



SOCIETY OF  
ACTUARIES®

2019 **ANNUAL  
MEETING**  
& EXHIBIT

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## Session 082: Can We Just Talk? The Art of Feedback

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# Can We Just Talk?

## The Art of Feedback

Nancy Abbott

October 29, 2019





Session Presented By:

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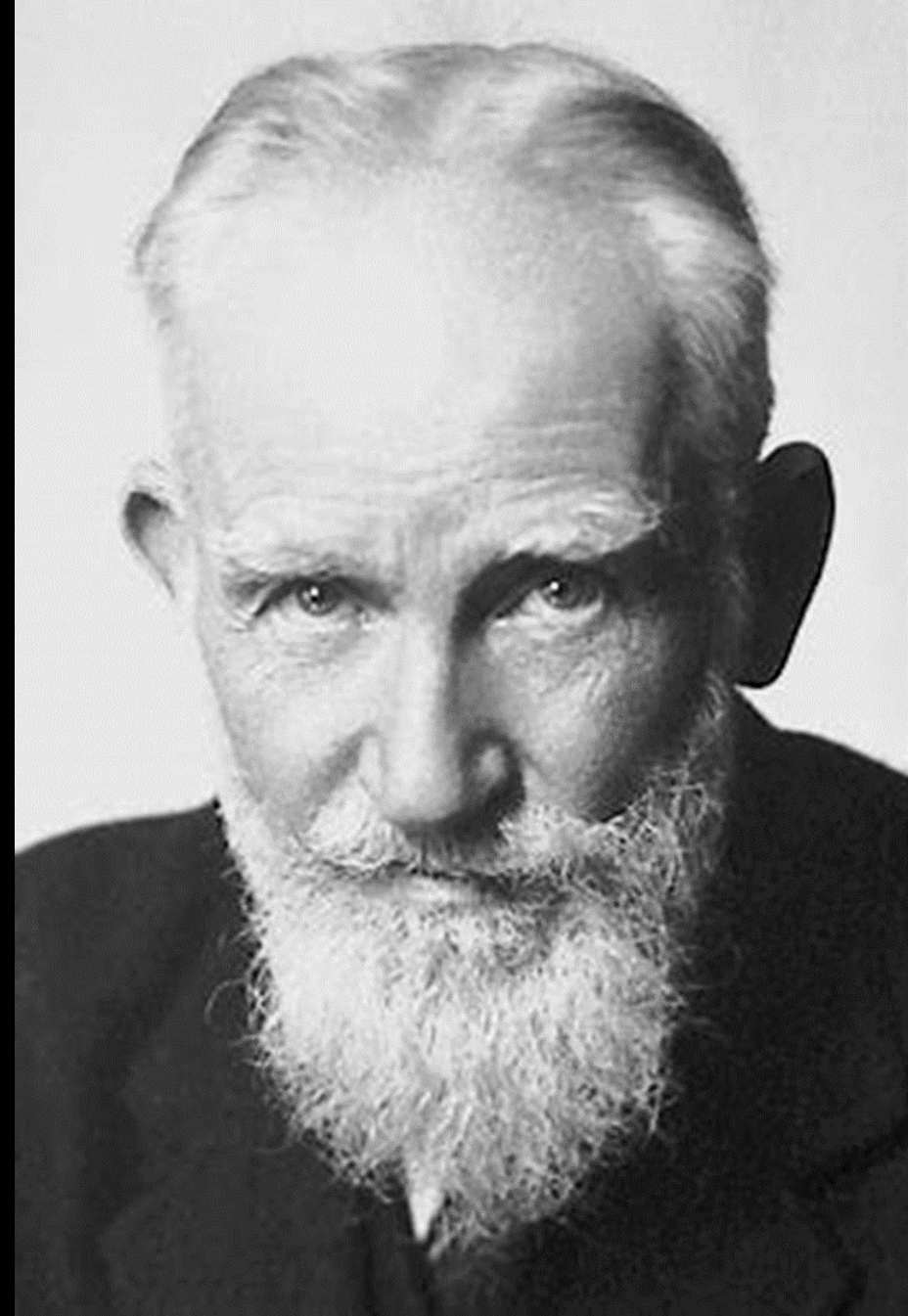


# Can We Just Talk?

Nancy Abbott|nansabbott@gmail.com

The Single Biggest  
Problem with  
Communication is the  
Illusion that It Has Taken  
Place.

George Bernard Shaw



# Is Communication Really a Problem?

Your Fitbit collects data... but what if it wouldn't share it with you?



# Does Good Feedback Matter?

**Organizations that focus on feedback...**



✓ **2X revenue per employee**  
(Bersin/Deloitte)

✓ **Faster revenue growth and higher profit**  
(Nat'l Center for Middle Market/The Ohio State University)

✓ **57% higher engagement scores** (CPA Practice Advisor )



**“...you can largely predict the health of an organization by measuring the average lag time between identifying and discussing problems.”**

Joseph Grenny – Crucial Conversations

# What are typical managers worst at?

- Conflict management
- Addressing direct report issues
- Motivating others
- Developing direct reports



# Why Do We Give Feedback?

- To help others do better?
- Help the organization be better?
- Make sure a project runs better?
- Help someone see an issue they might not notice?
- Prevent errors or problems?



**“ We all need people who  
will give us feedback.  
That's how we improve.”**

**—Bill Gates**



**Is There a Problem??**

# What's wrong with Feedback?

**“I know the truth”**

*I know better than you what  
you're doing wrong...*

*You just can't see it!*



# What's wrong with Feedback?

**“I’ve been down this road  
before...”**

***You lack the skills you need to  
acquire...***

***Your colleagues can teach you***



# What's wrong with Feedback?

**“I know excellence when I see it”**

***Great performance is:***

***Universal***

***Analyzable***

***Describable***





***MY way should be YOUR way!***



# Time to Give it a Try



**With your worksheet**

- ✓ **First 3 Questions**
- ✓ *Who would I like to share my views with?*
- ✓ *What is the issue?*
- ✓ *How have I perceived the issue?*

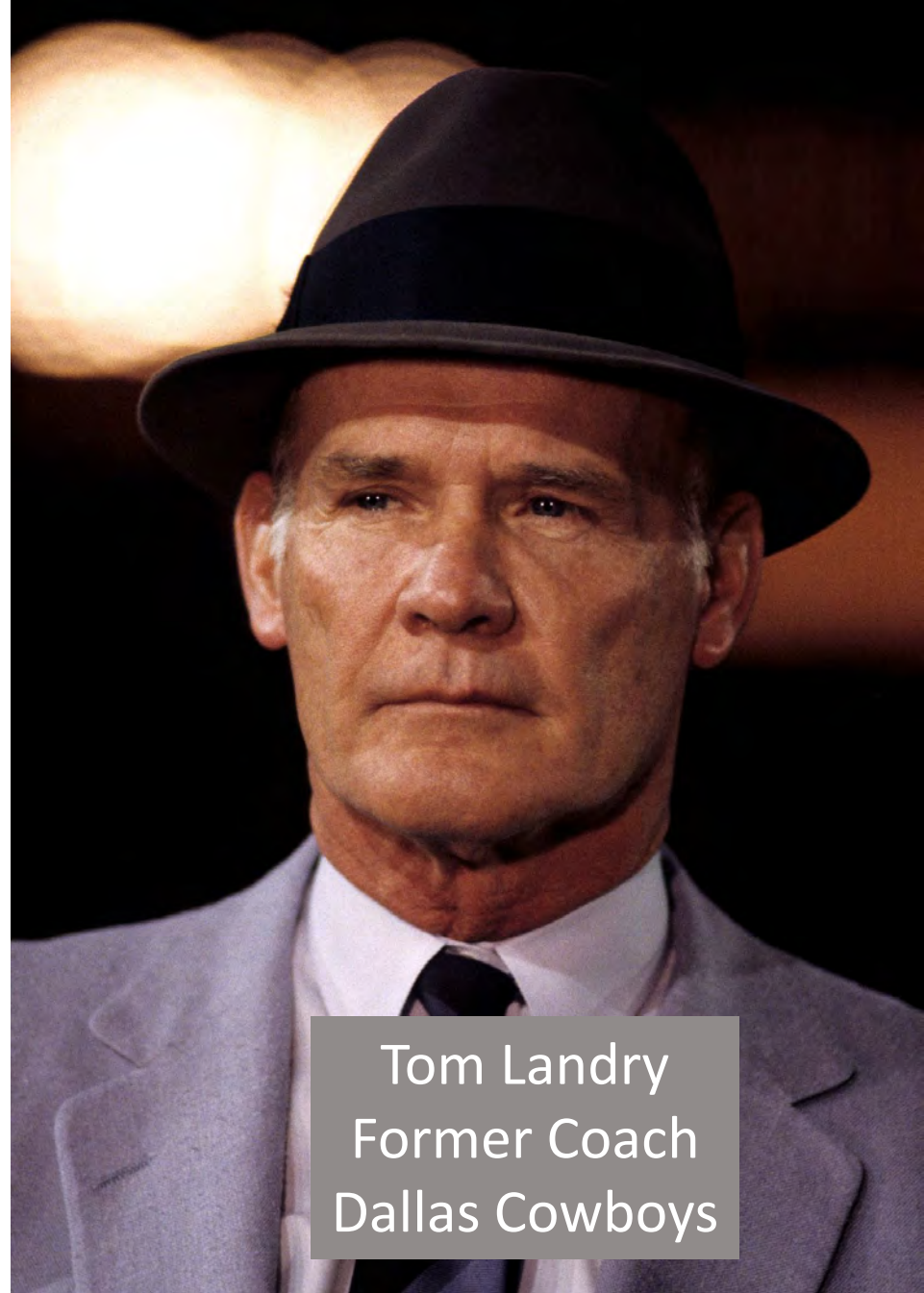
# The Art of Feedback



# Football and Feedback

Landry...combed through footage of previous games and created for each player a highlight reel of when he had done something easily, naturally, and effectively.

From now on..."we only replay your winning plays..."



Tom Landry  
Former Coach  
Dallas Cowboys

Buckingham & Goodall, HBR Mar-Apr 2019

# Don't focus on flaws

- **Focus on excellent outcomes**
- **Dissect what went well**
- **Describe your reactions**



# As an Observer

- **Look for wins**
- **Stop the 'action' and highlight an effective move**
- **Try not to judge**



# As a Recipient

- Watch for reactions
- Dig for meaning when you get praise
- *Understand what makes up excellence **your** way*



# Change the Conversation

**Can I give you some feedback?**

---

**Here's my reaction.**

**Here's where you need to improve.**

---

**Here's what worked best for me.**

**You lack strategic thinking.**

---

**I'm struggling to understand your plan.**

**Good job!**

---

**These are 3 things that resonated with me.**



# Use Coaching Techniques



# Coach the person, not the problem

**What** is working for you right now?

**What** have you done in the past that worked?

**What** do you already know that might work?

**What** do you want to have happen?

**What** are a couple of actions you could take now?



# Coach the person, not the problem

- Don't focus on why
- Help them see possibilities
- Instill confidence
- Help them envision their 'ideal self'



# Coach the person, not the problem

- **Look for an opening**
- **Demonstrate sincere interest**
- **Do just 20% of the talking**
- **Make room for exploration**



# Let's Be Clear ...When the Stakes are High



**Resentment is what happens when you don't get what you didn't ask for...**



# Making a Request



# A Good Request?

- 1) Can everyone get back to me with anything I should include in my meeting with the boss?**
- 2) I don't think you're applying yourself to this project.**
- 3) Will you send this data to home office before their big meeting at 3:00?**
- 4) You're taking longer with your analysis than anybody else on the team.**



# Asking for what you want

- ✓ **Name exactly what you want**
- ✓ **Specify whom you want it from**
- ✓ **State what will create satisfaction**
  - **Time frame**
  - **Budget**
  - **Other resources**
  - **Common understanding**
  - **Agreement for satisfaction**



# Is it that simple?

## What if you hear...

- **Maybe**
- **I'll get back to you tomorrow**
- **I'll give it a try**
- **Late for a meeting...let's talk later...**

# Commitment Management



Fernando Flores  
Business Design Associates

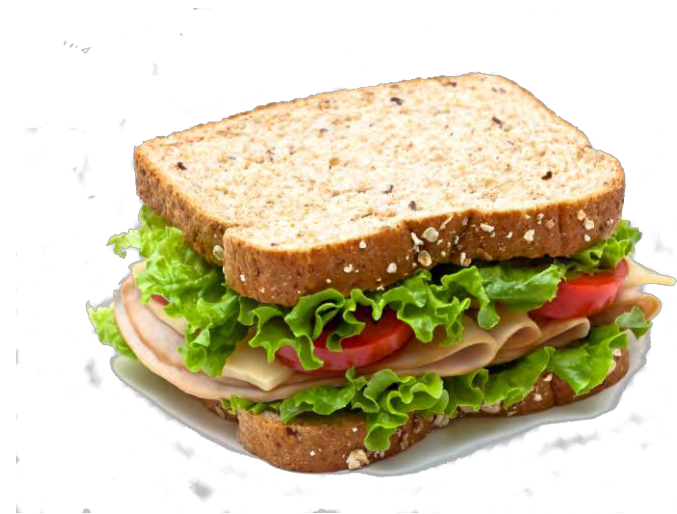
# Commitment Management

- **We get what we tolerate**
- **Focus on what you really want**
- **Avoid win/lose scenarios**
- **Build relationships**
- **Create a culture of accountability**

# Traditional Feedback Models

# Giving Feedback...The Sandwich

- **Positive Opening**
- **Developmental “filling”**
- **Positive Close**



# Giving Feedback ...CORE

**C**ontext – describe the situation

**O**bservation – describe what you see

**R**esults – describe the impact of the behavior

**E**xpectations – Reaffirm your expectations



# Giving Feedback...Event Driven

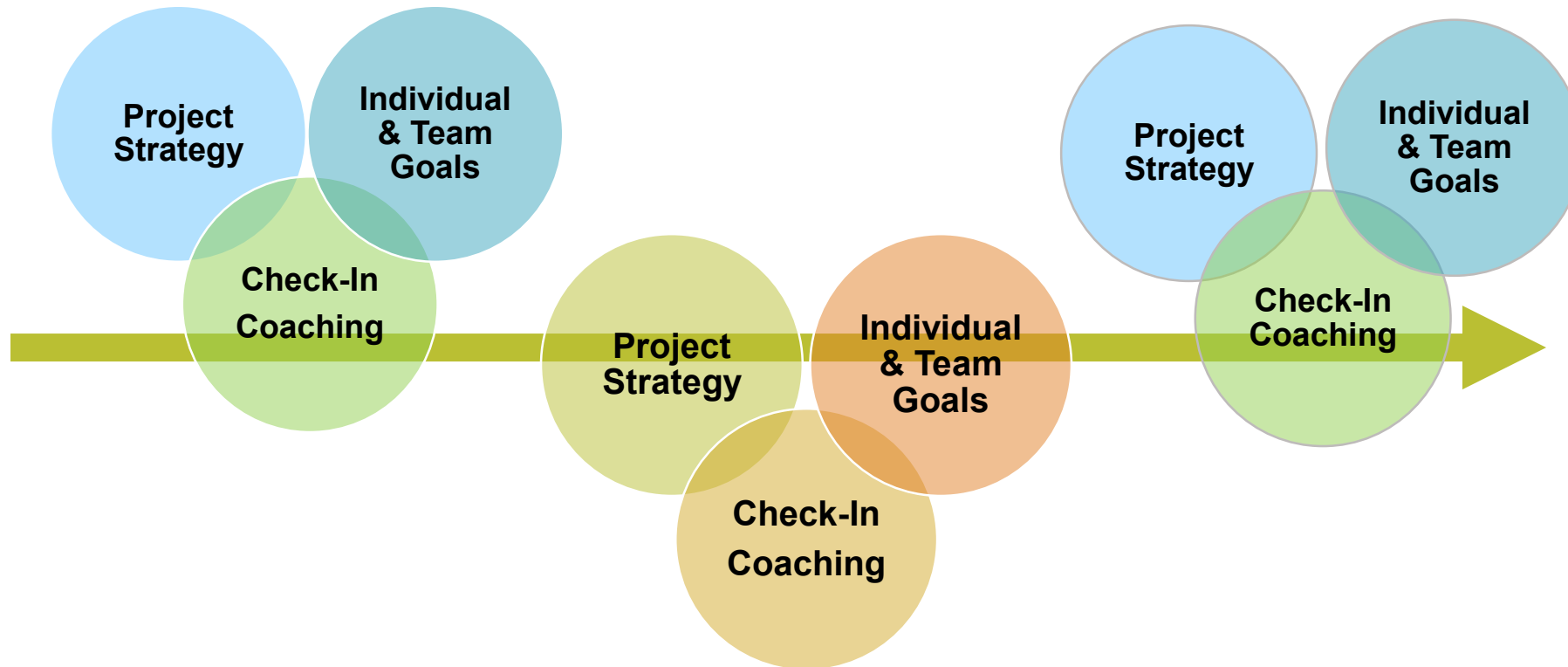


- Occurs when needed
- Focuses on a discrete event
- May be triggered by a ‘teachable moment’
- Part of routine day-to-day work
- Relies on two-way communication



# Giving Feedback...Event Driven

- Development Focus
- Flexible Process
- Regular Check-Ins



# Just a Little Advice



# When Someone Asks....What Do You Think?

- ✓ **Make sure they really want advice**
- ✓ **Be clear about their goals**
- ✓ **Share your experiences**
- ✓ **Look for what resonates**



# Receiving Feedback

# Receiving Feedback

**S**top

- Avoid reacting right away

**L**isten

- Try not to interrupt

**E**valuate

- Ask questions...seek clarity

**D**o

- Decide next steps



# Seeking Feedback from Your Team

- ✓ **Make it OK for your team to speak up**
- ✓ **Find your own coach**
- ✓ **Give examples of what you're working on**
- ✓ **Show humility**
- ✓ **Be realistic about what you'll change**

# Time to Give it a Try



**With your worksheet**

- ✓ *What do I want to communicate?*
- ✓ *What techniques would work best?*
- ✓ *How can I start?*
- ✓ *How can I seek feedback for myself?*

# Build a Communication Action Plan





# What You Accomplished Today

- ✓ **Learned about the business case for timely feedback**
- ✓ **Discovered what reactions feedback can elicit in others**
- ✓ **Heard about different approaches for feedback**
- ✓ **Learned about Commitment Management**
- ✓ **Started applying these approaches to your own challenges**

# Parting Thoughts

- ✓ **Be brave... and humble**
- ✓ **Experiment**
- ✓ **Help to build a culture of accountability**
- ✓ **Commit to better communication**



# Can We Just Talk? - Your Plan

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- 1) **Who would I like to share my views with? What are my goals for starting this conversation? Where do I want to take this relationship?**
- 2) **What is the 'issue'?**
- 3) **How have I perceived the issue? What am I seeing? What is the impact on me and others?**
- 4) **What do I want to communicate about what I'm experiencing? Think...what would my best mentor say to me?**

# Can We Just Talk? - Your Plan

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- 5) **What feedback techniques would work best? Should I start with a request?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 6) **How can I find an opening to start this conversation? Are there any upcoming events or projects that would provide an opportunity?**
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 7) **How can I seek out and absorb more feedback myself?**

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