

Good morning, everybody. Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.

Today I wanted to talk about something that I think probably most of you, if not all of you, find difficult and that's giving good feedback and getting good results from that feedback. Whether it's your annual employee review program or quarterly, if some of you do it, or just trying to get some corrective measures to an employee along the way, it seems like feedback is always hard to give and a lot of times doesn't get the result that you wanted to get as well.

So, I was recently reading an article and it really crystallized what I thought was a great way to approach feedback and the title was to shift from critic to ally. And I thought, well, that's an interesting approach. So, how do we do that? How do you shift from critic to ally in giving this feedback?

And it was really a two-step approach and makes perfect sense once you think about it. But step one was to empathize, and in empathizing acknowledge that the employee's struggling in some way and to acknowledge that and maybe to share how frustrating or how hard that can be for them or the task can be for them or whatever they're trying to accomplish can be for them.

And by doing so, by showing that empathy, that allows you to get on their side and approach the problem together hopefully. The second step in that empathizing pattern was to express confidence. To say the employee, I'm sure that there's a way around this and I'm sure you're capable of doing what we're trying to do or what you're trying to accomplish and capable of handling this in the future. By expressing that confidence, hopefully you pump them up a little bit and you get them to feel that whatever the problem is, it's not an insurmountable kind of problem.

The third part of empathizing is really to ask permission. Permission for what? Well, permission to really find out the root issues or the root causes and permission to sort of sit on their side and try to find a solution. Permission to really help them and guide them to a better place, whatever the issue is.

So, that's all step one. The empathy thing, to get off your two sides and for you to go join the employees' side in trying to look at the problem, find solutions, and gain confidence that they can accomplish that solution.

So then step two, they call it finding an energizing outcome, or finding an energizing solution to the problem. So then think about two parts of that. Of course, one is finding the solution, how can the employee do better? How can they accomplish whatever they're struggling to accomplish with? How can they change their attitude, whatever the idea is?

But by finding an energizing outcome, I think what you're trying to think of something that will motivate them, something that feels good. I'm thinking of an employee maybe that comes to work in the field for your company and maybe they're used to just showing up, working for the paycheck, and not really being motivated. Perhaps you can paint the picture in a case like that, of instead of the team you're working with looking down on you and throwing arrows at you, maybe there's a camaraderie there that they would enjoy and maybe there's a pride of leaving the workplace with your chest pumped up, feeling like you've really accomplished a lot or done something. So, by finding that energizing outcome, finding a result that they could shoot for that makes them feel better, that makes them more whole, that maybe allows them to take the next step in advancement.

So, finding that energizing outcome and then tracking the steps to that. Now that you've identified the energizing outcome, what are the steps from getting to where you are today to that future better place that they want? And another way of thinking about it is really it's just about finding the win/win in the situation. You're looking for a win for the company, but you also need to look for the win for the employees, wherein the change of behavior that you're looking for, the change of results that you're looking for, is the win for the employee.

And if you can find the win/win and communicate that well to the employee, I think you have a lot better chance of getting the results that you want. So again, talking about feedback, summarizing it very quickly. Trying to shift from critic to ally.

Number one, empathize. Make sure you're leaving your side and going to the employees' side to look at the problem and find the solutions. And number two, find that energizing outcome that is a win/win for the employee and the company. So, thanks for tuning in today, Dennis Engelbrecht, Digging Deeper.