

Feedback Wheel

Based on the work of Terry Real



Purpose of the Feedback Wheel

- A structured conversation is an excellent tool for learning to negotiate difficult, challenging, conflict ridden conversations.
- In the face of these moments, most people can listen for about 5-6 sentences, maximum. When we feel unheard, we have a tendency to get louder, repeat ourselves, or pull in other details to re-engage the listener. We tend to over-talk believing that more detail will make a more "win-able" argument. This technique offers a path to repair and connection.

Before Beginning Remember

- Get centered in your "Wise Adult" – meaning, get centered in the part of you that is flexible, understanding, non-reactionary, non-defensive, and considerate.
- Tone is the most important part of your message. If you can't drop the tone, don't speak now. Take responsibility to be in a non-triggered emotional space.
- Remember love. This is the person you love you are speaking to.

Set Up: Two Different Roles

1. The Listener Role

- You are like a customer service agent. If someone said to you, "My microwave is broken." You wouldn't say, "Well my toaster is broken."
- Put your own needs aside. Think less about objective reality than about understanding your partner's experience. Be curious about what it is like to be them.
- Keep your side of the relationship clean. Own what you can. Listen with an open heart. Always say, "I" and not "you."
- Turn points of contention into curiosity. Let go of being right for the purpose of being connected.
- Listening respectfully doesn't imply agreement. These are two separate things.

2. The Speaker Role

- To speak succinctly and thoughtfully. 2-3 sentences, not paragraphs. Think it through before you speak.

Steps for the Speaker:

1. Make a contract first:
 - Ask "Is now a good time to talk?" Don't have a conversation without first agreeing that it's a good time.
2. In a sentence or two, say what happened without editorializing.
 - "I noticed _____" or "When you _____"
3. State your thoughts or interpretations in a sentence or two:
 - "What I made up about this is _____" or "What I tell myself about this is _____"
 - This is where you explain your thoughts about why the conflict happened. This allows your partner to understand your thought process. It is important that you own this part as your own interpretation, not absolute truth.
4. State your feelings about this:
 - Use short feeling words like sad, mad, scared, angry, happy and hurt.
 - Be careful not to say, "I feel like..." because it is not a feeling, it is a thought. For example, say, "I felt lonely." "I feel sad."
5. Make a request for what you would like instead:
 - Think about what you want. Is your partner capable of your request? Is it feasible and reasonable? Be clear and simple with your request. If he meets even part of your request, say, "Thank you."
 - Making a request does not guarantee the request will be met. It is the responsibility of the person making the request to handle disappointment if the entire request is not met.

Steps for the Listener:

1. Feed back what you heard:
 - "What I hear you saying is". This validates to the speaker that you listened.
 - Ask, "Did I get that right?" and if so ask, "Is there anything else you would like to tell me?"
2. Acknowledge whatever you can:
 - Acknowledge something in the speaker's description that you can own or understand.
 - Remember, this is a person you care deeply about.
 - Remember, you can be right, or you can be connected. Which do you choose?
3. Making a request does not guarantee the request will be met.
 - In the speaker's request, what *can* you give? What can you agree to?
 - Give as much as you can. Find something you can own.