

## **Leadership: Seven Ways of Receiving Feedback that will Stall Your Career**

*“We all need people who will give us feedback. That’s how we improve.”*  
– **Bill Gates**

Receiving feedback is not always easy. It is also normal and natural to feel uncomfortable and even defensive at such times. However, constructive feedback is also a key way in which we develop and grow in our career, leadership and lives. And the consequences of not listening to and receiving feedback well can be costly. I have seen people whose careers derailed because of this one factor.

### **Here are 7 ways to not receive feedback**

Do any of these seem familiar?

#### **1) Denial**

Denial is when we don’t even acknowledge that the feedback could have some truth in it. It is a total obliteration of the message and sometimes even the messenger. Some responses include, “That is not true or accurate at all.” “This is absolute rubbish or I don't agree with it at all.”

#### **2) Blame**

The blame game robs us off the vital opportunity to take responsibility, be accountable and learn from the feedback. A typical response here is, “It was X’s fault that I was unable to deliver on time.” Or "So and so did or didn't do ...."

#### **3) Excuses**

Excuses, like blame, typically externalizes the cause of what it is that we need to learn or put right. It keep us stuck in the same groove and and takes away our agency to grow and adapt our behavior for better, more respectful outcomes. A common ‘explanation’ – “This did not happen because of such and such.” Watch out that the very plausible sounding explanation isn't really an excuse!

#### **4) Ego**

Seeing feedback as an attack on your ego can also block us from receiving useful feedback. A response here can be, “I don’t care about his opinion anyways.” While it is natural to feel that the ego has taken a dent, this is not a helpful mindset to get stuck on. It is also the ego, which gets hooked into the denial, blame, excuses, getting angry and other games.

*“In a growth mindset, challenges are exciting rather than threatening. So rather than thinking, oh, I’m going to reveal my weaknesses, you say, wow, here’s a chance to grow.”* – **Carol Dweck**

#### **5) Anger**

Having a short fuse and getting angry will ensure that as a manager and leader, people stop sharing vital information and telling you things you need to know. An example here could be the emerging safety issue that has been noted but people are too afraid

to share. Another example is getting angry about any 'negative' feedback received in a 360 degree process and then vowing to find who the outliers were so you can deal to them! An attacking response can be "Well – they are not perfect either!"

#### **6) Overwhelm**

This is when you only focus on the 'negative' feedback, get so overwhelmed that you lose perspective and now feel that you are not doing anything right! Instead we need to build on our strengths, become more mindful of the identified behavior and take corrective action.

*"Mistakes should be examined, learned from, and discarded; not dwelled upon and stored."* – **Tim Fargo**

#### **7) Lack of action**

After getting enriching feedback, the worst thing you could do is to ignore it and not do anything about it. This lack of action to take in feedback and flex and grow your behavior and yourself could be the ultimate career, [leadership](#) and life limiter. What other responses can you think of which are limiting?

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