

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: Giving and Receiving Feedback Constructively Peg Carlson UNC School of Government

#### What is your experience?

Think of a **memorable** performance feedback experience.

- What was it?
- When was it?
- What made it memorable?

Share with a partner (3 minutes each)

#### A (somewhat) universal truth . . .

 When we give feedback, we notice the receiver isn't good at receiving it.



When we <u>receive</u> feedback, we notice the giver isn't good at giving it.



## How are we doing in the feedback department?

#### According to a 2011 survey:

- 36% of managers complete appraisals thoroughly and on time
- 55% of employees said their most recent review was unfair or inaccurate
- 25% said they dread performance appraisals more than anything else in their working lives

Source: Globoforce.com



# WHAT MAKES FEEDBACK CONVERSATIONS CHALLENGING?

#### We notice different things

 We spend as little of our mental energy as we have to in order to get the job done.

 We take shortcuts and make assumptions about each other



#### We create different stories

I talked to Jeff about his performance

Anita talked to me about my performance





#### Each of us is the star of our own life

 93% of American drivers rate themselves as better than average

Half of adults admit to texting while driving



#### Instructions for small group activity

- 1. Form a small group of 6-8 people and select one person to act as recorder.
- 2. Take turns describing what you see in the photo on the next screen. Do this quickly—you don't have to reach agreement.
- 3. The recorder should write down all the different observations the people in your group make. Number your list.



#### What do you see happening?



Assumptions are things we take for granted. Assumptions are part of our system of beliefs, and they can be true or false.

Example: Email always gets delivered correctly.

- Inferences are conclusions we reach about something we don't know based on things we do know (or think we know). They can be true or false.
- Example: If your colleague says that he will send you an email by 8:30 am and at 8:30 am it's not in your inbox, you might infer that your colleague did not keep his word.

Attributions are special kinds of inferences about people's motives. They can be true or false.

Example: If you inferred that your colleague did not keep his word, then you might attribute to him that he was lazy, didn't care about the project, or wanted you to fail.

Directly observable data is sensory information (what you can see, hear, touch, etc.) that has no extra meaning added. It is the way a video or audio device might record an event.

#### Two people, two interpretations

	Person One	Person Two
Observable Information	You ask your colleague to send you the email by 8:30 a.m. and it did not arrive.	You ask your colleague to send you the email by 8:30 a.m. and it did not arrive.
Assumption	Email accurately addressed is delivered immediately and accurately.	Email accurately addressed can be delayed or misdelivered.
Inference	My colleague didn't keep his word.	My colleague's email didn't get through.
Attribution	My colleague doesn't care about this project.	

#### Small group activity, part 2:

- 1. Return with your group to the list of observations you made about the photo.
- Together, go through the list and mark each item as DO (directly observable) or A (assumption, inference, or attribution).
- Count the number of items that are directly observable and divide by total to get percentage.



#### We All Go Up the Ladder

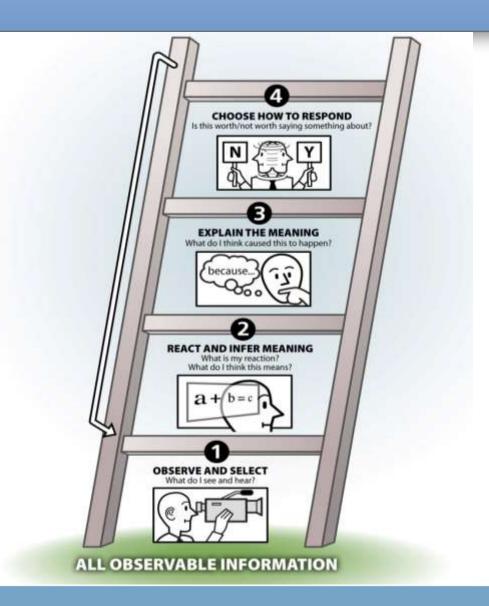
Assumptions

Inferences

Attributions



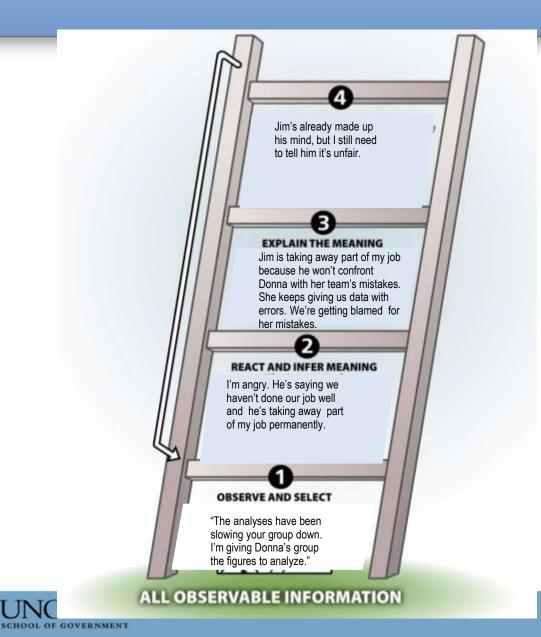
#### Ladder of Inference



#### Jim says to Hank:

"Hank, your group's been working really hard and doing good work, but the analyses have been slowing your group down. I'm giving Donna's group the figures to analyze. You won't need to do it."

#### Hank's Ladder of Inference



## "LOWERING YOUR LADDER" IS THE FIRST STEP

### Giving and receiving feedback effectively starts with what's in your head . . .



Before anything comes out your mouth



## When we have feedback to share, we often have this mindset:

I understand, you don't. I'm right, you're wrong.
I will win.

NO.

You're wrong so just sit there in your wrongness and be wrong.



#### Shifting our mindset is the first step:

I understand some things. So do you. Let's learn and move forward together.





#### You'll be on safer footing if you . . .

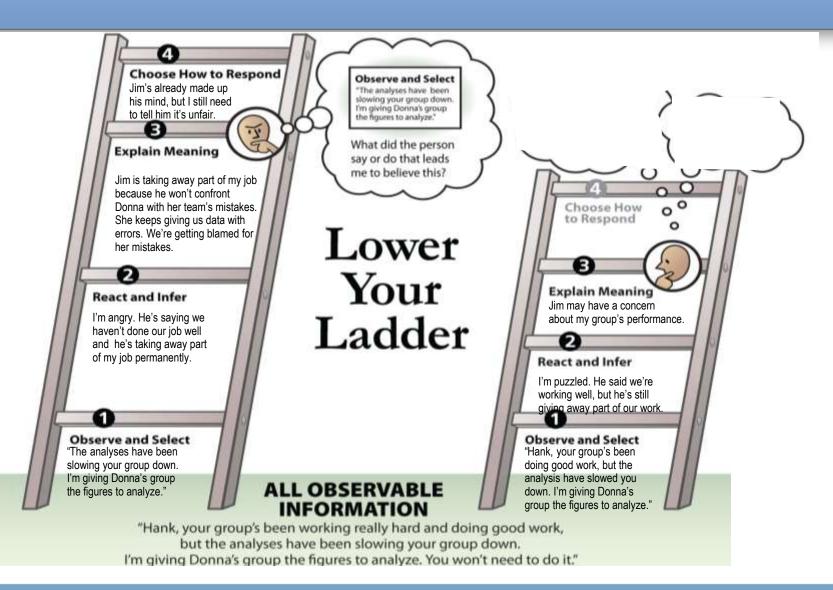
#### Aim for this



#### Instead of this



#### Ladder of Inference – Jim & Hank



#### Basic formula to "lower your ladder"

- Test observation
  - What I saw was...Did I miss something?
- Test meaning
  - I'm thinking...What do you think?



## DON'T FORGET THE BASICS

## Every good conversation starts with good listening.

#### The recessor of the little NO SECURE SPACE SETTING AND IN

the Period area to the Time private part from AND EDITION OF

to the which purposes the little good printing Street, by Thomas and Allen

COURT THAT WELL WE

COLD VALUE OF PERSONS ASSESSED.

eres from the best manner to the contract of SOME PROFITED A PERSON

Officers I placed in Figure 2.

story. The last pic risks rather programme to solve the base of the base of the

Witness Trees of the VANDALISM CO., Phys. Rev. Lett. track, the frame of the late to the late, and who have probable for your post price. March Street Street, Company

Bright Charles

way, was the light way, we are not

From Oak Sal Stages. For their man page.

Appropriate St. Fast.

Where the one Person had by Medium the bethe said (Name Seales when you have not become WHEN CHO WARRY AND ADDRESS.

"Observed On Burner" . . . On their real bid, the you great it could possible belong the develop deposit and in a present a larger possess brought to supply larger with the proops a fileral female party.

Party le como les Seniors Com Maio, St.

Newbook, These and West desired rates, they don't White many and country drough and head down

where the first that is part out to be in

-50 XXX PLESON, BACKS ARRIVED

manager being the bottom of the state of the state of 

courses. What he yes out the Marine

forces. I not the total concerning on the said. many Charles And part of Thing on his

Exercises, Made arraped for pre- 2 evaluate of non-school tion of the through right in during a deposit of the best. PATE A PARTIES THE REAL PROPERTY OF

Depthy Officer to be 100 Marches, 1 Even about and the particular control particular

many there's county have at all one than the start at or street. He second open continuous as the state -SHAPE SHAPE SHAPE

Delta (14, 125, 123)

A REAL PROPERTY AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSON NAMED AND ADDRESS OF and provide a limited when the second Real Prothe best first the part by her cheer our day All respect this sail Palmer star your PARS. other among our or work to an order factors and of Stille, School of

Report for all region Process. There devotes the that may not me be down in words here I for this MILE BY LICENSESSE

Panels and Course him More

marie Sec. 5 and Principle . . . Dir galle care you again defect it has all that however and therefore on the parties and the species.

Financial, Pro. 164 St. of the west Stewn J. Stewn an resident bully of Proper pay.

steen, tim yet, I deStant, and There also Finprint for the spirit streets beautiful to the spirit of the spirit streets. pay to the agricultural days, recognitive proper due to before.

Species of the Secretary of the Secretary School on. Barrier, T. (44), day series, and say months recom-Charles per les fireign fin juy anné broper hanmany first rather branes upon it will the got got charge in and these objects equilibring using develop 1 beginning process. NAME OF STREET OF THE OWNER, NAME OF

#### Listen

What you need to do is...



What do you think would help you improve?



#### Constructive Feedback

You never tell me anything!

If we communicated more often I'd be better prepared.





#### Be Specific

You're always missing deadlines



Provide project timelines and progress reports



#### Be specific, not generic

"Be more confident."



What was heard...

Give the impression that you know things even if you don't.

Have the confidence to say you don't know when you don't know.



#### Explain your reasoning and intent

Example: Did you return Citizen X's call yet?

The reason I am asking is because I just learned some new information from the Finance Director that might help you prepare.



#### Combine advocacy and inquiry

#### **Advocacy**

I'd like to discuss . . .

- What I saw happening was . . .
- I think it would be a good idea if we . . .
- I suggest we . . .

#### **Inquiry**

- Are there other things you would like to talk about?
- Did I miss something?
- What do you think?
- Do you see things differently?



#### Should I raise this at all?



- How important is this problem to the organization?
- How long has the problem existed?
- What will happen if the problem is not solved?
- What is the likelihood that the problem will go away on its own?

# **PEER CONSULTATION**

#### Time for peer coaching and support!

#### Form groups of three.

#### Each person shares:

- A specific conversation you are planning to have (can be as giver or receiver)
- Why it's important
- What you are concerned about and/or where you are feeling stuck

#### The peer coach's job is to:

- Actively listen!
- Paraphrase and summarize to check for understanding
- Ask open-ended questions
- Hold judgment—don't offer advice unless asked

#### **Group Debrief**

- Insights?
- Patterns of when/where we get stuck?
- Key Learnings
  - From your own situation
  - From others' situations
- What one thing from this session you can take away and start using?



#### Additional Resources

- Smart Leaders, Smarter Teams: How You and Your Team Get Unstuck to Get Results by Roger Schwarz (Jossey-Bass, 2013).
- Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen (Penguin, 2014).
- Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen (Penguin, 1999).

