Feedback Doesn’t Have to Hurt

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I’m Dawn Crawford
Owner BC/DC Ideas
Cary, NC
I’ve had over 120 bosses
120 bosses?!
• Full-service communications agency that works exclusively with nonprofits across the country

• **20+ years** of dedicated nonprofit experience paired with **10+ years** of corporate advertising experience

• bcdcideas.com or @bcdcideass
Services

Planning

Paid Advertising

Training

Websites

Videos

Design

Media Relations

Social Media
Vaccine Communications Warriors!
Vaccinated My Community

• Communications Team to launch COVID-19 vaccine a Wake County Government

• Reached 80% vaccination rate by August 2021

• Wake County was the site of President Biden’s COVID-19 vaccine rally in July ’21
Mind Set Check: The focus of this presentation

This is about **feedback**, review, critiques, changes, typos, whatever you call it **on daily work** - reports, plans, etc.

**NOT intended** as advice for HR, annual reviews, tough conversations, performance reviews.
• Gain skills on how to provide and receive feedback using emotional intelligence and kindness
• Effective ways of managing/providing feedback up and down
• How to work with troublesome workstyles
Commander >> Collaborator

• In a post-pandemic world, IZ teams are moving out of crisis mode.

• You are transitioning out of “commander” to “collaborator” to create well-functioning, sustainable teams.
The way forward is with kindness
Kind ≠ Nice

• Kind is an action

• Nice is a feeling
Finding kindness in your creative process will produce better work and better people.
Kindness Crisis
Why Feedback Matters
We need more joy at work
What do employees need?

Flexibility  Belonging  Purpose

Low employee moral is due to toxic feedback on work
Fussy
Flower
Arranging
Remember:
Feedback doesn’t have to hurt.
Building Your Team’s EQ
Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Ability to understand, use, and manage your own emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others, overcome challenges, and defuse conflict.
The Four Pillars Of Emotional Intelligence

01 Self-Awareness
- Recognize your own emotions.
- Understand how they influence your actions.

02 Self-Regulation
- Manage emotions in a healthy way.
- Adapt to changing circumstances.

03 Empathy
- Understand other people’s emotions.
- Offer comfort and support.

04 Social Skills
- Build and maintain relationships.
- Effective communication.
Why is this important for teams?

- Builds stronger relationships
- Efficient + honest communication
- Makes work suck less
Effective, Kind Feedback Leads to Higher EQ

- **Self-Awareness** of how feedback is given and its impacts
- **Empathy** of understanding how others receive feedback
- **Self-Regulation** to collaborate and find solutions
- **Social Skills** with new way to effectively communicate
Have you seen toxic feedback in your career?

How do you handle toxic feedback?
Why Feedback Hurts
We’ve received feedback all our lives

First smile as an infant when we finally pooped for the first time

High five for a job well done

Frowns and disapproving tones when we’ve missed the mark
Most humans have a negativity bias.
Negativity Bias

According to psychology, a negative bias is our tendency to remember negative situations or feedback more often and then obsess about them more often than not.

This thought process is also known as positive-negative asymmetry.
Negativity bias means we tend to focus on the bad comments and forget the positive ones.
Obsession with the negative helped our ancestors survive
Red Berries – Friend or Foe?
Our brains are simple sometimes.
They want to reduce risk and maximize reward.
Negative Bias Leads to Risk Avoidance
Risk avoidance also happens when your coworkers find flaws in creative work.

We focus on what needs to “change” instead of saying what we love about the idea.

We point out the danger of typos and grammatical errors.

We grunt to our clan mates that the threat of being misunderstood or ridiculed is in our future.
What happens when we receive too much negative feedback?

Our brain perceives a threat.
The amygdala is “hijacked” to prevent that threat.
Leading to reduced analytical thinking, creative insight, and problem-solving.
Risk Avoidance can contribute to anti-vaccine beliefs
Negative Environments

Freeze Brians

• Manifest as mental health challenges from anxiety to narcissism.
• Not brave enough to share our ideas or voice.
• We lose our ability to find a path to fix the problems.
• Our brains get tired.
Feedback Styles
Remember Feedback on daily work… ideas, presentations, reports, campaigns, etc.
The biggest risk of not managing the feedback styles around you is **BURNOUT.**
In working with over 100 bosses in 10 years, I’ve seen a lot of feedback styles. From harsh to kind, I’ve experienced them all.
I have discovered 8 different feedback styles. Only 1 is kind.
Spectrum of Kindness

Kind Collaborator

Perfect Passthrough

Vague Vocalist

Silent But Deadly

Landmine

DIYer

One And Done

Review Rager
Might Be One When You are **CALM**
Might Be One When You are **STRESSED**
Learn about all 8 styles in “Kindly Review”

How to manage the feedback styles around you – AKA your boss

How to fix your own feedback style

Cringy stories with each style

kindlyreview.com
3 Most Common Styles

One and Done
DIYer
Vague Vocalist
ONE AND DONE

This reviewer expects the first draft to be the only draft and does not understand or value the editing process.

This review style can be adapted to show the value of the editing process if the reviewer is a kind human.

Often folks who do not work with communications very often.
ONE AND DONE

How to GROW as a ONE AND DONE

• Trust that great ideas come from a messy process
• Understand that your input in the creative process is necessary and valued
• **Encourage the ideas you like to see**
• Realize that feelings are an essential part of creativity, not structure and format
DIYER

The work comes back wholly rewritten, with little time to collaborate on a rewrite.

This is the most destructive style of feedback. It leaves creatives demotivated to add creativity to the next piece of work.

Hardest to change.
DIYER

How to GROW as a DIYER

• You are not paid to do someone else’s job
• Include other viewpoints
• Experiment with taking a light hand on feedback
• Tell the creator the parts you like and want to keep
• Understand that it’s okay to fail as long as the team learns from it
VAGUE VOCALIST

They are vocal about wanting change but not specific enough for the creator to know what they are looking for. “Can you add a page about X?”

This type often leaves the creator confused about how to move forward.

Kind but confusing feedback style.
How to GROW as a Vague Vocalist

• Know that creators cannot read your mind
• Start with what you like about the idea
• Give your feedback vocally instead of over email or through track changes
• Be concrete about what you want to change — “I like it this way”
What is the goal here?
KIND COLLABORATOR

Has a clear vision and is honest when things need to change but accepts the creator’s creative contribution.

Ensures the creator is working in line with that vision.

Working with them is easy.
To BECOME a Kind Collaborator
• Encourage good work, sprinkle encouragement around like confetti
• Embrace your role in the creative process
• Make time for the thoughtful, kind review
• Be clear about your standards and process
• Collaborate to make an idea great
How does your feedback style impact your team?

Do you see styles in other people on your team?
The Positive Feedback Loop
Definitions

**CREATOR**
Person who makes a thing

**REVIEWER**
Person giving feedback
Most Feedback is Kind

• Working life is mostly about collaboration.

• It’s about learning to work with people and manage our pride to see the value of a group project.

• Work is about the melding of minds to make an idea great.
What is Kind Review?

Process of streamlining creative review to be:

- Collaborative
- Efficient
- Effective
- Kinder
Feedback should be used as a tool to improve an idea.
Giving Good Feedback
Words Matter

Cat Shelter Vaccine & Microchip Clinic Flyer

Let's make this look very market-y and fun. Bold colors. Cats and dogs. Let's bring in some fun.

HEADLINE: Vaccination & Microchip Clinic Saturday, May 6

Protection = LOVE
Vaccination & Microchip Clinic
SATURDAY, MAY 6
Get your cat or dog vaccinated and microchipped for an affordable price!

Pets/Owned Cats and Dogs
9 AM - 12 PM
8411 Garvey Drive, Suite 133C, Raleigh
Cats must be in carriers.
Dogs must be on a leash.

PRICE
- Rabies Vaccination $5*
- FVRCP (Cats - Distemper) Vaccination: $5
- DHPP (Dog - Distemper) Vaccination: $5
- Microchip $15
* The one-year rabies vaccine is available for animals with a valid and current vaccination certificate. The certificate must be displayed at check-in. Otherwise, the one-year rabies vaccine will be administered. We must have the certificate; the tag is not sufficient proof.

Feral Cats
12:30 - 1:30 PM
8411 Garvey Drive, Suite 109, Raleigh
Cats must be in a trap or carrier.

PRICE
- Rabies Vaccination $5
- One-year rabies vaccination only
With Clear Direction, I got a better product

• I messed up. Let me re-task this.
• New copy! New design - let's do something like this with dogs and cats
• In the SAFE Care Clinic colors
SAFE CARE
Spay and Neuter Clinic

VACCINATION AND MICROCHIP CLINIC

Saturday, May 6
8411 Garvey Drive | Suite 137C

Registration is required for this event. There are no refunds. The vaccination registration is good for May 6 only.

Register here: bit.ly/2yvax

Pets/Owned Cats and Dogs - 9 AM - 12 PM
PRICE
- Rabies Vaccination*: $5
- FVRCP (Cats - Distemper) Vaccination: $5
- DHPP (Dog - Distemper) Vaccination: $5
- Microchip: $15

Feral Cats - 12:30 - 1:30 PM
PRICE
Rabies Vaccination: $5 - One-year rabies vaccination only

Sponsored by the McLean Family in Memory of Jerry McLean and in Honor of Buddy the Feral Cat.

* The 3-year rabies vaccine is available for animals with a valid/unexpired vaccination certificate. The certificate must be displayed at check-in. Otherwise, the one-year rabies vaccine will be administered. We must have the certificate for this to be considered proof.
Polish the Idea to Make It Shine

• **Ask yourself:** Does your feedback improve the idea? Or does it fix it?

• Having a mindset that you are “fixing” your team’s work is unkind. To fix something means that it was broken in the first place.

• On the other hand, if you have a mindset of improvement, you can see how to brighten the highlights and make the product shine.
It’s always easier to edit than to create.
Good Feedback Includes

- Time
- Purpose
- Process
- Kindness
Feedback should always
Focus on what you LIKE
Then IMPROVE
Strength in Collaboration
The best products are the ones where we see all who created it.
It’s brave to share your ideas, but it’s braver to allow others to help you make them better.
You are in Control of Feedback

✓ Collaborate Fully
✓ Clarify When Necessary
✓ Defend Occasionally
GOALS

• Gaining skills on how to provide and receive feedback using emotional intelligence and kindness
• Learning effective ways of managing/providing feedback up and down
• Trying new ways to work with troublesome workstyles
Feedback should always

Focus on what you LIKE

Then IMPROVE
Be Kind
Sprinkle compliments like confetti!