

How to Use Feedback and Criticism Constructively

Teleclass Transcription

By Debra Russell



Professional Program

**Track 2: Believe & Receive: Confidence,
Perseverance, Courage and the Law of
Attraction**



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How to Use Feedback & Criticism Constructively

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Allow yourself to just let it in, without needing to make it (or the person giving it to you) right or wrong – but instead look for what is useful right now – and file the rest away for the future 20



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INTRODUCTION

DEFINITIONS FOR FAILURE AND FEEDBACK

Welcome to the March 2010 Toolbox Teleclass called How to... I forget what it's called. How to Receive Feedback and use it and put it into your life. Has anyone else joined the call?

Catherine: I haven't heard anybody come on.

Debra: Alright, well then, it's just going to be just you and me until more people join us. I do expect other people will, but you know, we'll see when they show up. So then I'm just going to get started and you can feel free to put yourself on mute, just star 6.

Catherine: Okay.

Debra: But I will be, you know asking for, you know, feedback.

Catherine: Okay, I will be on mute thing now.

Debra: That is so weird when the first person puts himself on mute it always plays a little music. It's very bizarre.

Alright, so we're going to jump right in. In this month's newsletter actually, I posted the definitions of what failure is and what feedback is. Welcome! Who's joined me?

Steve: This is Steve.

Debra: Hey Steve, I saw that you signed up. We're just getting started here, so...

Steve: Great.

DEFINITIONS FOR FAILURE AND FEEDBACK

So as I was saying, in this month's newsletter, I posted definitions for failure and for feedback, and I think that that's going to be useful for us to have as kind of a context or a foundation for the conversation we're going to have.

FAILURE

The condition or fact of being insufficient or falling short

So, the definition of failure is "...the condition or fact of being insufficient or falling short;



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The condition or fact of not achieving the desired end or ends

The condition or fact of not achieving the desired end or ends."

FEEDBACK

A reaction or response to a particular process or activity.

And the definition of feedback was "...a reaction or response to a particular process or activity;

Evaluative information derived from such a reaction or response.

And the evaluative information derived from such a reaction or response." And I think that that's a really useful definition for our purposes tonight, because feedback is not only what you receive kind of directly.

One of my clients spent last weekend at a Songwriters Camp in Connecticut and the whole purpose of going to a camp like that is to get concentrated feedback on your songs. And so, you know, it's very structured way of receiving feedback, and so you're getting feedback in a way you kind of expect it.

But a lot of times it's what I like about the second definition, which is that the condition-- I'm sorry, "...the evaluative information derived from the reaction or response," meaning that you can actually pull feedback from everything.

From every person's response to you. From every reaction you get in whatever your efforts are, so we can be constantly receiving feedback and we do constantly received feedback, but most of the time we received it in an unconscious way. We're not thinking about it in terms of, "Okay, but what's the feedback from this?"

So, it's really useful to kind of be holding those definitions, and I think that the reason people struggle with feedback so much is because they define it as failure. In some way or another they decided that it means that they are going to fail or they have failed or whatever that looks like for them.

And I think as I wrote it the newsletter that it's much more useful to look at all of that input as feedback, instead of evidence of failure.

WHY IS THIS CRITICAL?

So why is learning how to manage feedback and how to implement feedback critical to your success? Why is this a critical success skill? You guys want to tell me why you think this is a... (On this call) why do you think this is important? And feel free to take yourself off mute, star 6.



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Anyone want to share why they thought feedback was important enough to come on the call?

Catherine: This is Catherine. I... Well, because I'm developing my songwriting skills and learning to get together with other songwriters and exchange ideas and try to learn how to maximize that.

Debra: Great.

Catherine: Well, it's just one thing that's going on.

Debra: Right. But it's... Yeah, it's so important in skill development. How else can we know whether or not we're getting any better? And how else do we know how to improve our skills if we aren't open to feedback and don't have skills around how to use feedback? Very good, absolutely. Any other ideas of why feedback is important?

Well, I'll give you a couple of others. For one thing, it develops and deepens your relationship with your fans. So, your fans are giving you feedback all the time, and sometimes it's, "Hey man, that was great! Where's your CD?" or "I want to sign up on your newsletter!"

And sometimes, it's getting up in a middle of the song and walking out. That's also feedback. Sometimes it looks like them telling their friends about you, and sometimes it looks like them not telling their friends about you.

Sometimes it looks like people clicking through on a link to check you out, and then not doing anything more than that. And a lot of times that kind of feedback has nothing to do with your music. It has much more to do with your websites and the effectiveness of your marketing skills.

So, feedback is going to be critical in building and deepening and developing your relationship with your fans, with your colleagues, with your songwriting skills and your performance skills, with your business skills, with venue owners if you're looking to perform live or have shows with your artwork. All of that is going to be really... feedback is really important in developing all of those avenues of your business. I think the challenge a lot of times is that people don't like giving overt feedback. It's scary. It's as scary for the person giving the feedback as it is for you to receive it. And I don't think that people recognize that.



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But think about it. Think how you feel giving someone feedback on their stuff. It's a little scary. I participate in a music forum for the Taxi, and it's at taxi.com. It's a great music forum. And it was very interesting a woman posted a bit of a rant because she posted a song and 60 people had listened to it, but only 2 people have given her feedback.

And her rant was like, "Why didn't you give me... I want more feedback! Why aren't you giving me feedback?" And a bunch of people responded as to kind of why they don't give feedback, and some of them said that they didn't feel like they had anything useful to add, right? So my giving you feedback could make me look really stupid, right? So there's that risk.

Some of them talked about how they know that whether they like something or not, but they're not really able to put it into language why they like something or not or how to make it better, so they may not have language-ing skills.

And again, so that's...you know, I might look dumb or you might not understand me. And I think the biggest obstacle in giving feedback is that we worry about hurting the other person's feelings, right?

That the other person might get discouraged or angry, you know. And so one of the people in this discussion that came up on the forum said, you know, that he is--he's gotten his ear handed to him a couple of times by giving feedback on the forum. And you know, you risk that, you risk the other person reacting emotionally to your feedback.

And so recognizing that someone giving you feedback is taking a risk. I think it's really critical that you honor that and feel gratitude whether or not that feedback is useful to you. The fact that they cared enough to bother. It is something to be grateful for.

THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO SOLICIT AND RECEIVE OVERT FEEDBACK

So let's talk a little bit since giving feedback can be a little confronting for the person giving feedback, it would be helpful to know how to solicit and receive overt feedback.



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Meaning feedback where someone is consciously and intentionally telling you their opinion. So, it's really important to know how and who to ask for feedback. So let's talk about who first.

HOW (AND WHO) TO ASK FOR FEEDBACK

I would recommend that in looking for feedback, you first of all not ask family and friends. Because they're going to...first of all they love you and they want you to succeed and more often than not they will tell you it is wonderful--whether or not it was. And I was watching Dancing with the Stars last night, and I avoided that show for a long time, but I just decided to try it out again. And there was a scene between the Ochocinco, Chad Ochocinco the receiver from the Bangles, and his, you know, partner and choreographer, and she said, "Oh that was great!" and he looked at her and he said, "I didn't do it right, did I?" and she said, "Well, no." And he said, "Don't tell me it's great, unless I did it right." And then she said, "Okay that sucks. Do it again." Right?

So he really was clear about what kind of feedback he wanted. That he wanted open and honest feedback, and that's I think really useful for people to know. I think it's dangerous in asking friends and family, because you don't know how much of it is about them sparing your feelings. So, you want to be a bit careful about that.

The other thing is that most of your friends and family probably don't know a hell a lot about music industry or the art industry or the art biz. So, their feedback isn't necessarily going to be as useful.

WHO –

people's whose opinion you respect,

I recommend that you find people in your industry whose opinion you respect.

who have experience in your industry,

Who has experience in the industry and perhaps has made it to the next several levels up.

who don't have a vested or competitive interest

And who don't have a vested or competitive interest.

Feedback from your agent or manager might be less useful than feedback from a non-invested agent or manager. Feedback from fellow musicians who are not in direct competition with you. In other words, who perhaps are not in your same niche might be



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more useful than feedback from musicians who are in your direct niche unless they're several rungs above you.

Very often, people who've got into a certain level of a success actually pride themselves in mentoring the people who are coming up behind them. And if you can find someone who's like that--invaluable feedback--from people like that.

That's one of the reasons I love the Taxi forums because there is a tremendous availability of that kind of feedback from some people who are making serious livings in the music industry.

I also recommend that you get feedback from your fans, and if you're performing live or having shows, from your venue owners, because that's your target market, and the more information you can get from your target market, the better able you're going to target your marketing and hone your craft to appeal to that target market.

HOW –

So let's come to the point about how to receive and solicit overt feedback.

Be respectful of their time and resources

First of all, be respectful of their time and resources. I can't tell you how many times people have contacted me.

Now, I do this for a living. I'm a business coach. It's what I do for a living and people contact me and ask me to give them feedback on their website for free, or they say "Hey, can I take 10 minutes of your time?" and then 20 minutes later, they're still asking for more.

So you want to be respectful of time and resources. If someone is giving feedback as part of their business, you know, honor that. I mean, you can get John Braheny. You can get Jason Bloom. You can get you know Dan Keppel.

You can get Steve Memel. You can get a lot of really serious players/professionals. You can ask them for feedback, but expect to pay them for it. That's part of their business.

If they do this for money – don't expect to get it for free!

And they may be willing to give you a couple of tips for free, and if they do that, be tremendously grateful and honored. You know because that's something they get paid big money for. So be respectful of their time and resources.



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Let them know that your intention is to become the best you are capable of – and you appreciate their help in this process.

Let them know that your intention is to become the best you're capable of, and you appreciate their help in this process. So, when you go for feedback, you say to them, "Look, my goal is to be the best... (Whatever). I can be, the best songwriter, the best painter, the best whatever I can be. I would really appreciate your help in this process. And this is the key thing, it won't hurt my feelings."

Reassure them of your ability to take it.

You need to reassure them of your ability to take it. I've talked to dozens of venue owners in my days at conferences who talked about the artist who asked them for honest feedback and then get pissed off when they give it.

And we're going to talk about this, you need to remember that feedback is just information. It doesn't mean that you're a failure unless you decide that it means you're a failure. So if you're reacting emotionally, look at that, and we're going to talk about that in a minute.

So, ask for feedback. Let them know that you can take it, and be grateful for it. So that's the most effective ways to solicit and receive overt feedback. As far as your fans, one of the best ways to get feedback is to ask them for testimonials after a concert. You can also ask, you can survey them. Use surveymonkey.com, and ask them, you know, specific questions.

I know this one guy who will write a song, record it, post it on his blog, and then create a survey around it. And actually ask people to listen to this song and answer 5 questions. So they listen to this song and they at least give him specific, real time feedback-- hugely valuable.

And it has the effect of doing step 7 in the [Multiple Streams of Income](#) model, which is to deepen your relationship with them, because you know what, when someone gives you feedback, they become invested in your success. They start to care about you, and that's a great position to be in with your fans. Don't you think?

HOW TO RECEIVE FEEDBACK

So, do you guys have any questions before I move on? Okay. The next is how to receive this feedback that you've gone out of your way to solicit. So here's the thing, when it's in person, I recommend that you stand with both feet flat on the floor with your hands at your side, with your knees slightly bent, with your butt tucked under just slightly, so that you're kind of in a very balanced, relaxed stance and breathe.



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SHUT UP! AND BREATHE

When someone is giving you feedback, "Well, you know I watched your show, and this is what I like, and this is what I didn't..." your job is to shut up and breathe. I'm going to say that again. When someone is giving you feedback, shut up and breathe.

THE ONLY QUESTION YOU'RE ALLOWED TO ASK IS – CAN YOU BE MORE SPECIFIC?

The only question you're allowed to ask is, "Can you be more specific?" So for example, if they say, "You know, I really liked that song," "That's great! Can you be more specific? What did you like about it?"

And you know what, sometimes they can and sometimes they can't, because remember, they may or may not have language to give you useful feedback. So be grateful for whatever they give you. The only question you're allowed to ask is, "Can you be more specific?"

THE ONLY APPROPRIATE RESPONSE IS THANK YOU. FOR AT LEAST 2 HOURS.

And the only appropriate response is, "Thank you," for at least 2 hours. In other words, while someone is giving you feedback, you breathe. You stand in a relaxed and open position. You breathe. You say, "Thank you," and that's it!

NOTICE ANY EMOTIONS THAT ARE COMING UP WITHOUT ENGAGING IN THEM

Now, while this is happening, I recommend that you notice any emotions that are coming up, but don't engage in them. So notice if you get angry. Notice if you get resentful or defensive. Notice if you feel hurt. Just notice. "That makes me feel sad; isn't that interesting." Okay? But your job is to shut up and breathe. Just breathe.

IT'S GREAT TO COME BACK LATER AND TELL THEM HOW YOU IMPLEMENTED THE FEEDBACK – BUT IN THE MOMENT, JUST SAY THANK YOU – ANYTHING ELSE IS DEFLECTION.

Now, it's great to come back later and tell them how you implemented the feedback they gave you--if you did. In the moment, just say, "Thank you," because anything and everything else is deflection, meaning that anything else that you say or do blocks the feedback from coming in, and you don't want to do that. You want to breathe and allow the feedback in.

Now, that's not the same thing as believing it. We'll talk about that in a minute, but you do want to allow the feedback in past your filters; otherwise, it's useless to you. The only other thing that you can do is take notes.

And boy! if you've gone to someone like John Braheny, and/or you're at a conference and you're getting feedback from a mentor, take massive notes. If you can write what



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they say verbatim, it would be really good, because I promise you that what you hear may not be what they say, because you have filters on or because you have an emotional response to it. Okay?

WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN RECEIVING FEEDBACK (EITHER ASKED FOR OR UNINVITED)

So here's what NOT to do when receiving feedback. Whether that feedback is invited or uninvited, this is what you never do when receiving feedback.

DON'T ARGUE WITH THE FEEDBACK!

DON'T JUSTIFY WHY YOU GOT THAT FEEDBACK

So for example, if they say, "Oh well, you know when you went for that high note, you kind of missed it." "Oh well, I'm fighting a cold right now." Uh-uh! Breathe, and say, "Thank you."

DON'T AGREE OR DISAGREE – JUST BREATHE AND LISTEN

Agreeing with the feedback is as much as deflection as disagreeing with it. Just breathe and let it in.

DON'T LEAP INTO ACTION – BUT DO TAKE GOOD NOTES

And don't leap into action, by the way. Don't go back, and you know, if you're getting feedback on a song you've written or a painting you've done, don't go back and change everything. Take good notes. Breathe and let it in.

HOW TO MAINTAIN YOUR EQUILIBRIUM AND FAITH IN YOURSELF WHEN RECEIVING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

And finally, how to keep, maintain your equilibrium and your faith in yourself when receiving that feedback, particularly when the feedback is what to work on or what to fix.

NOTICE ANY EMOTIONS THAT ARE COMING UP WITH CURIOSITY

Notice any emotions that are coming up with curiosity, "Oh! I'm feeling really angry! Isn't that interesting?"

NOTICE WHAT YOU'RE MAKING THE FEEDBACK MEAN

REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE ENGAGED IN A PURPOSEFUL AND INTENTIONAL GROWTH PROCESS – AND IF YOU WEREN'T, YOU ARE NOW!

Notice what you're making the feedback mean, "Oh this person hates me. I'll never book this venue again." Just notice. Don't believe it. Don't disbelieve it. Don't fight with it. Don't challenge it. Just notice it.



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So notice any emotions that are coming up with curiosity. Notice what you are making the feedback mean and remember. This is so important. Remember that you are engaged in a purposeful and intentional growth process. And if you weren't before, honey, you are now!

Remember that you are engaged in a purposeful and intentional growth process, which means all feedback has value and no feedback means that you won't fail. In fact, feedback has no intrinsic meaning at all, which we're going to talk about a bit more.

Any questions before I move on on this? Because I know that that's a challenging piece. Questions about how to receive feedback. Questions about how to maintain your even footing while receiving feedback. Any questions about that? Any feedback on that? Okay. Let's move on...

HOW TO GLEAN FEEDBACK FROM YOUR MOST CHALLENGING EXPERIENCES

So, let's talk about...so we talked about how to get feedback overtly meaning asking someone specifically to give you feedback. Let's talk about a little bit about how to get feedback from your circumstances and your experiences, meaning stuff happens. You look at it, and you draw learning from it. You draw feedback from it.

REMEMBER THIS FORMULA – $E+R = O$ (SUCCESS PRINCIPLES)

So, I want you to write down on your notes the following formula, $E+R=O$. This, by the way, comes from Jack Canfield's *Success Principles*. $E+R=O$. What that stands for is the Event plus your Response or Reaction equals the Outcome.

ASK YOURSELF – HOW DID MY RESPONSE LEAD TO THIS OUTCOME? HOW DID THE EVENT LEAD TO THIS OUTCOME

So when you're looking at an outcome, you need to ask yourself, "What was the event? What did I do, think, believe, expect? What actions did I take? What did I say and how did I say it that led me to this outcome?" Because the events are what they are.

You know, Katrina was what Katrina was, but our outcomes from Katrina came not just from the storm itself, but from how we as a society responded to that storm, and in fact, continue to respond to that event. That leads us to our outcome.



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And so, looking at something that's not hitting you guys personally, you can see how that works. It's a little bit harder when it's really personal, you know. So if you're looking at a particular outcome, it's really good to disengage from it--emotionally--as much as you can.

And start asking some of the following questions, and I'll try and go through these slowly so you can take notes on them.

WHAT COULD I HAVE DONE DIFFERENTLY TO GET TO A DIFFERENT OUTCOME

What could I have done differently to get a different outcome? I mean, let's look at Katrina, right? Huge, huge destructive outcomes. Well, one of the events that happened long before Katrina happened was that all of the engineers told the city of New Orleans that their levees were going to break, and their response to that information was to do nothing. And thus, their levees broke. So the outcome was in part a result of their response to that information. It happened long before the actual storm happened.

So in looking at an outcome, it's actually a really good idea to go back further in time, and see if you can find the very first event that led to that outcome. And look at that, because very often there's a lot of much deeper feedback available to you. So what could you have done differently to get to a different outcome?

HOW IS THIS OUTCOME A GOOD THING?

How is this outcome, the one I'm dealing with right now, a good thing? Sometimes we can't see that right away, sometimes it takes time and distance. I mean, when I got ill back in 1995 and really for the first 6 years after I got ill, I couldn't see why it was a good thing.

And I wouldn't be here doing this with you guys on this phone if I had not gotten sick in 1995, because I would never become a coach and I would never have reconnected with Wendy which led us to create [Artist's EDGE](#), which led me to buy her out, which led us to create the you know the [Artist's EDGE](#) membership, all of that stuff. All of those occurrences came as a result of me getting seriously ill in 1995.

That was actually a good thing for me, even though it was a really, really, really hard thing for me. So how is this outcome a good thing? Let's say you don't get a gig that you really wanted. It may be that, you know, 2 weeks down the road, you're going to get an even better opportunity that you would not have been available to had you gotten this gig. You just don't know. So how is this outcome a good thing?



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WHAT, IF ANYTHING, CAN I DO NOW TO CHANGE THIS OUTCOME?

What, if anything, can I do to change this outcome? So in other words, is there a way for you to actually go back and undo something that happened? You know, something happens with a friend or a loved one. Is there a way for you to repair fences? You know, to mend those things.

WHAT CAN I DO NEXT TIME TO GET A DIFFERENT OUTCOME?

What, if anything, can I do now to change this outcome, which leads me to, what can I do the next time to get a different outcome? What can I do the next time to get a different outcome? And that's going to stem right out of that first question which is, what could I have done differently, right?

This next question is going to have you really look at who you are and whom you're being in the face of these events or circumstances that create your response.

WHAT MOTIVATED MY RESPONSE? WHAT BELIEFS, ASSUMPTIONS, EXPECTATIONS LED ME TO RESPOND/REACT AS I DID?

What motivated my response? What beliefs, assumptions, expectations led me to respond or react as I did?

WHAT COULD I BELIEVE, ASSUME, EXPECT THAT WOULD LEAD ME TO A DIFFERENT RESPONSE?

What could I believe, assume, expect that could lead me to a different response? So given this same set of circumstances, what could I believe about these circumstances that might lead me to respond differently?

WHAT LESSONS ARE HERE FOR ME – AND WHAT ARE THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THOSE LESSONS THAT I CAN APPLY TO OTHER AREAS OF MY LIFE?

And finally, what lessons are here for me? And what are the underlying principles of those lessons that I can apply to other areas of my life?

GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK

So in how to glean feedback from your most challenging experiences, remembering the formula, $E+R=O$, asking yourself these series of questions. It's a really good exercise to just, you know, journal about these experiences.

YOU MAY NEED TO WAIT UNTIL THE BRUNT OF AN EXPERIENCE PASSES BEFORE USING THIS METHOD.



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And the final one is to give yourself a break. You know, you may need to wait until the brunt of an experience passes before really using this exercise, before really using this method, especially if the event included a great loss or disappointment.

I will tell you that when I got ill, I guess I'd been ill for about 2 months, when a very dear friend who I respect highly asked me that question, "So, what can you learn from this experience?" or you know what, "How did you get this outcome? Where did this come from?" And what I said to them, because at that point I was bedridden and barely able to put two sentences together, I said to her, "That's a really, really good question. I really appreciate you asking that question. I can't even look at that now. I'm not there yet."

I knew because I'd been doing this kind of work since I was... oh, about 17, that I would be there at some point. And I spent a lot of time, over the last 15 years (it's been 15 years since getting sick), looking at that and really asking those questions, but at that moment, there was no way in heck I could do it.

So give yourself a break. It's okay to wait to ask these questions. Let yourself have the experience and process the emotions, and then ask yourself these questions, okay?

So one last piece and then I'm going to open it up for you guys to actually talk about specific experiences that you've had, and perhaps we can get some useful feedback out of it. So do be prepared to bring yourself off mute by hitting *6, but I'm not quite there yet.

THE BEST WAYS TO INTERPRET AND IMPLEMENT FEEDBACK

REMEMBER – DO NOT RESPOND OR INTERACT WITH THE FEEDBACK, JUST LISTEN AND BREATHE AND SAY THANK YOU

So the best ways to interpret and implement feedback. So going back to what I told you to do when receiving that income, which was to shut up and listen. For at least 2 hours, just let it lie. Do not respond or interact with the feedback; just listen and breathe, and say, "Thank you."

TAKE NOTES ON ANY SPECIFIC PIECES THAT IMMEDIATELY APPEAL TO YOU AND ANY THAT REALLY PISS YOU OFF.

Take notes on any specific pieces that immediately appeal to you AND any that really piss you off, and as much as you can actually, I recommend writing verbatim what people say. It can be hugely helpful, because you'll come back and look at that



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writing, you know, and realize that boy, you heard something completely different, and it's a really interesting exercise to do by the way.

WAIT 2 HOURS BEFORE DECIDING WHAT, IF ANYTHING YOU'RE GOING TO DO WITH FEEDBACK. DURING WHICH YOU JUST CONTINUE TO BREATHE AND NOTICE ANY EMOTIONS THAT ARE COMING UP

Then wait two hours before deciding what, if anything, you're going to do with feedback. During which you just continue to breathe and notice any emotions that are coming up. Just breathe and notice the emotions.

AFTER THAT 2 HOURS HAVE PASSED, THINK ABOUT THE FEEDBACK:

After that 2 hours or more have passed, think about the feedback. So here's the thing that you have to know:

SOME OF THE FEEDBACK YOU CAN SEE HOW TO USE RIGHT A WAY

Some feedback, you will be able to see how to use immediately. "Oh well, if you just do this chord change," or "What if you blend it a little white into that painting right there?" or something that's really specific. Very often, you can just put right into action. Some of the feedback you will be able to see how to use right away.

SOME OF THE FEEDBACK IS MORE ABOUT THEM THAN ABOUT YOU – SO JUST SET THAT ASIDE FOR NOW

Some of the feedback is more about the person who's given the feedback than it is about you, and if you believe that's the case, because you know what the truth is, we all communicate from within our filters, and so what I'm experiencing and then what I'm giving you feedback on is completely dependent on my context on my beliefs, my expectations, my assumptions, who I think you are, who I think you are in relationship to me, all of that stuff colors my experience and therefore will color my feedback.

When you're getting feedback from a specific expert, they're going to be giving you feedback based on their genre. I've seen this happen time and again where a country music person will give a heavy metal guy feedback on their song, and guess what, a lot of that feedback probably isn't all that useful 'cause it's not their genre.

So, some of the feedback is more about them than it is about you, so just set it aside. And again, you don't set it aside within those 2 first hours. You set it aside after the 2 hours have gone by. You say to yourself, "Well, is this something I can use right now? Is this something that is more about them than it is me?" And if it is, you can just set it aside.



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FEEDBACK THAT IS CONFUSING OR MYSTIFYING OR YOU THINK IS JUST WRONG – LET IT IN. AND DECIDE TO SET IT ASIDE FOR NOW.

If the feedback is confusing or mystifying or you think it's just wrong, let it in, right? Those 2 hours, you let it in. You let it lie. You just let it be. And then 2 hours later, decide to set it aside for now.

FEEDBACK THAT TRIGGERS STRONG EMOTIONS – USE THE “ISN'T THAT INTERESTING” PROCESS

If feedback triggers strong emotions, there's value there for you, even if you think it's just wrong or confusing or mystifying or about them and not about you, because guess what, that feedback did not cause those emotions, you did.

That feedback triggered a belief within you that created the feeling. So the emotion can be hugely valuable to you if you will just look at it, and say, "Ha! I'm really pissed off. Isn't that interesting? I wonder what I'm thinking, believing, assuming, expecting, that's having me feel pissed off? Well, I guess I'm believing that other people are better than me. Isn't that interesting? What could I believe differently that might have me feel better?"

So in other words, you use your response or reactions to feedback as a buoy showing you the location of an emotion that's not working for you. I'm sorry...showing you the location of a belief that's not working for you, and then you can use all of the skills you learn in the Transform Your Beliefs class to transform that belief into a belief that works better!

Notice, we didn't make the feedback mean anything. We're not agreeing with the feedback or disagreeing with the feedback, because all of that blocks your...its usefulness. You either implement it or you set it aside, okay?

Here's what really cool if you use this technique, and I've been using this technique, I guess I learned this technique when I was around 20. And I've been using this technique for years, and the thing that I noticed in my mid-20's was that a lot of feedback that I got when I was 20 and 21 and 22, that I had no idea what they were talking about.

So I said, "That's just...what?" But I let it in and I let it sit, and then I set it aside. And 3 years later, something would happen and that feedback would float back up to my consciousness, and all of a sudden it would click into place, and I would say to myself, "Oh! That's what they were talking about! Oh, I can use that."



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If I had defended, if I had deflected, if I had denied or argued with that piece of feedback because I didn't get it at the time, I would have totally missed the opportunity for it to float back up 3 years later in a way that I could implement. Totally miss that opportunity, because I would not have let it in and not for it to actually process it in my brain, okay?

ALLOW YOURSELF TO JUST LET IT IN, WITHOUT NEEDING TO MAKE IT (OR THE PERSON GIVING IT TO YOU) RIGHT OR WRONG – BUT INSTEAD LOOK FOR WHAT IS USEFUL RIGHT NOW – AND FILE THE REST AWAY FOR THE FUTURE ...

So allow yourself to just let it in without needing to make it or the person giving it to you right or wrong. Instead, just look for what is useful right now and file the rest away for the future. And you know what? There's pieces of feedback that people gave me back then that I've never used. So what? It doesn't harm me by filing it away. It doesn't damage me by filing it away, because I'm not believing it or disbelieving it. I'm not arguing with it. I'm not making it mean anything. I'm just filing it, just goes into the big filing cabinet, and the amazing thing about your brain is you have practically unlimited space for filing. So just go ahead and file it!

Okay. I've got 15 minutes. Let's come on off mute. Hit *6. Hello! Say hello!

Steve: Hello.

Debra: Is that Steve?

Steve: Can I talk?

Debra: Yes.

Steve: Okay, well, you know I play piano, and I was playing in a restaurant at a gig...a weekly gig, but the manager started complaining to me. I wasn't bringing in enough customers since she talked to me a few times. And then I went there one night to play with all my equipment, and they cancelled me without notice. Then I still continued to play there, and then the second time after I played there, she only offered to give me half my pay.

Debra: Okay.

Steve: Just talking about it, I'm getting...

Debra: Angry.

Steve: Angry.



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Debra: Okay. So that's feedback, right?

Steve: And I was furious! And I took all my self-control not to strangle her.

Debra: Okay.

Steve: So, what do you do with feedback like that?\

Debra: Well actually...stop, stop, stop, stop. So first, breathe.

Steve: Yes.

Debra: And guess what? So the event was the way that this relationship just slid into a bad place, and then you had this outcome, this response to it, which led you to an outcome. But what do you think was the very first event that led to that outcome?

Steve: Well, when she complained the first time, not bringing in enough customers.

Debra: Yes, and how did you respond to that complaint?

Steve: Well, I'd say, "Well, I'm doing the best I can. I'm emailing all my fans, and you're not putting anything up on the sign..."

Debra: Ah! So you defended yourself?

Steve: I didn't say it like that in that angry of tone, but I...

Debra: It's not important how you said it. You defended yourself, did you not?

Steve: Yeah.

Debra: Yeah, instead of shutting up and listening, and saying, "Thank you."

Steve: Okay...

Debra: And! She gave you really valuable feedback. She basically told you what she-- as your customer--needs and expects.

Steve: Say that again?

Debra: She gave you very valuable information. She, as your customer, told you what she needs and expects.

Steve: Right.



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Debra: That's tremendously valuable. I can't tell you how many times people will get fired from a gig without ever getting any feedback like that. That was a huge opportunity for you.

Steve: Yeah, well, I did the best I could, and then...

Debra: It's not the point. It's not the point.

Steve: ...it didn't turn out...

Debra: You're defending yourself right now actually.

Steve: Oh okay, yeah (laugh). I guess I do it more than I thought.

Debra: I think you do! (Laugh) So what could you have done differently to get a different outcome?

Steve: Um, besides bringing in more customers, and...

Debra: Oh! I think that is what you could have done differently to get a different outcome.

Steve: Yeah. Is that what you were asking?

Debra: Yes. And also, one of the things you could have done differently just right there in the moment with her is ask her to be specific. How many customers do you want me to bring in in order to maintain this gig? What do you expect? Be specific.

Steve: Okay.

Debra: Right? And that's not defensive. That's saying what do you want? What do you need? How can I serve you?

Debra: She's your customer.

Steve: Yeah. That's amazing! You're treating her as giving feedback as if I went to Jason Bloom for feedback...

Debra: It's all feedback.

Steve: ...because she's not a pro in the music business, she doesn't know music...

Debra: She's your customer. She's your client.

Steve: She's my boss!



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Debra: No, no, no. She's your customer. She's your customer. She's buying your services.

Steve: Okay...Oh, right! You're right. (Laugh) I never looked at it that way.

Debra: Isn't that interesting? So your customer gave you very specific feedback, and then when she didn't get what she expected, she stopped being as good a customer. Guess what? That's how it works!

Steve: It's a cruel world...

Debra: I know, right?! Right?

Steve: Yep. Yeah!

Debra: Here was a wonderful opportunity for you to develop your marketing skills. You were doing everything you sought to do, but you don't know what you don't know, and the feedback she gave you was that you need to improve your skills, because your marketing effort ain't cutting it.

Steve: Yep.

Debra: What a great opportunity to expand, improve, and develop your marketing skills. So that's how that outcome is a good thing, isn't it?

Steve: Yes! You just turned it around.

Debra: How do you feel now?

Steve: Much better! Much more lighter.

Debra: Isn't that interesting?

Steve: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Debra: You have to remember this about your emotions, Steve, and I think you've been a member, and we have enough interaction long enough that I can hopefully give you some coaching feedback.

Steve: Yes. I love it!

Debra: You believe your emotions. You think they're real, and you let them take you over.

Steve: Doesn't everybody?



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Debra: No. There's a wonderful book called *Emotional Intelligence* that's just...by Daniel Goleman...that's about this specifically. Your emotions...Here's what your emotions are, your emotions are buoys to your unconscious. It's like your unconscious is the deep blue sea, and your emotions are the buoys that are saying, "Reefs. Rocks. Here be dragons." That's what your emotions are. There signs and symbols, because that's how your unconscious communicates with you. They're not real, except as buoys as real messages.

And here's the magical thing that happened...what just happened in our interaction is that you got the messages they were trying to send you, and so they just faded. You get that?

Steve: Yes.

Debra: We didn't feel that anger. We didn't process that anger. We used it as a buoy. "Oh, there's something interesting here. There's learning to be had here. Let's go deeper. Let's explore this and see what we can find," and then as soon as you do that, the emotion dissipates, 'cause it's done its job. It got your attention. Yeah?

Steve: Yeah. Thank you, Debra.

Debra: You're welcome! Hey, Catherine you still there?

Catherine: Oh yeah.

Debra: Did you have a question or a feedback opportunity that you wanted to talk about?

Catherine: Well, I haven't had anything...nothing flowing to mind that was difficult as that one. And I must say my sympathies are with Steve for having that...

Debra: Oh, and mine too!

Catherine: ...I personally feel that it was not fair to be cancelled without notice, and you know, I guess I give some solidarity with you about that. I mean not that...

Steve: Yeah.

Catherine: ...I feel it's important to validate. That's not fair.

Debra: Yeah, it's not the way...it's not a good way to do business in general, and but here's the thing, notice what you're doing right now, Catherine, you're disagreeing with the feedback he got, because her response...



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Catherine: I am absolutely disagreeing with that feedback...

Debra: That's not a useful thing to do. That's actually one of my don'ts. Don't agree or disagree with feedback. Just breathe and listen, and notice what it is triggering in you.

I know, I get really incensed about things that I don't think are fair. Fair is...I'm a Libra...fair is a big thing for me, and the most useful thing about that incensed is to find out, "What's the truth? You know, what is that? I'm incensed right now. Isn't that interesting? Wonder what that's about?"

But again, if you're looking at the feedback and arguing with it, defending yourself, making the other person wrong, you're not receiving the feedback. You couldn't receive it.

Catherine: Well, this was not my experience.

Debra: No, I know, and I'm just saying in general you--the big you, right? 'Cause you know, we do that! We don't want to hear it.

Catherine: Oh no, and as I said my empathy is in solidarity.

Debra: Absolutely!

Catherine: You know, I do have a political instinct here, and I'm going to own that without apology.

Debra: Okay, absolutely!

Steve: Can I just ask you something real quick?

Debra: Go ahead!

Steve: ...that related to this? What if I had a different response to that, and I was very calm and a few days later I took her to small claims court? Would that be cancelling that feedback or that's obviously fighting that feedback--not agreeing with it?

Debra: No, it's not necessarily fighting the feedback. It's choosing your response to the feedback, right? There was an event, and you have a response to it and that's going to lead you to a particular set of outcomes. And you need to ask yourself are those the outcomes you want? Because I will tell you there will be unexpected and unpredicted outcomes knowing no matter what your choices are. That's life, right?



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That's life. Stuff happens that we're like, "How the heck did that happen? Where did that come from?" But if we really look at it and say, "Okay. Well, what were the events that led up to that outcome? What were my responses to that event? How did I create that outcome? What/where's my responsibility in that?"

And you know what? Sometimes small claims court is an appropriate response, "I'm taking my landlord to small claims court." I mean, you know that can be an appropriate response, that doesn't mean...there was a lot of feedback for me in that interaction with him, and the whole thing, I mean, I learned so many lessons about how to document everything with the landlord, and you know and put it all in writing and record everything and all of that stuff because boy, I'm going to be going to small claims court without any of that evidence. That's really good feedback for me, 'cause I just couldn't even believe that he would be this like sleazy, but anyway that's a whole other story.

And again, right? It triggers my fairness thing. I get that, but my point is, you know, we walk through life and were human beings, right? We have reactions; we have responses. That's just life, right?

And if your intention is to grow, develop, expand not only as an artist, but as a human, and as a business person, then working this feedback process will be tremendously valuable, and I'm betting, Steve, how long ago did that happened with her?

Steve: Um, that was a year ago, August or September.

Debra: I'm betting if we had this conversation the first week that it happened, we would have not gotten to the feedback. You might not have been ready to hear it. If we had done it within the first week of this all happening, it probably would have been too soon.

Steve: Right! 'Cause I had the experience, and I was ready to hear what you had to say, and I was, you know...

Debra: Yeah, it is time for you to look back on it. Very often when we have a very strong reaction to something, it's really important to notice the reaction, to think and to say, you know, "Let me give myself a break. Let me give myself some time to just have my response." And then go back and look for what the feedback is.

Steve: And then what do I do every time I drive by there? The anger starts swelling up. The hatred starts.

Debra: First of all, that may not be as true now that we processed a little bit.



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Steve: Right.

Debra: Don't assume that you're still where you were 5 minutes ago, 'cause you're not. That's the first thing. Second of all, keep using it as a buoy. Keep going back and say, "I'm angry. Isn't that interesting?" The sense of curiosity about your own emotion is a key piece to this process, because as long as what I said to you, as long as you are believing your emotions, as long as you're wallowing and allowing yourself to, "Oh, I'm just furious..."

As long as you're reacting to your emotions, they aren't serving you. They aren't doing the job that they're to do, which is to bring your attention to the information they're trying to give you.

Steve: Uh-hmm.

Debra: There's a great chapter in the *Artist's Way*...Um, I'm just making notes for what I'm mentioning in this class. In the *Artist's Way*, I think it's week 4, which is the week in which you deal with anger.

Steve: What book is that?

Debra: The *Artist's Way*.

Steve: By whom?

Debra: Julia Cameron. The link will be on the call...that you know, it's really, it's a signal, like she talks about jealousy of other artists, and that...really all that is your inner artist saying, "Let me out to play! I want to be doing that," right? It's just... because the emotion, jealousy in this case, or anger, is a buoy. It's just saying, "Look at me down here. There's something going on down here that you need to look at."

So use it as an opportunity, Steve, to interact with your own emotions from a place of curiosity. "Ha, isn't that interesting? I'm really pissed off." And if you can giggle a little bit when you say it, even better!

Catherine: Is there not a possibility that that one's emotions might be alerting that one has screwed over?

Debra: Yes, absolutely. That might be the information that was there. Very often when I'm angry, it's because someone steps on my boundaries, and very often, I discover that I had boundaries that I didn't even know existed until someone stepped on them, and man, am I pissed off.



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But guess what, that anger is not about them. It's about me and my boundaries. Other people do not cause your emotions, your beliefs, expectations, assumptions, cause your emotions. Your thoughts create your emotion, so what are you thinking? That's where the information is.

And maybe what you're thinking is, "I need to stand up for myself." Maybe that's the information, but you won't know until you look. Don't assume that that's the information. You won't know until you genuinely inquire "I'm really angry; I wonder what that's about?"

And as long as you're making it about them, you are blind. Does that make sense?

Steve: Oh yeah. Debra, what's the name in the book you mentioned earlier?

Debra: All of the books that are mentioned will be up on the post. So just check for...once they're recorded, you get the emails that says the recording is up. Just go to the page, and it'll be up.

Steve: On that page where the recording is available?

Debra: Yep. All of...everything that I mentioned will be there.

Steve: Okay, great.

Debra: Yeah. So we are out of time. Do you guys want to say what you're taking away from tonight's call, and what you might be ready to implement in the next week or so?

Catherine: Well, for me, it's just kind of reaffirmation for how I'm trying to approach the different songwriting workshop, and songwriters' circles that I'm recently involved in, and it's just kind of codifying the approach that I've been trying to, I think, instinctively be in anyway.

Debra: Good!

Catherine: It's very nice to review it, and I appreciate it.

Debra: And you might want to just notice how other people do it and what works for them and not so much.

Catherine: Right.

Debra: 'Cause we can learn from other people's feedback too. (Laugh). Great, What about you, Steve?



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Steve: Well, it's not to invest myself so quickly into my emotions and react, you know, it's just...or if I... it's just to look at, you know, whatever happens to me. This experience we discussed to look at it as feedback and use it more constructively, rather than just being stuck in my emotions. And like you said, she was telling me that I need to improve my marketing skills. Well, she didn't say those words, but that was what she was implying, so I could have gotten better at that and brought in people maybe. That could be could be. It's like you choose the outcome.

Debra: Exactly.

Steve: You were saying as well, we choose the outcome. So you know if you want to be full of emotion and anger, you want it to be something more constructive or something more present. You were talking about being present, I love that. I love how you were saying to take feedback, standing grounded, and focused and breathing and just listening, being receptive. That's fabulous.

Debra: Alright. So I want to suggest also, Steve, that you may want to listen to the Emotional Intelligence call, which is the call I did a while back.

Steve: Yeah, that's what I was referring to...Thank you.

Debra: Yeah, and that's a call, but it's also a book, and I'll put the link for both--up on the page. And the other thing that might be really useful...Oh no, I'm blanking on it. I had another thought...I don't remember. If I remember it, I'll email you. (Laugh) It went right off the window.

Steve: Okay.

Debra: Alright guys, thanks so much for being on the call.

Steve: You're welcome.

Debra: Have a great night! And oh yeah, one last thing. You may have seen the emails about the Time Management Intensive Program. I have extended the early bird discount for another 2 days until Thursday night. So if you want to take advantage of it, that discount comes off of your already discounted membership price. So you're already get a discount as a member, and then you can apply the early bird coupon and get an even deeper discount. So you might want to think about that, and do feel...please share it with other people who you think would find it valuable.

Steve: Even if they're not members?



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Debra: Even if they're not members. Then they just order it off the regular page, but they can still use the early bird discount until it's gone. I'm only giving five of those, and one's already gone, so actually there's 4 left.

Steve: Okay, thank you!

Debra: You're welcome. Thank you, guys. Goodnight.

Steve: Goodnight.

Catherine: Goodnight.