

FEEDBACK: FOCUS ON THE HOW AS MUCH AS ON THE WHAT

Building a culture of supportive, useful and ongoing feedback is as important now as it's ever been. As organizations reinvent their approach to performance management, as they seek to keep their millennial workforce engaged, as they elevate coaching to be an everyday leadership skill, feedback matters.

It's natural to focus on WHAT to say (which, of course, matters). But HOW you say it matters just as much.

Neuroscience can guide us on how to best say what we've got to say. The brain is constantly checking Is this situation safe? The acronym **TERA** refers to four factors that increase a sense of safety — and drive the neuroscience of engagement.

- T** **TRIBE:** The brain asks, Are you with or against me? Do I feel assured that you're on my side?
- E** **EXPECTATION:** The brain asks, Do I know what's about to happen? Do I feel safe about it?
- R** **RANK:** The brain asks, Are you more or less important than me? Do I feel secure with my status?
- A** **AUTONOMY:** The brain asks, Are you making all the choices, or do I have some say? Do I feel like I have some control over my destiny?

If you increase the TERA Quotient in your feedback delivery, you'll have more of your feedback understood and acted upon.

THREE TIPS FOR DELIVERING FEEDBACK THAT GETS HEARD



BE SPECIFIC

The words "I've got some feedback for you" reduce the TERA Quotient and invokes a flight-or-fight response. Giving details increases Expectation and keeps things calm: "I've got some feedback about your report. It's mostly good, but discussing how it's structured will be useful. It will take just five minutes to explain."



ENCOURAGE THE SETTING OF (SOME OF) THE RULES

Would you like to talk now, or later today? Would you like me to go first? These are easy choices you can offer to increase a person's sense of Rank and Autonomy. You're not giving them a choice about getting feedback. But within that understanding, offer as many choices as you can.



MAKE THE ENVIRONMENT WORK FOR YOU

If you deliver the feedback across your office desk, the other person's Rank is way down. Get out of the office. Walk or sit side by side (or kitty-corner). Touch them on the shoulder or elbow as reassurance. That balances out Rank, and increases their sense of Tribe-iness.

The TERA Quotient is explained in detail in *The Coaching Habit* and is part of Box of Crayons' [The Last Feedback Workshop You'll Ever Need](#) workshop.

Box of Crayons teaches 10-minute coaching, so busy managers can build stronger teams and get better results. Learn how we do it at BoxOfCrayons.com; call 416-532-1322 or email us at inquiry@boxofcrayons.com.

