



“To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.”  
~ Tony Robbins

### Session Objectives:

1. Understand how assertive communication strengthens feedback
2. Examine your mindset and how it affects giving and receiving feedback

### Being Assertive

Assertiveness is a **social skill that relies heavily on effective communication while simultaneously respecting the thoughts and wishes of others.**



### Common Blocks and Challenges

1. We don't know what we \_\_\_\_\_
2. We're unsure of our emotions
3. We may feel our \_\_\_\_\_ don't matter
4. We want to be liked at all costs; worried about \_\_\_\_\_
5. We become flustered, not \_\_\_\_\_ effectively
6. Or have experienced excessive \_\_\_\_\_ in the past
7. We're scared of saying the wrong thing
8. We fear \_\_\_\_\_
9. Or are afraid of what people will think

~ Richard Banks, Author

How many affect you?





## Assertive Rights

Being assertive goes beyond our language. It means understanding our rights as a human being. It means feeling empowered to think, feel, speak and act in ways that are authentic and transparent, while being respectful to others.

Review the following statements about your rights. Consider how comfortable you are asserting them and place a checkmark in the appropriate column, using the following scale:

1 = Very Uncomfortable    2 = Uncomfortable    3 = Comfortable    4 = Very Comfortable

I have the right to:		1	2	3	4
1.	Respect and dignity				
2.	Change my mind without justification				
3.	Judge my own thoughts, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors				
4.	Make my own decisions and deal with the ramifications of them				
5.	Be illogical or irrational				
6.	Say "no" (reject requests) to others without justification or guilt				
7.	Feel all my emotions and express them appropriately				
8.	Say, "I don't know"				
9.	Say, "I don't care"				
10.	Disagree with others; I am entitled to my own opinions				
11.	Ask questions when I don't understand regardless of the audience or situation				
12.	Feel proud of my accomplishments, achievements, and successes				
13.	Ask for what I want, knowing others can say "no"				
14.	Feel good about myself, my actions and my life				
15.	Not offer excuses or explanations for my actions				
16.	Feel happy and be happy				
17.	Set my own priorities				
18.	Take the time I need before I act, respond, or make a decision				
19.	Be independent of others' approval				
20.	Be alone				





### **OPTIONAL: Change Your Non-Assertive Belief**

1. Identify a non-assertive belief that creates negative consequences, particularly when providing feedback to someone:
2. Where does this belief come from?
3. What negative consequences does this belief cause to you (or others)?
4. What is a new belief that will allow you to be more assertive?

### **Use Assertive Communication**

= Equal rights, direct, respectful, aligned words/tone/body language

- Use \_\_\_\_\_
  - I want...
  - I think...
  - I need...
  - I expect...
- Use \_\_\_\_\_ as opposed to subjective one
- Make \_\_\_\_\_ and avoid vague directives
- Express your \_\_\_\_\_ honestly, without being dramatic, avoid exaggerated statements
  - I feel \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_





### **ACTIVITY: Change the Language**

1. My boss is a micromanager.
2. We are so understaffed, it's ridiculous.
3. Fred is a problem, and no one is addressing it.
4. I guess I'll just finish the project myself, no one on my team is stepping up.
5. I just can't rely on other departments to help.
6. You can't talk to your co-workers that way.
7. I want to collaborate with other leaders, but their responsiveness is terrible.

"I learned that *courage* was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it.

The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid,

but he who conquers that fear."

~ Nelson Mandela



### **RESOURCE: Should I speak up?**

Consider a situation in which you wanted to speak up and provide feedback, but didn't. Then answer the following questions.

- What do you care about...values, principles, facts, perspectives that you wanted to share (i.e., what was the gap between what you wanted and what occurred)?
  - My Want?
  - A Need?
  - An Expectation?
- How did you feel at that moment?
- What are the consequences to you or to others if you don't speak up?
- How could you communicate the message from an "I" point of view? With facts?





## Receive Feedback Gracefully

### 13 Ways We Deflect

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. Play _____ | 8. Attack      |
| 2. Take _____ | 9. _____       |
| 3. Minimize   | 10. Deflect    |
| 4. _____      | 11. Invalidate |
| 5. Avoid      | 12. _____      |
| 6. _____      | 13. Exaggerate |
| 7. Counter    |                |

### Remember SCARF

The following are areas that cause a "threat" response in our brain. (Research by David Rock)

- S \_\_\_\_\_
- C \_\_\_\_\_
- A \_\_\_\_\_
- R \_\_\_\_\_
- F \_\_\_\_\_

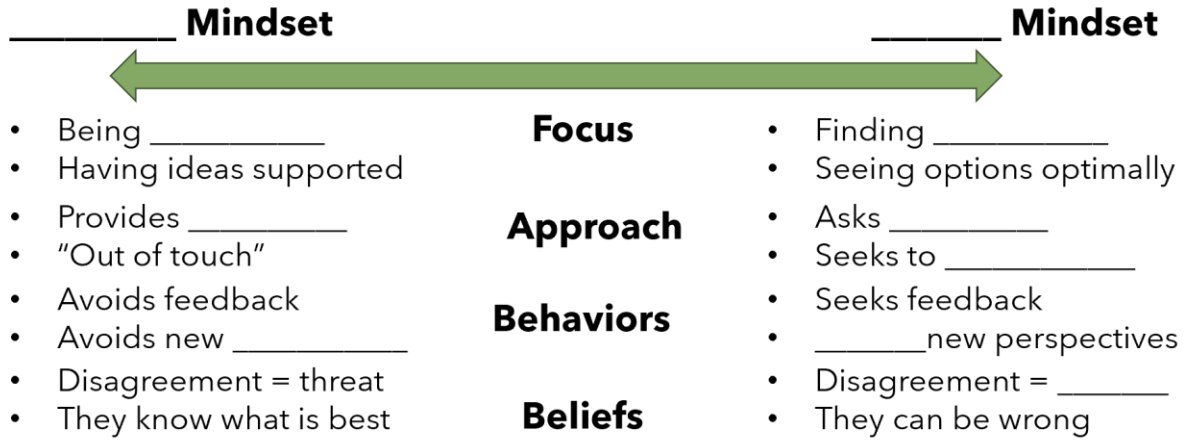
## Examine Your Mindset

### Mindset #1



Consider a time recently either at work or in your personal life when you were closed to another's' perspective, ideas and/or suggestions. What was the situation? What was the outcome?





From, Success Mindsets, by Ryan Gottfredson

### A Cautionary Tale



Know that when individuals assess their own mindset, they have a tendency to \_\_\_\_\_ that they are open and \_\_\_\_\_ the times they are \_\_\_\_\_.



When individuals assess the mindset of others, they have a tendency to \_\_\_\_\_ the times they are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the times that they are \_\_\_\_\_.

### 2 Reasons we are closed:

- 1.
- 2.





**RESOURCE: Mindset Self-Assessment**

I can sometimes stubbornly and illogically hold on to my own point of view	1	2	3	4	5	I am always open to the possibility that I could be wrong
I prefer to listen to ideas that support my own thoughts and opinions	1	2	3	4	5	I actively seek out ideas that disconfirm my thoughts and opinions
I am primarily concerned with validating my perspectives	1	2	3	4	5	I have a genuine fear of missing important perspectives
I am quick to judge	1	2	3	4	5	I am willing to suspend judgment for a time to appropriately evaluate another point of view
I tend to lead with my best thinking without exploring different points of view	1	2	3	4	5	I seek to explore different points of view to ensure that I am seeing myself, others and the situation as accurately as possible
Typically, I am confident that I have the best answers	1	2	3	4	5	I recognize that I likely have not taken in all relevant information
I am prone to give answers	1	2	3	4	5	I am prone to ask questions
I have a tendency to presume and be assertive with presumptions	1	2	3	4	5	I have a tendency to ask to ensure my presumptions are accurate
I don't always seek to understand what others are thinking and may be out of touch with how other people see things	1	2	3	4	5	I always seek to understand what others are thinking and I am in touch with how other people see things
I primarily want to be told that what I'm doing is the right course of action	1	2	3	4	5	I want to find out if I or others are doing something wrong or am standing in the way of achieving goals
I avoid criticism, or, if receive criticism, get defensive and/or quick to justify it away	1	2	3	4	5	I actively seek out feedback
I am willing to fight to demonstrate if I am right	1	2	3	4	5	I am willing to fight to find out what is true
I see being right as being a winner and being wrong as being a loser	1	2	3	4	5	I see getting the decision right as being the winner (even if it involves changing thinking) and getting the decision wrong as being the loser
I am unwilling to have ideas challenged and become frustrated when they are	1	2	3	4	5	I am more than willing to have my ideas challenged, and become curious when they are



## Giving & Receiving Feedback, Part 2



I directly or indirectly discourage others from telling me when I could be wrong	1	2	3	4	5	I encourage others to tell me when I am wrong
I see disagreements as threats	1	2	3	4	5	I see disagreements as opportunities for learning
I may block others from speaking and do not leave space for others to express their thoughts and ideas	1	2	3	4	5	I am often more interested in listening than speaking and encourage others to express their thoughts and ideas
It is challenging for me to hold two opposing thoughts, views or concepts simultaneously in my mind	1	2	3	4	5	I can hold two opposing thoughts, views, or concepts simultaneously in my mind, and am able to go back and forth between them to assess their relative merits
Typically, I am more uncomfortable being around those who know a lot more than I do	1	2	3	4	5	I am thrilled to be around people who know more than I do

### Mindset #2 Reality Check:

Reinforce your openness:

- Ask others for their \_\_\_\_\_
- Change your \_\_\_\_\_
- Consider your mental \_\_\_\_\_
- Examine your \_\_\_\_\_ habits



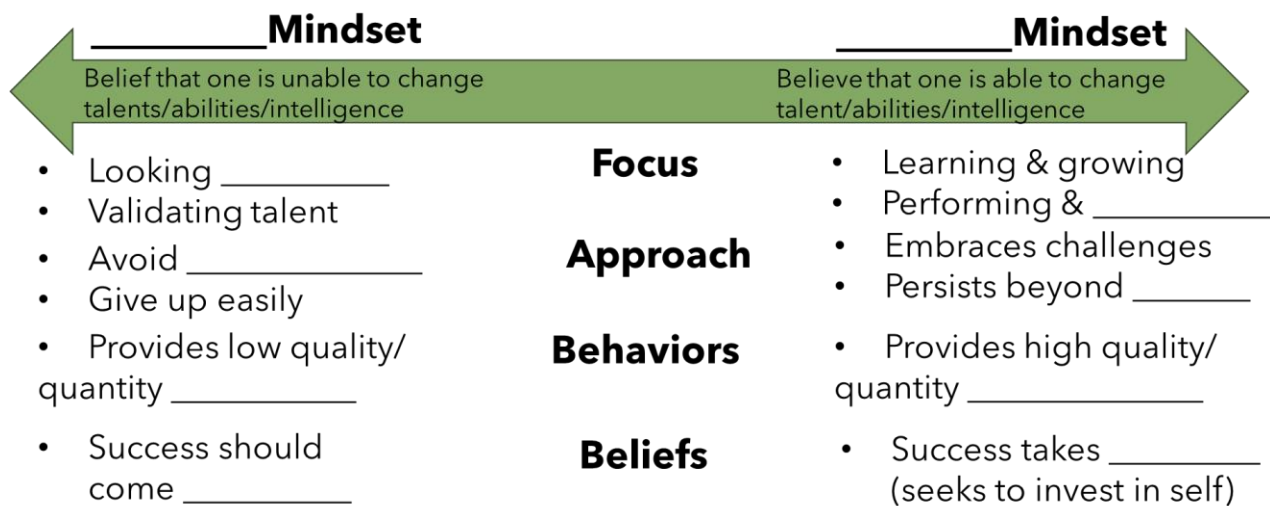




## Mindset #2

Have you ever....(check all that apply):

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Thought...."This is who I am, I can't really change?"</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Said, "I'm not good at [fill-in-the-blank] so why spend time on it?"</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Felt like you want "out" after not doing as well at something as you would have liked?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Felt embarrassed to admit to a mistake?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stuck with something familiar when faced with a choice to learn a new approach?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Felt like you need to "look good" to others?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lost interest in a task if it didn't come naturally to you?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Given excuses or placed blame rather than accepting ownership (e.g., "I didn't have enough time." "There were not enough resources." "I didn't wasn't sure what to do.")?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Felt like you needed to prove your intelligence, talent or superiority?</li> </ul> |
|--|---|



From, Success Mindsets, by Ryan Gottfredson





### Shifting to Growth Application

What is one area in which you have a fixed mindset about yourself, your skills, knowledge or abilities?

Where did that belief come from?

What 3 micro actions could strengthen your abilities in this area?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What can you tell yourself that is a more growth-oriented mindset?

### Strategies for Growth


- Notice others with a growth mindset
- Seek out little wins
- Engage in positive self talk: "I'm learning..." "I'm becoming..." "I'm not there yet."
- Redefine genius associated with hard work
- Disassociate criticism from failure
- See challenges like weight training
- Become realistic about learning something new


Circle several you'd like to try.







## What to do Instead: Be Graceful and Composed

 \_\_\_\_\_

 Notice your \_\_\_\_\_

 Seek to \_\_\_\_\_; ask \_\_\_\_\_

 Express \_\_\_\_\_

## Tips to Breathe (aka take a Pause)

- Breathing brings oxygen to your brain. It allows you time to bring your thoughts and emotions to the surface.
- When you're experiencing strong emotions, being calm, collaborative and focused on problem solving is extremely challenging.
- Pauses can be seconds, minutes, or a day; if you need time to process--take ownership over the timeframe; set a time to follow up.
- Breathing and pausing allows you to respond rather than react. This is a choice that must be made deliberately.

## Notice Your Thoughts

- ⇒ Be an observer of your thoughts and reactions when others provide feedback.
- ⇒ Negative emotions are caused by your thoughts.
- ⇒ Remember the SCARF model and examine what might be triggering a threat response.
- ⇒ Be open about your fears (if possible) and/or understand yourself what you are making the feedback "mean" about you.
- ⇒ Recognize if or when you go into "self-criticism mode" (aka beating yourself up over mistakes and/or actions).





## Seek to Understand

- Remain calm.
- Try to separate the content from the messenger and/or the way the message was delivered. *Find the nugget of truth or learning.*
- Avoid reacting defensively and/or attempting to rationalize your actions.
- Ask questions to understand.
- Press for details or examples (in a non-defensive manner).



## Express Gratitude

Feedback is a gift and those that can give and receive it have the strongest and most trusting relationships with others. Be graceful and grateful for the opportunity to learn.

## Or when you don't know what to say...

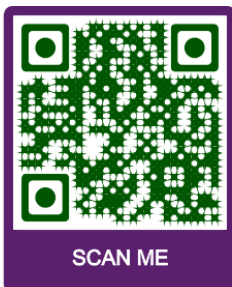
Here are some phrases to say when you're caught off guard:

- "Thank you for sharing your point of view. Let me process this for a bit."
- "That's an interesting perspective. Tell me more."
- "I appreciate you sharing your thoughts with me."
- "I didn't realize that. Thank you for letting me know."



My **Action Plan** to strengthen my ability to give challenging feedback or accept feedback gracefully is:

- 1.
- 2.



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