



## Episode 63: A Framework for Giving Feedback

Welcome to In the Right Direction podcast, where we believe you get to choose what's on your plate, you can manage the overwhelm, and that change is possible. I'm your host, Deb Elbaum, and I'm here to share insights and strategies to increase your happiness, one baby step at a time. Let's dive in.

Hi everyone, it's Deb. Today, let's talk about giving feedback. Here are some questions to get your thinking started:

Who is one person you would like to give feedback to? What information would you like to share? What's getting in the way? And – last question – if you did have this conversation, what might be helpful about having it?

When I lead group coaching sessions about giving feedback, I start by asking people to complete this sentence. “When I think about giving feedback, the one word that comes to mind is:” what?

The answers range from “gift” to “necessary” to “anxiety.” People have a lot of thoughts and emotions about giving feedback.

We've been told that giving feedback is a gift, and we might not want to hurt someone's feelings.

We know feedback might ultimately help a relationship, and we might not be exactly sure what feedback to share.

Today's framework is a way to give feedback in a structured and clear way. It's a framework to help you prepare for a feedback conversation.

Productive feedback conversations require pre-thinking. If you want to show up intentionally for these conversations, it takes clarity. You need to be clear about the goal of the conversation, what you're sharing, and what you're asking.

Getting clear in our own head first helps us communicate clearly, calmly, and confidently.

The framework I'll explain today is one for you to work through ahead of time so that you can feel ready, intentional, and curious. Because in addition to sharing information, the most productive feedback conversations also involve curiosity.

When you give feedback, you're sharing your perspective -- how you see a situation. Please remember that it's only one piece of the whole. You do not know what the other person is thinking, how they came to their conclusion, or what prompted their behavior.

My framework involves both sharing information and being curious. It also brings in the most important piece of communication: our body language and energy. In other words, how we show up.

When a meeting matters, you'll want to bring a certain energy. Body language is a crucial and often overlooked piece of preparing for a conversation. This framework will help you decide how you want to show up, so that you can give the feedback in a way that's authentic and in your integrity.

I've given you a broad overview of the framework. Now, here's the name I call it.

I call it the 3-3-3 Framework. A super simple and clear name that represents the different pieces to think through to prepare for conversations that matter, whether feedback conversations or other high-stakes conversations.

The 3-3-3 framework has 3 pieces. Each number 3 represents something to think through and write down ahead of time.

The first 3 represents your telling pieces. In a feedback conversation, you will share your point of view and perspective. As you think through this piece, ask yourself this question:

What 3 things do I want this person to know?

After all, there are many things that you could share with someone. If you don't take time to be clear about your telling pieces, you can quickly get off track.

This first 3 is your opportunity to get clear on your talking points, and your talking points will depend on your goal for the conversation. Even with a feedback conversation, there are different goals you might have.

Your goal of the conversation could be to simply to give feedback and let the person digest the information. Your goal could be to name the problem and move into problem solving. Or your goal could be to gather information to better understand the challenge.

One of your telling pieces might be the reason for the conversation. For example, you might say, "I'm sharing this feedback because my job is to help you grow as a leader."

A telling piece might be to share data around behaviors and tell the behaviors you have noticed or seen.

When you share data, please focus on the behaviors and not the person. For example, instead of saying something like, "It seems like you don't care about your work," please describe the behavior. For example, you might say, "When I ask you about a project, it takes a few days for you to reply."

The same holds true when you share feedback from others. Share the behaviors – what someone said, what they did, or what their body language was.

In addition to sharing a goal or data, one of your 3 telling pieces might be sharing your expectations to provide clarity. You might say what the next steps are. You might share company expectations. Or you might share background information to provide context.

You might also want to include gratitude as one of your telling pieces. You might thank someone for their commitment to the work, or for being a learner.

As you can see, there are many telling pieces that you could choose. Your job and responsibility is to think about the telling pieces that are most relevant, clear, and move the conversation in the direction you want it to go. That is what's in your control as the feedback giver.

The next 3 of the 3-3-3 Framework is the opportunity to be curious.

For this piece, you will think of 3 questions you want to ask. A feedback conversation should involve 2-way communication. You get to share, and you get to be curious and ask questions.

For this piece, think about what you're really curious about. It could be many things – and by clarifying your questions ahead of time, you're more likely to learn what you really want to know.

When asking questions to better understand someone, I recommend you ask open-ended questions. These are questions that start with one of 5 words: who, what, when, where, and how. You'll notice I did not use the word "why" here. When people are asked 'why' questions about their behavior, it often makes them feel defensive.

If you want to be curious about someone's reasoning or approach, please switch your 'why' questions to what or how questions.

As you craft your 3 questions, keep in mind that different questions invite different feelings and different ways of thinking. As the leader of the conversation, take the time to think through the different questions you could ask, and then choose the ones that support the goal of the meeting.

For example, if your goal is to share data and understand the person's thought process, you might ask a question like, "What were the different steps of your thought process?"

If your goal is to move into problem solving, you might ask a question like, "What information would be helpful to figure this out?"

Questions are tools to help our thinking, and you get to choose the tools that are most helpful for this meeting.

The last 3 in our 3-3-3 Framework is about your body language – your presence and energy. For this last piece, you will choose 3 words for how you want to show up. In the meeting, would you like to be curious, compassionate, and gentle? Or direct, calm, and solutioning?

Choosing your 3-word intention helps you show up that way. And here's the key: after you choose your 3 words, take a moment and anchor them in your body. Find the body position that reflects the presence and energy you want to bring.

Doing this can help you shift from anxious to more confident, from frustrated to curious, and from vague to focused.

And the more confident, curious, and focused you can be, the clearer the feedback conversation can be. Using the 3-3-3 framework will help you be an intentional leader. It will also help the feedback recipient better understand what you mean, what you want, and how you can partner together – and that is a gift.

Thank you so much for listening and being part of my community. Here's a special offer: I have a one-pager explaining the 3-3-3 framework that I'm happy to send to you. Simply email me at [deb@debelbaum.com](mailto:deb@debelbaum.com) and ask.

And if you want to chat more about how to build your feedback giving skills, go to my website [debelbaum.com](http://debelbaum.com) and schedule a consult. I look forward to it. I'm here to help you create your best self at home and at work, so that you're confident you're moving in the right direction for you.

Until next time!