

COACH

PREPARE MODULE #3

COMPETENCY: Provide feedback and evaluation that increases ministry effectiveness and leadership capacity, personally and spiritually.

OBJECTIVE: To empower and coach RLC leaders to courageously provide and receive feedback in a way that moves leaders toward personal and spiritual growth.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1: Read “Biblical Accounts of Speaking Truth in Love.”

Assignment 2: Read Forbes article on honest feedback by Joseph Folkman.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/joefolkman/2013/12/19/the-best-gift-leaders-can-give-honest-feedback>

Assignment 3: Listen to Andy Stanley’s Audio Podcast: “The Art of Inviting Feedback.” Start at the 1:50 mark; listen up to the 15:27 mark. <http://podbay.fm/show/290055666/e/1383582600?autostart=1>

ASSIGNMENT 1

Ephesians 4:15-16 (NIV)

¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 Timothy 1:5 (NET)

“But the aim of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.”

Paul is writing here, first to the church in Ephesus, and then to Timothy. His expert ability to guide and coach other early church leaders has become a centerpiece for spiritual instruction (what we can refer to as feedback) for 2,000 years. Then in his letter to Timothy, Paul calibrates the aim even further. To quote 1 Timothy 1:5 again, “But the aim of our instruction is love that comes from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.” He is focused squarely on the original heart and intent from which we are speaking to each other. Paul’s words firmly cement him as a leader and coach of the early church. But leading is not always easy. And, to lead well, you absolutely must be able to give and receive feedback to and from others.

Serving in ministry as leaders and volunteers has its fair share of opportunities to engage in meaningful moments of interactive feedback with others. Sometimes you are the one providing the feedback, and other times, you are on the receiving end of the situation. It does not always end well. Unfortunately, people have left the church over moments such as these, and others have stayed, harboring resentment for many years that followed because a crucial conversation went awry. But this is important. As a leader, in the church, in the workplace, and in our homes, we have a duty and responsibility to address situations and people with honesty. Yet, how we do this feedback is critical. The how is always the key. If we maintain a posture of love, the message will not be lost in the moment.

Pastor Tim Keller wrote:

Love without truth is sentimentality; it supports and affirms us but keeps us in denial about our flaws. Truth without love is harshness; it gives us information but in such a way that we cannot really hear it. God’s saving love in Christ, however, is marked by both radical truthfulness about who we are and yet also radical, unconditional commitment to us. The merciful commitment strengthens us to see the truth about ourselves and repent. The conviction and repentance move us to cling to and rest in God’s mercy and grace.

- Timothy J. Keller, *The Meaning of Marriage: Facing the Complexities of Commitment with the Wisdom of God*

QUESTIONS:

1. Do you experience anxiety or stress when encountering situations where you see opportunities to speak correction or instruction into a moment?
2. Theologian Warren Wiersbe once wrote, "Truth without love is brutality, and love without truth is hypocrisy." Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. Where are you specifically challenged on the spectrum of "truth in love"? Are you more on the side of speaking truth without any softness or cushion? Or do you have plenty of cushion, but perhaps not enough truth to address the issue at hand?
4. The first evidence of spiritual growth is Christlikeness. In the passage mentioned, Ephesians 4, Paul speaks to one aspect of Christian maturity as truth joined with love (v. 15). Paul correlates maturity with the ability to speak truth to others in a loving and supportive way. Where are you on your journey toward this end?

ASSIGNMENT 2

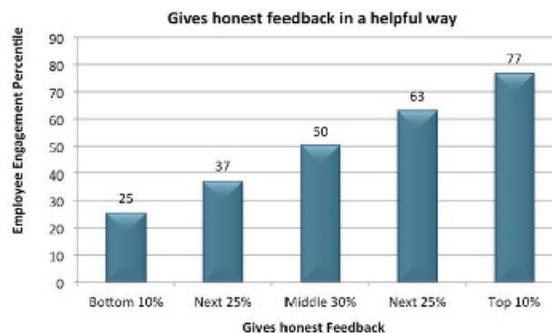
Forbes Article: “The Best Gift Leaders Can Give: Honest Feedback” by Joseph Folkman

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/joefolkman/2013/12/19/the-best-gift-leaders-can-give-honest-feedback>

Recently I was speaking to a large group of leaders and asked them the following question: How many of you would like your manager to tell you what you want to hear rather than what you need to hear? Not one person raised their hand. Everyone wants to know the truth, no matter how difficult it is to hear. But even though we want to hear honest and direct feedback, we generally don't look on those occasions with much joy or pleasure.

Most people can come up with several traumatic stories from their pasts where they have given or received negative feedback. These negative experiences embed themselves into our psyche and become a source of anxiety. On the other hand, most people can also come up with an experience where a person gave them helpful feedback that contributed to a marked improvement in their effectiveness and influenced their success. I have always tried to help people see that whether the feedback is critical or positive it is a gift.

Strong employee engagement is closely aligned with the ability to give honest feedback in a helpful way. A recent study of 22,719 leaders showed that those who ranked at the bottom 10% in their ability to give honest feedback to direct reports received engagement scores from their subordinates that averaged 25 percent. It is quite obvious that these employees detested their jobs, their commitment was low and they regularly thought about quitting. In contrast, those in the top 10% for giving honest feedback had subordinates who ranked at the 77th percentile in engagement.



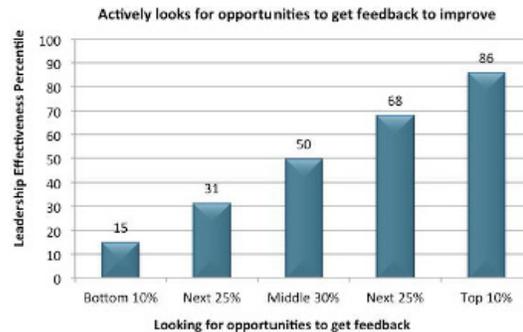
Giving honest feedback is a fantastic gift, but apparently people only experience it as a gift when it is delivered well. Giving honest feedback poorly, will, for most people, be viewed as a punishment—not a gift.

The Best Gift You Can Receive

The vast majority of people assume that when their Boss wants to “talk” it is negative or corrective feedback they’ll hear. In fact, this negative assumption about feedback causes many people to avoid feedback all together. Strangely enough, “feedback phobia” isn’t limited to people who have had a boss who predominantly criticized them. Nor is it limited to people who are generally insecure about their performance. It is widespread.

The advantage of receiving ongoing feedback is much like the advantage you gain from a GPS device as opposed to a paper map. Both provide directions about where you want to go. The GPS, however, provides the directions in the context of an accurate assessment of where you currently are.

In our research from more than a decade we continue to find that leaders who ask for feedback are substantially more effective than leaders who don't. In a recent study of 51,896 leaders we discovered that those who ranked at the bottom 10% in asking for feedback were rated at the 15th percentile in overall leadership effectiveness. On the other hand, leaders who ranked at the top 10% in asking for feedback were rated, on average, at the 86th percentile in effectiveness. It appears that being open and willing to receive feedback from others is an essential skill for effective leaders.



What is your attitude and how skillful are you at receiving both positive and negative feedback? The best leaders appear to ask more people for feedback and they ask for feedback more often. Rather than being fearful of feedback, they are comfortable receiving information about their behavior from their bosses, their colleagues and their subordinates.

QUESTIONS:

1. The article mentions “feedback phobia.” Can you relate? Do you have feedback phobia? Share how/why.
2. The article showcases that people in the workplace who receive honest feedback from their superiors’ rank in the 77th percentile in “engagement.” Why do you think that is?
3. Why is it critical for any leaders in the church to embrace feedback? Both giving and receiving?
4. As a leader, what is one step you can take regarding getting and giving feedback?

Leadership tip: a volunteer job description will help people on your ministry team have clarity of their goals and respective roles. Make sure leaders on your team have clarity of their goals and roles to play. These goals will help you give them the most supportive feedback to their ministry and leadership growth.

ASSIGNMENT 3

Andy Stanley's Audio Podcast: "The Art of Inviting Feedback"

<http://podbay.fm/show/290055666/e/1383582600?autostart=1>

Start at the 1:50 mark; listen up to the 15:27 mark.

QUESTIONS:

1. Pastor Andy Stanley shares early on about an email he received from Clay, asking for feedback about his church and how it can be improved. Andy then explains his perspective that "every leader should invite feedback." Do you agree with this absolute?
2. What is the difference between subjective opinions and valuable feedback? How do you tell the difference?
3. At the 10:31 mark, Pastor Andy theorizes that Type-A leaders might have even more resistance than others to receiving feedback. Is this a pride issue? Is this something you identify with in your communication?
4. At the 14:10 mark, the speaker mentions that the way in which you solicit opinions affects how you are able to receive others' input. Is there a right way to ask for input? Does it matter how we ask? How so?
5. At the core of any healthy relationship, trust is foundational. Do you believe a "bridge of trust" is a central factor in your feedback process with others? How so? How do we build that bridge?

LEADERSHIP TAKEAWAYS: