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**Warning: Feedback May Be
Dangerous to Your Health**

**PLAYING TO THE
FEEDBACK**



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ICF ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
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Warning: Feedback Can Be Dangerous to Your Health

- Necessary Conditions of Behavior Change
- Neurobiology of Feedback
- Current Research on 360-Degree Feedback
- Evidence Based Best Practices in Feedback

Case Study -- The Competent Jerk

Chris is a 48-year-old International Sales Director for a large, global sales firm. Chris has been with the company for over 11 years and has risen through the ranks based on strong sales performance and demonstrated technical competence. Chris ranks as one of the top producers and manages three multi-national sales teams.

In a recent organizational talent management/succession planning review, senior managers saw little upward mobility and possibility of promotion for Chris, because of strong interpersonal skills deficits and lack of self-awareness. Chris is perceived to be highly arrogant, defensive, and opinionated, and he/she lacks empathy for others. Chris uses an autocratic style and has little patience for those who are slower to learn or require tremendous feedback about their performance.

Chris is also a "Type A" personality who tends to work tremendously long hours and exhibits poor health habits (rarely exercises and smokes, and weighs too much) that have contributed to their lack of work/life balance and high blood pressure. In the last executive physical, Chris was encouraged to make some immediate changes in eating habits, increase physical activity, and stop smoking.

The CEO of the organization believes Chris can benefit from executive coaching to enhance interpersonal skills that can help build a stronger psychological climate for talent to continue being fully engaged and productive. The CEO believes Chris should utilize the executive coaching and feedback from direct reports and colleagues to enhance both leadership effectiveness and physical health. Unfortunately, Chris doesn't really believe a coach will be that helpful given his outstanding sales performance but believes politically it would be in his or her interest to work with one for a brief time.

COACHING CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

- What are the presenting issues?
- How motivated does the client appear to be to make positive behavioral changes (i.e., are they coachable)?
- What approach to coaching makes the most sense given the facts of this case?
- What types of assessments might be useful to enhance self-insight and successful behavior change?
- What approach would you take to provide feedback in a manner that maximizes understanding and acceptance?
- What potential pitfalls, barriers or challenges do you see in this coaching intervention?

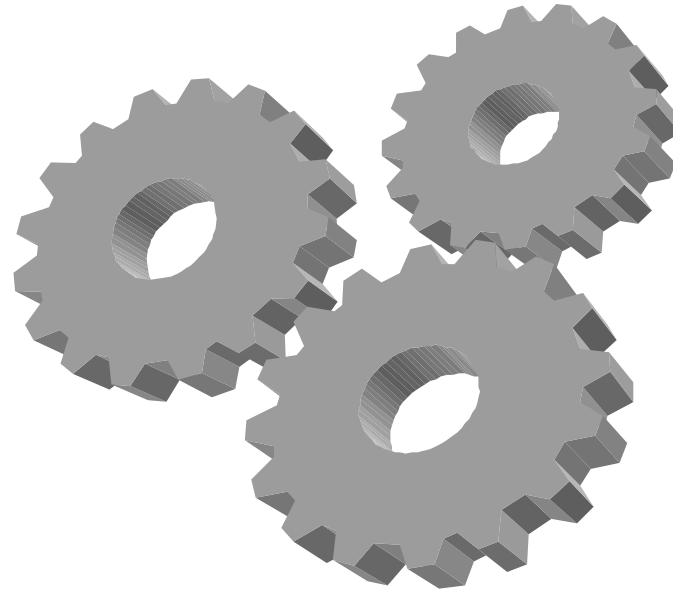
Outcomes With 360 Feedback and Coaching

- Olivero et al. (1997) found that employee coaching *increased productivity* over and above the effects of a managerial training program (22.4% versus 88.0%)
- Thatch (2002) found that 6 weeks of coaching following 360 feedback increased results by 60%
- Smither et al., (2003) reported that after receiving 360 feedback, managers who worked with a coach were *significantly* more likely to set specific goals, solicit ideas for improvement and subsequently received improved performance ratings
- Grant (2008) demonstrated that a 5-session solution focused cognitive behavioral coaching program resulted in statistically *significant increases* in goal attainment, cognitive hardiness and insight

Necessary Ingredients for Changing Behavior (Mashihi & Nowack, 2011)

1. Enlighten

Assessment and Feedback Process
(awareness of strengths and potential development areas)



2. Encourage

Readiness to Change
(clarification of motivations and beliefs)

Goal Setting/Developmental Planning (measurable and specific)
Skill Building

3. Enable

Reinforcement, Monitoring, and Social Support to reinforce learning and behavior change

Relapse Prevention Training

Evaluation (knowledge acquisition, skill transfer, impact)

How Long Does it Take to Change a Habit?

- Typically, the development of *expertise* in a complex activity requires at least 10 years and/or 10,000 hours of deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2006)

Ericsson, K. (2006). [The influence of experience and deliberate practice on the development of superior expert performance](#). In K.A. Ericsson et al., (Eds). *The Cambridge Handbook of Expertise and Expert Performance* (pp. 683-703). NY: Cambridge University

- The number of days it takes for a new behavior to become “automatic” depends on its complexity (e.g., new eating habits 65 days and exercise 91 days)

Lally, P. et al. (2009). [How are habits formed: Modeling habit formation in the real world](#). *European Journal of Social Psychology*, DOI: 10.1002/ejsp.674

Coaching and Behavior Change Model



***“Sticks and stones
can break my bones
but words can never
hurt me.”***

Unknown



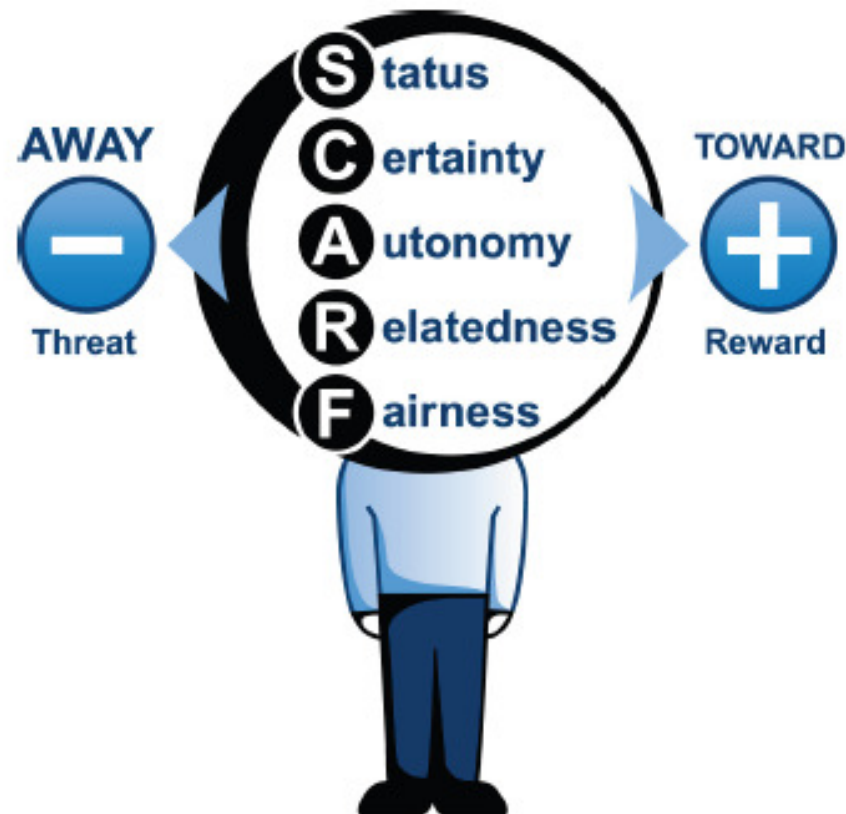
Neuroscience of the Stress Response

Activating the primary **threat** and **reward** circuitry takes 1/5th of a second



Rock, D (2008). SCARF: a brain based model for collaborating with and influencing others. *Neuroleadership Journal*, 1, 1-9.

Neuroscience of the Stress Response



Rock, D (2008). SCARF: a brain based model for collaborating with and influencing others. *Neuroleadership Journal*, 1, 1-9.

Neurobiology of Social Stress

- Interpersonal stress (e.g., being judged or compared to others) has an effect on cortisol **three times** greater than when the stress is impersonal
- For impersonal stress, cortisol returns to normal in about 40 minutes but if interpersonal cortisol remains high **50 percent longer** taking an hour more to reach baseline

Dickerson, S. & Kemeny, M. (2004). Acute stressors and cortisol responses: A theoretical integration and synthesis of laboratory research. *Psychological Bulletin*, 130, 355-391.

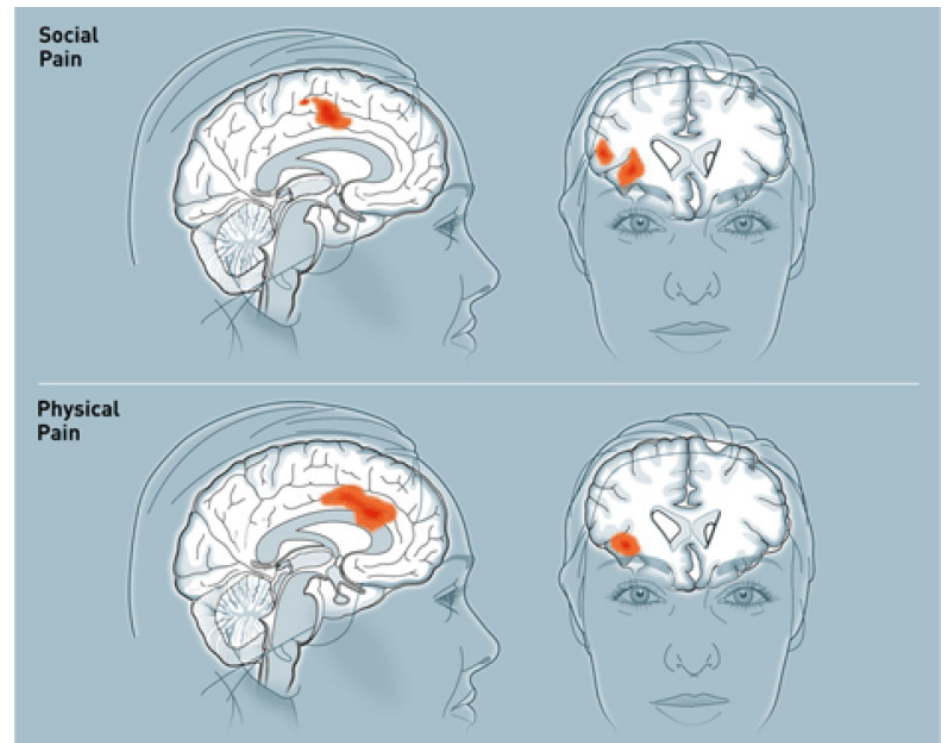
Social Rejection and Physical Pain

Social pain lights up two brain regions key in the response to physical pain and correlated with self-reported distress

Eisenberger, N., Lieberman, M. and Williams, K. (2003). *Does rejection hurt? An fMRI study of social exclusion. Science, 302, 290-292.*

25 healthy subjects took either 2,000 milligrams of acetaminophen daily or a placebo and after three weeks played a computer game measuring social rejection. fMRI showed reduced neural responses associated with *physical pain* in those taking acetaminophen

DeWall, C. et al. (2010). *Acetaminophen reduces social pain: Behavioral and neural evidence. Psychological Science, 21, 931-937.*



Social Relationships at Work

- Close relationships at work boost employee satisfaction by 50 percent
- When employees have close friendships with their bosses, they are more than twice as likely to be satisfied with their jobs
- People who have a best friend at work are seven times more likely to be engaged in their work (as well as less accidents, more engaged customers and more creative)



Rath, T. (2006). The Gallup Organization

Social Relationships at Work

- 820 healthy adults who worked an average of 8.8 hours a day were followed for 20 years
- Employees were asked to judge the quality of relationships with their manager and peers
- Controlling for lifestyle factors such as smoking, obesity and depression, those who had the lowest social support at work were 2.4 times more likely to die sometime within those 20 years



Shirom, A., et al. (2011) *Work-based predictors of mortality: A 20-year follow-up of healthy employees. Health Psychology, 30, 268-275*

Common 360 Issues and Questions

1. Should 360 be used for evaluation or development?
2. What competencies should be measured?
3. Who should be asked for feedback?
4. How many raters should be asked?
5. How should raters be selected?
6. How confidential and anonymous should it be?
7. Who should receive feedback?
8. Who should deliver the feedback?
9. How should open-ended questions be presented?
10. Do raters use the same filters in evaluating participants?
11. How do you get clients to accept feedback?
12. How should behavior change be facilitated?

Nowack, K. (1999). [360-Degree feedback](#). In DG Langdon, KS Whiteside, & MM McKenna (Eds.), *Intervention: 50 Performance Technology Tools*, San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, Inc., pp.34-46.

Does Feedback Result in Improved Performance?



A meta-analysis over over 3,000 studies on performance feedback found that although there was a significant effect for feedback interventions ($d=.41$), **one third of all studies showed performance declines**

Kluger, A. & DeNisi (1996). The effects of feedback interventions on performance: A historical review, meta-analysis and preliminary feedback theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, 119, 254-285

Does Feedback Result in Improved Performance?

Atwater and colleagues found that **improvement following an upward feedback intervention only resulted for 50% of the supervisors** who received it

Atwater, L., Waldman, D., & Cartier. (2000). An upward feedback field experiment. Supervisor's cynicism, follow-up and commitment to subordinates. *Personnel Psychology*, 53, 275-297

Does 360° Feedback Result in Improved Performance?

A recent meta-analysis of 26 longitudinal studies indicate significant but small effect sizes suggesting that it is **unrealistic to expect large performance improvement** after people receive 360-degree feedback



Smither, J., London, M., & Reilly, R. (2005). Does performance improve following multisource feedback? A theoretical model, meta-analysis and review of empirical findings. *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 33-66

Are Raters Providing Unique Information?

Agreement Within Raters

The average correlation between:

- two supervisors is only .50
- two peers .37
- two subordinates .30

Conway, J. & Huffcutt A (1997). Psychometric properties of multi-source performance ratings: A meta-analysis of subordinate, supervisor, peer and self-ratings. *Human Performance*, 10, 331-360

Are Raters Providing Unique Information?

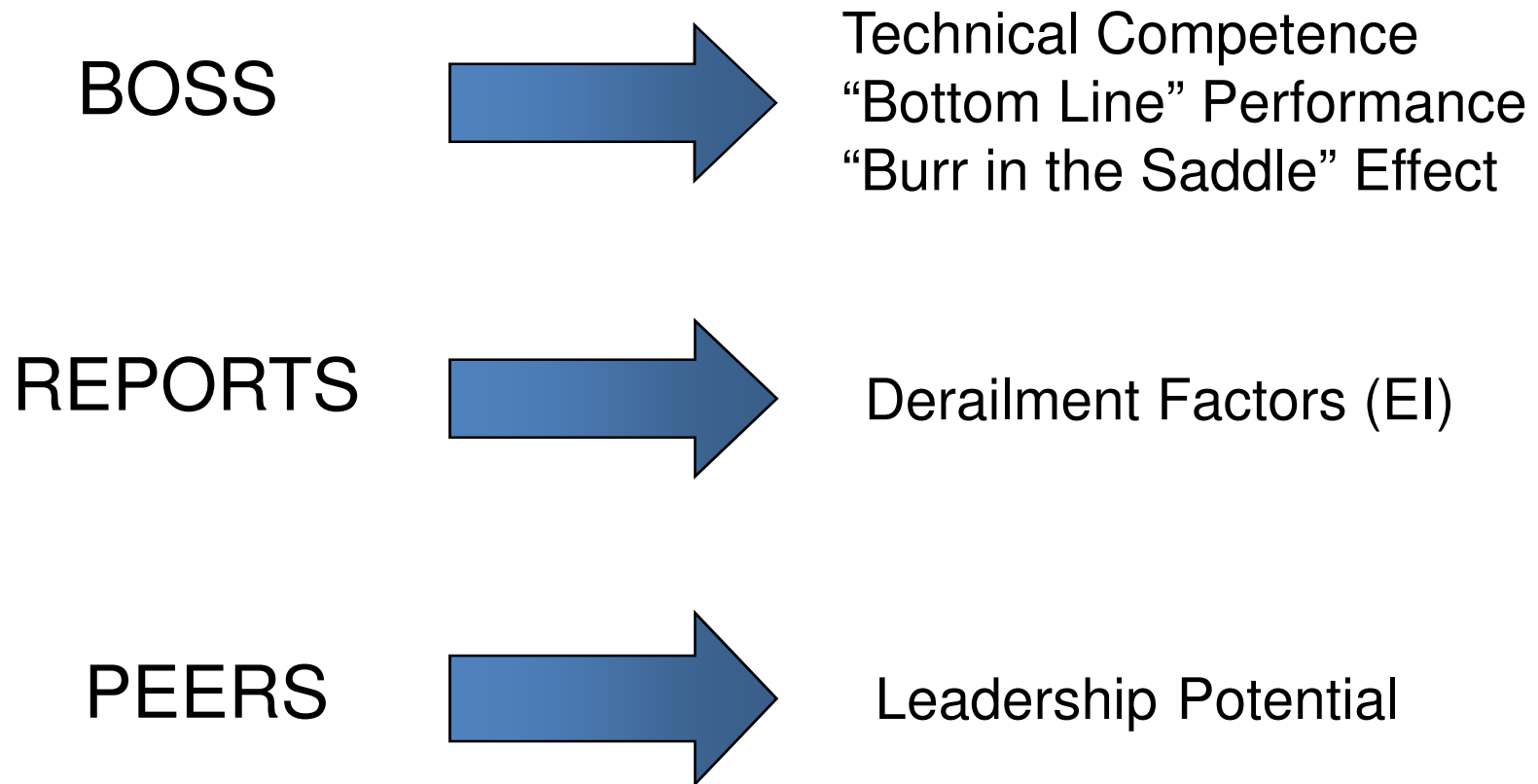
Agreement Between Raters

- **Self-ratings are weakly correlated** with other rater perspectives¹
- **Bosses, direct reports and peers overlap only modestly on how they view an individual²**

¹Nowack, K. (1992). *Self-assessment and rater-assessment as a dimension of management development. Human Resource Development Quarterly, 3, 141-153*

²Harris, M. & Schaubroeck, J. (1988). *A meta-analysis of self-supervisor, self-peer and peer-supervisor ratings. Personnel Psychology, 41, 43-62*

Self-Other Perceptions



Nowack, K., (2002). Does 360 degree feedback negatively effect company performance: Feedback varies with your point of view. *HR Magazine*, Volume 47 (6), June 2002

Maximizing the Impact of 360° Feedback

- Some evidence that **facilitated rather than self-directed feedback** enhances successful behavior change

Nowack, K. (2005). *Longitudinal evaluation of a 360 degree feedback program: Implications for best practices*. Paper presented at the 20th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Los Angeles, March 2005.

- Some evidence that **coaching coupled with 360 feedback** can facilitate behavior change

Smither, J. et al. (2003). *Can working with an executive coach improve multisource feedback ratings over time? A quasi-experimental field study*. *Personnel Psychology*, 56, 23-44

- Some limited evidence that **use of an online development planning system** and competency based resource center can facilitate behavior change with managerial involvement

Nowack, K. (2009). *Leveraging 360 feedback to facilitate successful behavior change*. *Consulting Psychology: Practice and Research*, 61, 280-297.

Giving Effective Feedback Using the DESC Technique

Describe the behavior, not personality or attitudinal characteristics of interest

- Be concrete, specific and objective in your behavioral descriptions
- Focus on as recent behavior as possible

Express your own feelings about the behaviors

- Use "I" statements to convey these feelings
- Use congruent non-verbal behavior

Specify the changes in behavior that you want in a precise and concrete manner

Consequences of the desired behavior changes should be shared

- Specify positive consequences for you first!
- Specify negative consequences for others only when you want to use "tough love"

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