

Thanks For The Feedback (and Neurodiverse Marriage)

Chapter 6: Identify the
Relationship System
Take Three Steps Back

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P 123: Who Is The Problem and Who Needs To Change?

Feedback is often prompted by a problem: somethings not working, somethings not right.

The feedback giver knows they are (intend) to be offering constructive criticism and helpful coaching.

But...

The feedback receiver hears it as blame (it is your fault, you're the problem, you need to change)

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P 124-125: See The Relationship System

System: interacting or interdependent parts that form a complex whole.

Systems Insights for relationships:

1. Each of us is part of the problem
2. Each of us sees only part of the problem (the part the other person contributes)

When receiving feedback we become defensive because we see what the other person does to contribute to the problem—this confuses the feedback giver because the receiver's contribution is obvious (to the giver)

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P 125: Take Three Steps Back

- One Step Back: You + Me Intersections: What does each of us contribute to the problem between us?
- Two Steps Back: Role Clashes: Is there something about our role in the relationship that contributes to the problem?
- Three Steps Back: The Big Picture: What are the other people, structures, and processes that contribute?

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P 126-129: One Step Back: You + Me Intersections: a look at you and the other person and the way your tendencies interact and intersect.

In a relationship ‘this is how you are’ actually means ‘this is how you are ***in relationship to how I am***’

This combination of differences can become a dynamic downward spiral (you trigger me, I trigger you, and around we go...)

What we see from inside the relationship is the other person’s behavior and we experience its impact on ***us-our contribution may be in our blind spot.***

One step back means trying to see what each party is doing in reaction to the other.

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P 129-131: Two Steps Back: Role Clashes and Accidental Adversaries: This is not just about you and me, this is also about the roles we play.

How are our roles contributing to how we see each other, and to the feedback we give each other?

Accidental Adversary: when our roles cause us to butt heads enough that we start considering each other to be adversaries.

The issue is that the roles are inadvertently creating chronic conflict—NOT the personality and intentions of the other party

Role Confusion contributes through lack of clear boundaries between roles (who decides this Mom or Dad?)

Role Clarity contributes when the roles lead to conflict. Be aware that it may be the role contributing to the issue and not the character of the other person.

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P 131-133: Three Steps Back: The Big Picture (Other people, structures, policies and processes)

(See Chart on Page 132)

Use this step to identify significant inputs and causes to the issue that might otherwise be overlooked.

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P 135: Seeing Feedback in the System

One Step Back: How does the feedback reflect differences in preferences, assumptions, styles, or implicit rules between us?

Two Steps Back: Do our roles make it more or less likely that we might bump into each other?

Three Steps Back: What other players influence our behavior and choices? Are physical setups, processes, or structures also contributing to the problem?

Circling Back to Me: What am I doing or not doing that is contributing to the dynamic between us?

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P 136: Benefits of a Systems Lense

1. Its Reality: opposing arrows of causality are shown to be circles and cycles.
2. It moves us away from needless judgement: we are less likely to judge others if we view conflict as an intersection, and/or involving a clash of roles
3. It Enhances Accountability: A systems approach helps clarify your choices and actions and how they lead to the outcomes you got. Understanding the system might change how you see the problem and lead to identifying appropriate action in the future
4. It Helps to correct our tendency to shift or absorb
Absorbers tend to see their own contribution to the problem and stop there. Shifters are chronically immune to accepting responsibility for their role in problems
5. It Helps Us Avoid 'Fixes that Fail': If we address only one part of a complex problem we fail to address other contributing factors and can expect more problems to follow.

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P 141: Talking About Systems

Be On the Lookout

Try to be aware of your own silent switchtracking reaction to feedback—instead use them as cues to step back

Take Responsibility for Your Part:

‘I take responsibility for my part’ and ‘We both contribute to this’

‘Here is What Would Help Me Change’: allows you to tactfully identify the givers contribution (after taking responsibility for your part of it)

Is this a Me + Everybody Intersection? If so, then changing me can have a wide ranging impact.