

John Sturrock Podcast

(transcript)

Better Conversations, Better Outcomes

Session 8: Giving Feedback: Using HPDREE

This podcast (number 8 in the series) has arisen out of a coaching session I had with a senior professional who was preparing to give feedback to an organisation whose work she oversees.

In the course of our session we explored a tool that I have used for many years as a way to provide information most effectively when reviewing someone else's performance. Giving really good feedback, in other words.

Just like "Why am I asking this question of this person at this time in the way" which I discussed in podcast 7, this technique was developed from work I did with some senior American practitioners many years ago.

So, let's talk about **HPDREE**. Like **AARREE** (which we covered in podcasts 1-3), **HPDREE** gives us a framework to convey information in a certain order which optimises its impact. Interestingly, in my coaching session, we realised that **AARREE** is a perfect preface to **HPDREE**. You'll need to go back to podcasts 1-3 to dig deeper into **AARREE** and work out why!

HPDREE stands for:

- **Headline**
- **Playback**
- **Diagnosis**
- **Remedy**
- **Example** and
- **Explanation**

This is probably best illustrated by an example. So, let's imagine you are giving feedback to someone (let's call him Frank) about how he handled a difficult meeting:

"Frank

I'd like to discuss the way you respond to something that appears to be a challenge to your authority.

When Bill asked why you had decided to stop the project, you turned to Bill and said: "How dare you interrupt me, you should know your place and keep quiet until I ask for your comments." Bill left the meeting immediately after.

Your words came across to Bill as accusatory and abrupt. They seemed to lack respect for him and his views.

In future, I suggest that you approach these matters more objectively, showing respect for others' views even if you disagree.

For example, you could have said to Bill: “Thank you for your observation. I’d like to deal with that at a later stage.”

By doing this you acknowledge his intervention in a respectful way but still keep control of the agenda and therefore maintain your own authority.”

Let’s now debrief on that example:

The **Headline** is the introduction to the topic: *“I’d like to discuss the way you respond to something that appears to be a challenge to your authority.”*

Playback is repetition of exactly what was said and/or done as a matter of fact not judgment: *“When Bill asked why you had decided to stop the project, you turned to Bill and said: “How dare you interrupt me, you should know your place and keep quiet until I ask for your comments.” Bill left the meeting immediately after.”*

Diagnosis is your explanation of why what you have played back did not seem to work: *“Your words came across to Bill as accusatory and abrupt. They seemed to lack respect for him and his views.”*

Then you move to **Remedy** by looking ahead and offering a different way of doing it: *“In future, I suggest that you approach these matters more objectively, showing respect for others’ views even if you disagree.”*

To be really effective though, it is good to provide a specific illustration of how to do that: *“For example, you could have said to Bill: “Thank you for your observation. I’d like to deal with that at a later stage.””* As it says, that is the **Example** you give.

Finally you tie it all back to the headline with an **Explanation** of why your remedy and example should be more effective: *“By doing this you acknowledge his intervention in a respectful way but still keep control of the agenda and therefore maintain your own authority.”*

Another way of looking at this is to ask: **What** happened? **Why** did it happen? **What** could be done differently? **How** might that be achieved? And **Why** would that work better?

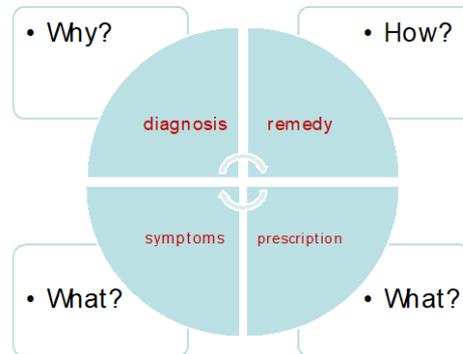
What, why, what, how, and why.

Past and present focussed initially (P,D), then forward looking (R,E,E) with a clear topic identified to start with (H).

There is another similar useful tool from the Harvard school known as the **Circle Chart: Symptoms, Diagnosis, Remedy, Prescription**. Again: *what* and *why* in the present; *what* and *how* in the future.



Harvard Circle Chart



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In passing, if you wish to acknowledge that something has been done well, you can still use HPD: Headline, Playback, then Diagnosis being *“that worked well because.....”*. You can even still suggest improvement: *“you might achieve even more if....”* Etc etc, using R, E, E: Remedy, Example, Explanation.

And you can cover both something done well and something that can be done differently. Just use HPDREE each time in your feedback.

The key aspects of this HPDREE framework are that it is specific, not judgmental, not a finding of right or wrong nor of fault, it's fact-based not opinionated, short and to the point, and designed to help in the future; in other words, to stretch not to limit.

Try it and see how well it works!