

Feedforward

discoveryinaction.com.au

originated by
Marshall Goldsmith

- 1 Describe your goal - simply + clearly



I'd like to
be better
at ...

- 2 Ask for 2 suggestions
Encourage creative ideas
- 3 Listen carefully
write suggestions down
- 4 Say 'thank you' Nothing more!
Thanks
- 5 Repeat! Ask other people
No excuses or defensiveness

Feedforward

The concept

Marshall Goldsmith has come up with the extremely simple, yet powerful method – *feedforward* – to gain ideas for improvement from colleagues. As the name suggests it is a variation of the concept of feedback, but with a forward-looking focus where you ask ‘what can I do more of or better in the future?’ rather than asking ‘how well did I do in the past?’.

Why it's useful

It can be particularly challenging to both give and receive feedback. There are two significant problems with receiving feedback:

1. It can hurt. Neuroscience tells us that we have a biological reaction to feedback that is akin to experiencing a threat where we might go into flight/fight mode.
2. It is in the past and we can't do anything about the past.

For these reasons it is also difficult to give someone feedback for fear of how they may react. *Feedforward* provides a much safer and positive space for people to gain insights from colleagues about opportunities for improvement.

How/when to apply it

Either when you are seeking insights from colleagues about improvement areas or you have identified some development areas and wish to seek concrete ideas from colleagues. Simply asking questions such as:

- What would you like more of from me over the next 3 – 6 months?
- What specific ideas do you have about how I could do XYZ?
- What do you think I could do in the next few months to get better at XYZ?

When asking such questions it is important to be genuinely curious in people's ideas and thoughts. You don't have to agree with them, but just listen carefully and ask prompts to better understand. It is up to you what you choose to take on and implement.

Finally it is important to thank people. You will likely be amazed at people's generosity and thoughtfulness when their opinion is sought!

