

LEADING SELF SERIES

PEEPLCOACH TIP SHEET NO: 13

THE KEY TO GIVING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK IS TRUST. THE PERSON RECEIVING THE FEEDBACK MUST BELIEVE THAT YOU TRULY CARE ABOUT THEM. THEY MUST TRUST THAT YOU ARE ACTING FOR THEIR BENEFIT, NOT FOR YOURS.

At Peepcoach, we love the framework created by Kim Scott in her book Radical Candor.

This model provides a simple framework to assist everyone, whether you manage a team or not, to have more courageous and effective discussions for better outcomes. Or, in Kim's own words, to "get what you want by saying what you mean."

The framework is based on four communication styles: Radical Candor, Ruinous Empathy, Manipulative Insincerity, and Obnoxious Aggression.

TO BUILD TRUST:

- Demonstrate consistent and predictable behaviour, both with the person receiving the feedback, and with others.
- Individuals will assess you on how you treat them but also on how they see you treating others.
- Be honest and fair when giving feedback.
- Be vulnerable and honest – admit when you don't know the answer, or you have made a mistake.
- Listen, and be open to sharing information.
- Be aware of body language and other non-verbal signals.
- Support the team when mistakes are made – avoid blaming others.
- Be inclusive.
- Do what you say you will do.
- Trust others – people will not trust you if they feel you do not trust them.

Feedback can involve both praise and constructive criticism. Too often when we think about feedback we only think about difficult conversations. It is just as important to develop the skill of giving genuine and specific praise regularly.

A research study by The Gottman Institute found that healthy and constructive relationships have a 5 to 1 ratio of positive interactions to negative interactions.

**COURAGEOUS
CONVERSATIONS**

RADICAL CANDOR

Radical Candor is the communication style that balances direct communication and personal care. In this case the recipient knows that you have a personal interest in their success, and they trust the intent of your feedback. Your feedback is clear, specific and direct and leaves no room for interpretation or error. It is not always easy to speak with candor. Recipients may be offended or upset, and you may become the 'bad guy'. However, strong leaders and true team players pride themselves on this skill as it is only with constructive, clear and direct feedback that we can improve individually and as a team. Radical Candor requires you to be specific when giving feedback. For example, it is effective and constructive to say something like 'I really enjoyed the presentation because it was clear and easy to follow the actions and next steps. People who speak with Radical Candor will say what is needed and can have the hard conversations because they care about their team's development and improved performance.

Benefits

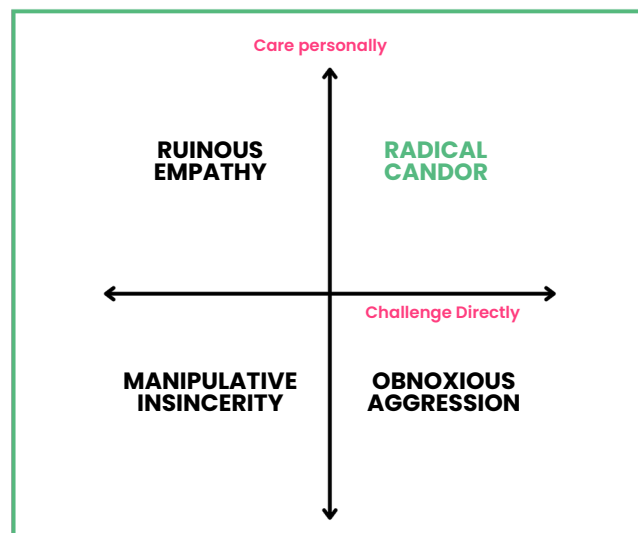
- Candid, specific and direct feedback can result in immediate change and improvement.
- It creates long-term trust and success.
- It improves people's and organisations' performance.
- It gives people the chance to improve rather than remain ignorant of their areas for development or be blindsided by unexpected feedback.
- You will gain greater commitment and loyalty from team members over the longer term.
- It creates high-performing team

Disadvantages

- It can hurt people's feelings or make them angry with you.
- People don't always want to accept candid feedback.
- Feedback cannot be effective without trust between the parties.

Example

Your colleague has food in their teeth. You whisper, 'You have food stuck in your teeth.' Your intention is to help your colleague in a way that is respectful, discreet and effective. You know that even if he or she is upset with you or they get embarrassed, you need to tell them for their own benefit. Your focus is on improving performance and protecting your colleague's reputation.



RUINOUS EMPATHY

Ruinous empathy occurs when feedback is aimed at making the recipient feel better rather than helping them improve. The intention is to protect them and avoid embarrassment or upset, often resulting in watered-down feedback or none at all. In the long term, this behaviour is destructive, as it denies people the chance to learn and grow.

This communication style is typical of the 'nice guy' boss who avoids hard decisions and difficult conversations.

Benefits

- You can remain everyone's friend.
- Greater collaboration is often possible, as team members focus on getting along and being nice to each other.

Disadvantages

- Without honest feedback there is no long-term improvement for individuals or teams.
- Without healthy debate it can be hard to find the best solutions.
- You may default to this style when you want to avoid making others upset or angry.

Example

In this situation, your colleague has food in their teeth, and you choose not to tell them. You stay silent to avoid embarrassing or upsetting them, hoping someone else will point it out because they need to know.

MANIPULATIVE INSINCERITY

Manipulative insincerity occurs when you are more concerned about the impact on yourself, rather than about creating positive outcomes for others. The focus here is personal gain. It may be that you just don't care enough or cannot be bothered to expend the energy required to give candid feedback.

Alternatively, it might be that you fear being disadvantaged by someone else's improved performance, so you opt not to share genuine feedback. Or you might choose to give false praise in order to gain support or favour.

This is the style of the boss whom no-one trusts – the boss who will say what is needed to get what they want. A boss like this is also known as the 'political animal'.

Benefits

- People will like you.
- You are more likely to gain favour and build rapport with others.
- It can be a more politically savvy approach.

Disadvantages

- In the long term, both individuals and the organisation will experience a lack of progress and development.
- Tolerating underperformance lowers overall standards and demotivates the rest of the team.

Example

In this situation you again stay silent and do not tell our colleague that they have food in their teeth, but this time it is for your own benefit.

You either want them to look silly or you don't care enough if they do look silly so you say nothing.

OBNOXIOUS AGGRESSION

Obnoxious aggression, also known as 'front-stabbing', occurs when feedback is belittling, rude, aggressive, flippant or aimed at embarrassing the recipient.

People who act this way may not always intend to be hurtful, but their lack of empathy, care and emotional awareness can make their communication style condescending and ineffective. Often individuals may defend this style by claiming they were 'only joking'.

Unfortunately, the recipient usually does not find this type of communication funny. This boss is the 'jerk' who doesn't care about his or her team and doesn't listen.

Benefits

- It can result in immediate short-term action and results as individuals take direction and 'do as they are told'.
- This style is often used defensively and can hide uncertainty or a lack of confidence.
- People often listen to bullies (for a while).

Disadvantages

- In the long-term individuals lose confidence and stop growing and developing.
- This style is not conducive to teamwork or collaboration – more than likely it will create silos.
- It can be perceived as bullying.
- This feedback is often very personal, focusing on the person, not the behaviour, which ultimately does not improve performance.

Example

In this situation you tell your colleague that they have food in their teeth, but you do so in an embarrassing way.

You yell so everyone can hear: 'Hey Jo, did you forget to brush your teeth today? Looks like you still have last night's dinner stuck in there.'

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