

THE ART OF DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

NOTES FROM THE BUSINESS HABITAT PODCAST

(FORMERLY 'CONVERSATIONS WITH SAM DEAN' PODCAST)

EPISODE #4

PRIOR TO GIVING FEEDBACK



- **Ask yourself** - what is the main behaviour point I want to address?
- **Think about why** - why do you want to address it (and not just because it annoys you)
- **Take notes** - jot down a couple of points to go through in preparation - it's ok to refer to your notes
- **Focus on the good** - have something positive to say and note what they're doing well
- **Feedback close to the behaviour** - provide feedback as close to the behaviour as possible that you're feeding back on
- **Only if it's visible** - ideally only give feedback on behaviour you've seen yourself
- **What is the change?** Think about what could be changed to improve
- **What can you suggest?** Have a suggestion ready to give, if required
- **What does success look like?** What would success look like if the behaviour changes

WHEN GIVING FEEDBACK

- **Ask permission to give feedback** - "Hey would it be ok to give you some feedback on...."
- **Create the space and time to do it** - "Do you have 15 minutes now or can we catch up later....?"
- **Get to the point straight away**
- **Be clear in what the actual behaviour/problem is** that you're feeding back on. "Hey in that meeting you seemed angry, that's ok but walking out in the middle of it is not"
- **Make sure you're on the same page** - get them to repeat back what they understand the issue to be. Don't move forward until this is articulated
- **Get their thoughts and feedback** - and listen!!
- **Suggest a different approach** and a check-in if required
- **Be kind** - receiving feedback can be uncomfortable for most people



RECEIVING FEEDBACK

- Breathe
- Be open to the feedback
- Create the space if needed - schedule another time to discuss it
- Listen to what they're saying
- Allow them to finish
- Check-in with what they're feeding back: "ok what I heard was that leaving the meeting was not ok"
- Clarify any suggestions received and what they look like
- If you're feeling it's unjustified, take a breath and feed that back
- If it's too hard, ask for space. Say "thanks for the feedback, can I get back to you?"
- Remember giving feedback is also uncomfortable and they're only trying to help



TIPS FOR PREPARATION + DELIVERY



Prepare a mini agenda

When writing it, ask yourself:

- **What is my intention** going into this conversation
- **What is the problem** I'm trying to solve - why am I having this conversation. Mentioned above, what does success look like (to help set expectations going forward)
- **How can I ask for permission** to have the conversation
- **How can I connect** with the person quickly before I correct
- **How could I bring some fresh new ideas** or perspective to the conversation
- **REHEARSE**

DURING THE MEETING

- Set expectations
- Breathe
- Count to three before talking
- Always check-in - "can I check in with what I said" or "the story I heard is..."
- **As always, be kind and empathetic**

Remember

- Discomfort only lasts eight seconds
- The consequences of not having the conversation can last a lot longer