

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF FEEDBACK

Created by Susan Wefald, as part of [Calling In & Up](#)

Description: One of the most impactful things we can do as managers to support the effectiveness and impact of our staff and organization is to develop a culture of feedback. This allows everyone to continuously learn and grow, an essential part of creating a high-performing and joyful work environment. This series of activities draws from multiple sources to provide important concepts and tools to strengthen the ways we **solicit**, **give**, and **encourage** feedback across our teams and organizations.



about the session

Purpose: To learn strategies to develop a culture of feedback within your team or organization that supports everyone's learning and growth, and maximizes organizational effectiveness.

Outcomes:

1. Understand how the brain responds to feedback and its implications.
2. Learn how to cultivate an open mindset in yourself and others.
3. Learn The Management Center's CSAW ("see-saw") feedback framework.
4. Learn key concepts and tools for practicing and encouraging Radical Candor.

Process: 3.25 - 3.5 hours

This is a series of workshop components designed to work together. The times listed below do not include breaks.

Component	Time Needed
Part 1: Introduction	10 minutes
Part 2: Mindset	30 minutes or 45 minutes (incl a video)
Part 3: Giving Feedback Using CSAW	30 minutes
Part 4: Radical Candor	60 minutes
Part 5: Practice in Putting it Together	60 minutes

Connection to [Vertical Development](#):

- **Awaken:** Participants become aware of the importance of feedback and growth and recognize how the brain processes it.
- **Unlearn/Discern:** Individuals challenge existing mindsets that hinder feedback, effectiveness, and cultivating an open mindset.
- **Advance:** Apply learned concept to enhance their ability to give and receive feedback.

facilitator preparation

First check out the “How to Integrate Into Agenda/Program” section above.

Designed for in-person or virtual facilitation

For more on moving sessions online, check out [Dynamic Meetings from Training for Change](#), [Training for Change tools for online facilitation](#).

Materials:

- Tech & AV needed
- Part I & II
 - [5-minute video on the secret of giving great feedback](#)
 - [9:37 video of Dweck on growth mindset](#)
 - [Reflection Worksheet](#)
 - [Power of Mindset article](#)
- Part III
 - [CSAW framework](#) (including supplemental worksheet)
 - [2 x 2 feedback form](#) (another supplemental worksheet)
- Part IV
 - [6-minute video on radical candor](#)
 - [Reflection Worksheet](#)
 - [Radical Candor One-Pager handout](#)
 - [Radical Candor Core Feedback handout](#)
- Part V
 - [CSAW Worksheet & sample](#)

How to keep this session fresh and relevant?

A lot of folks have been talking and thinking about this topic recently! Check out some of the work that we’re following here:

- [Radical Candor website](#)

process (3.25 - 3.5 hours)

part 1: introduction (10 min)

Use description above to talk about the purpose of these related activities. Then start with this [5-minute video](#) by Lee Renninger that provides some key insights on the secret of giving great feedback. Ask for key takeaways popcorn-style.

part 2: mindset (30-45 min)

Option 1: 30 minutes, including a short presentation (5 minutes), individual work (7 minutes), large group sharing (8 minutes), and summary (10 minutes); OR

Option 2: 45 minutes including a short presentation and review of the video (15 minutes), individual work (7 minutes), large group sharing (8 minutes), and summary (15 minutes).)

Lee mentions at the end of the video the importance of asking for feedback because it establishes you as a “continual learner.” Being able to respond well to feedback is essential - if you get defensive or angry it will be worse than if you didn’t ask for feedback in the first place. This is where mindset comes in.

Carol Dweck published a book in 2007 called *mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. She introduced the concept of a “growth mindset” - what she characterizes as the “Power of Not Yet,” in contrast with a fixed mindset - “The Tyranny of Now.” [If there is ample time, consider showing this [9:37 video of Dweck](#) discussing this concept.]

Role modeling a growth mindset when soliciting and receiving feedback helps you take maximum advantage of the feedback, and it also signals to others that feedback is an opportunity for learning, not something to be feared.

If we have a growth mindset, we see feedback as a gift or an opportunity - we become aware that we need to improve on something we don’t YET know or aren’t YET good at. With a fixed mindset, feedback can cause us to feel like a failure and give up, or get angry at the person giving the feedback. Here are some examples of famous people who used a growth mindset to bounce back from failure or rejection:

- Michael Jordan was cut from the varsity basketball team in high school - he worked hard, grew in height, and performed well on the junior varsity team.
- Oprah was fired from her position as a TV anchor in Baltimore. The producer said she was “unfit for television.”
- Stephen King threw out his first manuscript, *Carrie*, after being rejected by 30 publishers. His wife retrieved his manuscript from the trash and encouraged him to keep trying.

All of us may have a fixed mindset about some things and a growth mindset about others. Using [this worksheet](#) let's start by spending seven minutes reflecting on our individual experience with being in a fixed or growth mindset.

	Fixed Mindset	Growth Mindset
Challenges	Avoids challenges and gives up easily because it makes them feel like they're not talented or smart.	Seeks and thrives on challenges. Believes stretching leads to learning and growth. Believes time, effort, and practice lead to mastery.
Setbacks	Lets one setback - a test, evaluation or outcome - define you forever.	Looks at a setback as a single point in time that doesn't forever define your intelligence, abilities or character.

Large group "popcorn" share:

- Does anyone want to share their fixed or growth mindset examples?
- What lessons can we take from this so the next time we notice we are in a fixed mindset, particularly in response to a setback or failure, we can move into a growth mindset?
- What might we do as managers to encourage a growth mindset in ourselves and others?

As a summary, review the list below, and share a [link to this article](#), which includes this list and a link to the video:

1. **Identify areas you have a fixed mindset.** Your mindset isn't static; you probably have a growth mindset in certain areas and a fixed mindset in others. To identify where you have a fixed mindset, pay attention to where you tend to avoid or quit something you know is good for you. Feelings of boredom, anxiety, and discomfort can also signal areas you view as unchangeable.
2. **Seek feedback.** Recognize that others can help make you better- after all, it's unrealistic to expect you can perfect all areas of work and life. Constructive criticism is a valuable tool that enables you to identify blind spots, so don't be afraid to ask others where you can improve.
3. **Embrace failure.** You are going to make mistakes, and that's okay. Take ownership of your errors. When you blame your circumstances or divert responsibility, you deny yourself the opportunity to correct it. After a mistake, get curious. Ask yourself, "what obstacles kept me from achieving my

goal?"

4. **Pursue challenges.** Taking on projects that stretch your skillset is an opportunity to grow that prepares you for greater prospects in the future. Don't pass up opportunities because you don't feel as if you have a firm grasp on the skills required. Reframe how you think about challenges – think of them as an opportunity, experiment, or adventure.
5. **Ask questions.** Take advantage of others' expertise by asking questions. After all, no one knows *everything*. Rather than being intimidated or embarrassed about your lack of knowledge, get curious! If you're afraid of looking dumb, remember that the judgment you fear from others isn't as harsh as your own inner critic.
6. **Take pride in the journey.** Focus on your progress, not results. When you fixate on the end goal, you lose sight of the lessons you could learn along the way. The point is to learn and grow, not achieve.
7. **Praise effort, not abilities.** When you concentrate on your existing abilities, you're thinking about them in a static way. Instead, take pride in your hard work and celebrate your ever-increasing capacity to learn and develop new skills.
8. **Use the power of "yet."** Are you struggling to reach a goal or perform a task? Remind yourself you haven't mastered it "yet." Reframing the challenge by using "yet" leaves room for possibility and reminds you that you can still move forward despite setbacks.

part 3: giving feedback with CSAW (30 min)

The Management Center offers a useful framework for preparing for and giving feedback: [CSAW](#) ("see-saw"). We will walk through the steps and then give you an opportunity to practice after we discuss Radical Candor in Part IV. CSAW parallels each of the steps that Lee laid out in the video.

The four steps are:

- C:** **Connect** and Get **Consent**
- S:** **Share** Your Observations and Impact
- A:** **Ask** Questions to Understand Their Perspective
- W:** **Wrap-Up** with Next Steps

There are three types of feedback. CSAW can be used for all of them:

1. **Positive:** Reinforces and affirms what you want to see and grow in the future
2. **Developmental:** Helps people take their skills from good to great, or from meeting to exceeding expectations. This feedback is for helping someone take their impact to the next level.
3. **Corrective:** Helps someone get from off track to on track when it comes to results (e.g.,

meeting goals) or relationships (having a negative impact on others).

Connect and get Consent:

Connecting includes making eye contact, naming a shared value, goal or experience; being explicit that you have feedback to share, and getting consent to give that feedback. Asking for consent is so the person has agency over when and how they receive feedback. If they say “no” you can ask when a better time would be to share the feedback.

Here are some examples from The Management Center on asking to give feedback:

- **Positive:** “You have been working so hard on the campaign rollout. I have feedback about several things you’ve done that have really impressed me and that I want to see you keep doing. Can I share that with you?”
- **Developmental:** “Thank you for stepping up and facilitating yesterday’s meeting. I thought that demonstrated a lot of initiative and care for the team. I have feedback about two concrete ways I think you can be even sharper in your facilitation. I’m happy to share that verbally now, or send it to you in writing. What’s your preference?”
- **Corrective:** “I know we’re both coming from a deep investment in this project’s success—I’ve seen you name and demonstrate that. And I have some feedback for you about your follow through on the details. Is now a good time?”

Sharing Your observations, the impact, and any requests

Be specific and focus on what happened. Avoid language that is judgmental or makes assumptions about the person’s motives, mindset, or character. Name the impact (positive or negative), and add any concrete requests you may have.

Here are some examples from The Management Center:

- **Positive:** “I loved how you incorporated images in the text. It really made the points come to life for me. How much extra time did that take? I’d love to support you to do more of that in the future. Is that something you’d be interested in?”
- **Developmental:** “In our client intake meeting, I noticed how welcoming you were and how well you established a rapport with them. How would you feel about eventually leading client intake meetings instead of playing a support role? With a little bit of support and practice, I could really see you owning client intake meetings moving forward.”
- **Corrective:** “I’ve noticed that for the last few months, you’ve been turning in your expense

reports late. Can we discuss that? Being late on reports not only slows down our ability to bill for the work, but it also increases the burden on our administrative staff and reinforces a false hierarchy about whose work is more important. It's important that you get to a place where you're turning these in on time—so let's talk about how to do that.”

Avoid “overselling” - less is more. You want to leave some time for the person to respond and give their perspective.

Ask Questions to Understand Their Perspective

Be genuinely curious as you ask for their perspective, rather than assuming you already know the answers. Examples from The Management Center:

Check for alignment on your assessment:

- How do you think that went?
- What's your take on what's happening?

Unearth causes:

- Why do you think this happened? Why do you think this keeps happening?
- Are there things I'm missing?

Surface solutions:

- Do you have thoughts on how to move forward?
- Is there a better system or process we could try?

Wrap Up with Next Steps

After you both have shared your perspectives, discuss and agree on next steps. You may want to repeat any specific requests you've already made. If you are in alignment, this will be straightforward and concrete. If not, you might agree to come back to the conversation after you've both had time for further reflection. Either way, schedule a time to check in again.

TMC examples:

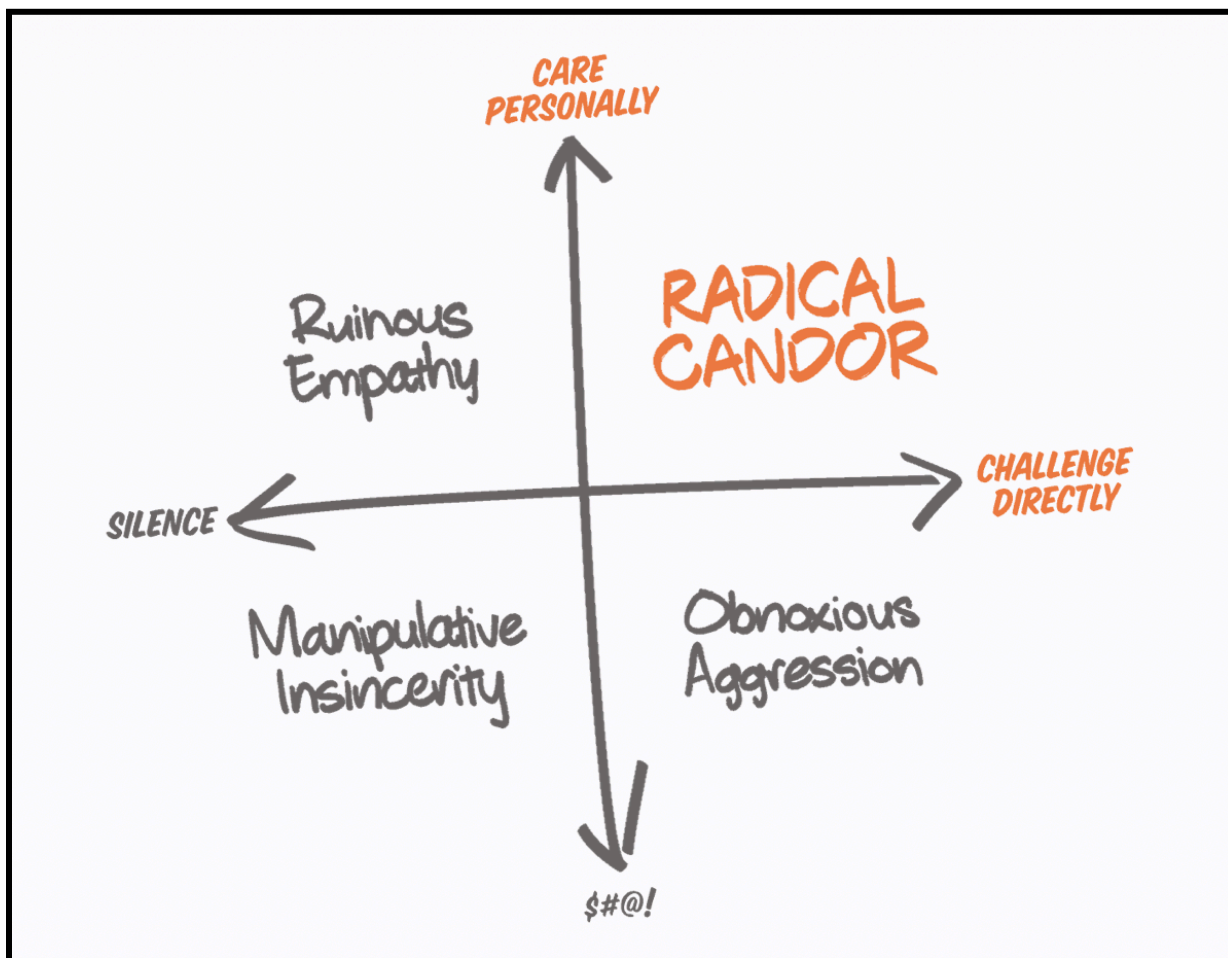
- “Just to make sure we're on the same page, can you do a quick repeat-back on how we're moving forward?”

- “We have really different perspectives about this. Why don’t we both sit with this conversation and revisit it early next week? I’d like each of us to come with a proposal about how to move forward that takes into account the other person’s perspective. Does that work?”
- “Let’s revisit this at our check-in next month.”

Share a link to the The Management Center article on [Giving More \(and Better\) Feedback with CSAW](#), and let them know a worksheet is available at the bottom. Another useful TMC tool that encourages Receiving as well as Giving feedback is the [2X2 Feedback Form](#).

part 4: radical candor (60 min)

Radical candor is an important concept as you strengthen your and your organization’s ability to solicit, give, and encourage feedback. Paired with developing a growth mindset and using CSAW to plan and implement a feedback conversation, it helps you lean into an essential orientation toward supporting your employees’ and colleagues’ success: **Care Personally**, and **Challenge Directly**.



Let's start by watching a [6-minute video](#) with Melissa Andrada describing her experience with receiving Radical Candor feedback.

Let's talk about what these different approaches might look like. Imagine that you are at a conference. Lunch is over and you are about to make a presentation in front of a hundred and fifty people. Five minutes before you go on stage, someone notices you have spinach in your teeth.

What would **Ruinous Empathy** look like?
[They wouldn't say anything because of fear it would be embarrassing or awkward.]

What would **Manipulative Insincerity** look like?
[They wouldn't tell you, but they might talk behind your back about it.]

With either of these approaches, how would you feel when you go to the bathroom after your presentation and realize you have spinach in your teeth?

What would **Obnoxious Aggression** look like?
[They might call out "Hey, you have spinach in your teeth!" within earshot of other people.]

How would that make you feel?

What would **Radical Candor** look like?

[They might lean over and whisper, Hey, you have spinach in your teeth.]

How would that make you feel?

Someone who is willing to risk awkwardness or discomfort to let you know you have spinach in your teeth - or to let you know about a performance issue or an error that you've made - and who does it with kindness, is demonstrating that they care about you and are helping you succeed.

[This section is optional - use if you think the participants don't fully understand.]

Let's review how these four approaches are defined:

Radical Candor: Care Personally and Challenge Directly

The highest performing teams value feedback and ensure it is frequent, candid, and flows up, down, and sideways. Use Radical Candor to help guide your feedback to a better place by making sure your criticism and your praise are Kind, Clear, Specific, and Sincere.

Obnoxious Agression: Low Care and High Challenge

Also called brutal honesty or front stabbing, it's what happens when you challenge someone, but don't show you care about them, leaving people feeling attacked.

Manipulative Insincerity: Low Care and Low Challenge

It's praise that is insincere; flattery to a person's face and harsh criticism behind their back. Also called "playing politics." Most commonly, talking about someone instead of talking to them. It's a major source of low-trust workplace cultures.

Ruinous Empathy: Hi Care and Low Challenge

This is what happens when you want to spare someone's feelings, so you don't tell them something they need to know. It's the source of our most regrettable mistakes.

Before we go further into developing a Radical Candor approach, let's talk about your experience with giving and receiving feedback.

Using [this worksheet](#), spend five minutes thinking about feedback that you received in the past that ultimately helped you. We will then break you into pairs to discuss your experiences with each other. You will have a total of 20 minutes in your breakout.

Back in the large group, use a [Slido poll](#) to ask people to respond to the following:

1. Did you remember having an experience with receiving Radical Candor? Yes/No
2. On a scale of 1-5, how useful do you think using Radical Candor would be to creating a high-performing and highly-motivated team? (5 the highest, 1 the lowest)
3. What form of feedback has been your primary approach up until now? Please be honest - responses are anonymous. (Multiple choice for the four approaches)

Hand out this [Radical Candor One-Pager](#) and/or share it in the Chat.

Ask for three volunteers to read through each of the three sections: Get it; Give it, and Gauge it. After each one, pause and ask if anyone has any comments or reflections. Also ask the following, unless it came up in the comments:

After Get It: We often have a tendency to talk to fill in uncomfortable pauses in a conversation. Why would it be important to wait, as they recommend?

After Give It: Why do they recommend giving feedback in the moment or shortly after? Why not wait until your next check-in or the next performance review?

After Gauge It: We often have a natural tendency to walk back our feedback in the face of an emotional reaction. This can undermine our intention. What might you say if you see that someone is appearing sad or angry after you've given them this feedback? What might you say if the person tries to minimize the feedback or give you the brush off?

Distribute the [Radical Candor CORE Feedback](#) handout or put it in the chat. Give people five minutes to read it over.

Ask for comments or reflections. What jumps out? What do they want to make sure they remember?

Talk about how the CORE steps fit into the CSAW framework. Start by reminding them of the CSAW framework, reviewing what each of the letters mean. Then ask where do they think the CORE steps fit into the CSAW structure.

Summarize by sharing the following chart:

CSAW	Radical Candor (CORE)
Connect and Give Consent	

S hare Your Observations and Impact	C ontext; O bservation; R esult
A sk for their perspective	
W rap up with next steps	n E xt st E ps

part 5: practice in putting it together (60 min)

Now let's practice! Using the slightly modified [worksheet from The Management Center](#), plan for a feedback conversation, and incorporate Radical Candor in your approach. You have 10 minutes to complete the worksheet. Then we will put you in pairs to practice the conversation. (10 minutes)

Ask someone to role play their CSAW/Radical Candor feedback conversation in front of the group, with a volunteer to serve as the receiver. After they are done, ask for observations, beginning with what they did well, and then moving on to what they could improve. When you break into pairs, suggest that they can try their delivery again (with a different partner) and incorporate the feedback they just received. (15 minutes)

Now we are going to break into pairs. You will each have 5 minutes to go through all of the steps, starting with Connect and Consent. When you are done, ask your partner for two minutes of feedback on your delivery. It would be helpful if one of you acts as a timekeeper to make sure you both have time to practice. (15 minutes)

Back in the large group, ask people for any reflections or observations on combining the CSAW and Radical Candor framework to provide effective feedback. (10 minutes)

In closing, acknowledge that giving and receiving feedback can be hard. Encourage them to lean into an open mindset and remember that the more they give and receive feedback, the easier it will become, and the more they will succeed in developing a culture of feedback within their team or organization. This is one of the most important things we can do as managers and leaders to ensure the success of our staff and maximize our impact. In order to do our best work, we need to know what we are doing well, and what we need to improve.

Share a link to the [Radical Candor website](#), where there are a lot of resources for further exploration and learning, including information about two books to go deep on radical candor and building a “kick-ass culture of inclusivity.” (10 minutes)

