help them thrive and telling them what they should do actually hinders learning
- The Rater doesn't actually know
- Definition may be present but interpretations vary
- Correlation is not Causality

"The Fallacy of Feedback"
HBR 2019
Marcus Buckingham and Ashley Goodall



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Feedback Assumptions Debunked

Source of Truth

- Humans are unreliable raters of the abstract and since we are unreliable from the beginning then our error rate is systematic because our collected data is skewed.



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How we Learn

- Learning is less a function of adding something that isn't there than it is recognizing, reinforcing and refining what already is. Focusing on weaknesses creates defensiveness; tying it to our strengths catalyzes learning. If we are too far out of our comfort zone we stop listening.



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Excellence?

- It is each of us at our best, not a comparison but rather our unique version. It can be cultivated but not forced. Failure is not the opposite of excellence. Excellence is its own pattern.

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Process for Coaching to Improve Performance for Measurable Skills

- Do your homework
- Introduce the issue as "here is what I saw and felt"
- Ask for input
- Agree on the situation
- What are they having trouble with
- What have they tried in the past in similar situations
- What can they do in the future to apply it
- Develop a specific plan
- Agree on a follow-up



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Effective Feedback

- Best practices for giving feedback?



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How to Help People Excel

- Look for good outcomes “That! Yes, that!”
- Replay your instinctive reactions, share your truth
- Never lose sight of your highest priority. Interrupt when you see something great and say so.



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Giving Effective Feedback for Measurable Skills

- Timely
- Accept we have impression bias and, over time, the halo effect
- Behaviorally based, specific to the situation observed and relevant to the individual and the team
- Use “I” statements
- Ask for their perspective, listen for understanding, don’t interrupt
- Stay focused on one issue at a time
- Imagine they are rational human beings, so why might a rational person do this?
- Do not get defensive
- Contextualize the relative importance attached to the feedback



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Common Mistakes

- Giving feedback when upset or emotional
- Blaming
- Interpreting or making assumptions about motives
- Getting into their head
- Being too gentle or not direct
- Labeling without explaining what you mean



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Effective Feedback

- Best practices for receiving feedback?



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The Politics of Receiving Feedback

- Listen quietly and clarify
- Resist getting defensive or argumentative
- Understand their perspective
- Know it is one person's opinion/perspective
- Summarize situation and discuss alternative behaviors as appropriate or explain your need to process this
- Remain calm
- Thank them
- Finally, determine if this is a pattern and if so is an action required



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Appreciative Feedback

- Suggestions?



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Appreciative Feedback

- 4 to 1 rule
- Do not sandwich or bury your positives
- Don't sand bag or close with required improvements
- Consider the temperament and strengths of the receiver and its impact on frequency
- Reinforce positives makes improvement based feedback easier
- Public or private feedback, depends on the individual and the lesson
- Employ eye contact, your Duchenne smile, and say thank you



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Performance and Getting Feedback

- | Poor | Adequate | Good | Excellent |
|------|---------------|----------------|-----------|
| Easy | "You're Fine" | Very Difficult | Easy |



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Choose one of your Strengths

- Write down one "good" one that if you were excellent in its execution, would make the most difference in the work that you either are doing or aspire to do.



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The Feedback Challenge Process

- Refine the gift into a concise, clear and tangible statement of your desire to improve in this area.
- Keep in mind they are judging your performance relative to your strength as your strength is likely to be only part of the performance
- Create a list of all the people at your firm/company with whom you have worked that has required you to engage in the chosen gift
- Send them an email indicating you would like specific feedback and invite them to answer the following



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The Feedback Challenge Process

Relative to this skill:

- What do I need to start doing more of?
- What do I need to stop doing?
- What would you have done differently?
- What did I miss?



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The Feedback Challenge Process

- Collect the feedback
- Synthesize it and look for patterns
- Send a thank you and a statement of what you will be attempting to do differently going forward
- Ask them to hold you to it
- A year later repeat with another skill development request
- If the overall impression of you is negative, this is your shot at redemption



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Before I Close

What can I answer or clarify?



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One More Thing



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One More Thing

Which of your firms identifies and subsequently nurtures, develops, and/or rewards “high potential” employees?



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Develop Momentum not Potential

- **Mass:** the traits, abilities, and aptitudes that are unique to an individual and present in things they do that create “flow”
- **Velocity:** how quickly and how well a person has used thought traits and in what direction they have taken them



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The Path Forward

- Priority one, develop trusting relationships
- Embrace your lopsidedness and that of your gifted colleagues
- It's not about power, commitment trumps compliance
- Mass + Velocity = Momentum
- Pick your battles but always side with hope



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Thanks for Listening And Go Make this a Better World

Join me on LinkedIn

Chris De Santis
www.cpdesantis.com
chris@cpdesantis.com



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