

Thanks For The Feedback (and Neurodiverse Marriage)

Identity Triggers: The Challenge of ME
Chapter 7: Learn How Wiring and
Temperament Affect Your Story

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We each process feedback in our own unique way—this is because of our brain wiring AND emotions and feelings

P148: The Liberation of Hard Wiring

Our unique brain structure is what we are born with. It affects how we communicate-including how we process feedback.

While wiring matters, we remain responsible for our choices and actions

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P 149-158: A Behind the Scenes Look and Yourself on Feedback

One of the brain's main functions is to manage approach and withdrawal. But the brain glitches when confronted with the need for short term pain to foster long term growth: Feedback is one of these potential glitchers.

The authors describe feedback in terms of:

1. Baseline: the default state of well being toward which we gravitate
2. Swing: how far we move from the baseline
3. Sustain and Recovery: how long (duration) our swings last

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P 150: Baseline: The Beginning and End of the Arc

We feel emotions in the moment, but they occur against a broader backdrop: we are pulled back up to our baseline after receiving bad news and we are pulled back down to our baseline after receiving good news.

Baseline varies significantly from person to person.

Our baseline affects the way we perceive feedback—

Positive feedback can be muffled while negatives are magnified; negatives can be ignored and positive feedback can be overemphasized;

There are many ways that baseline can affect how we receive and process feedback.

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P 151: Swing: How Far Up or Down You Go

We can move far or hardly at all in either direction from our normal baseline (wherever it is)—even in response to minor input

Neuroscience research has identified structural difference in the cortexes of infants with different ‘swings’

Bad input is stronger (can cause a wider swing away from baseline) than good input.

This has to do with the amygdala—it directly signals the flight or fight response when it finds a pattern that is previously part of a fear episode.

There is no such fast message when the amygdala senses positive information.

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P 153-158: Sustain and Recovery: How Long Does the Swing Last?

The time needed to recover (return to baseline) can vary by up to a factor of 3,000% between individuals

Positive and Negative feedback appear to be mediated by different halves of the brain and they can differ in their effectiveness.

P154: Negative Recovery

- The left side of the frontal cortex appears to provide a calming influence to counter the amygdala's panic signals
- People with a more right sided brain wiring are slower than those with a more left side wiring to recover from negative feedback

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P 156: Sustaining Positive Feelings—how long positive feedback feels good

The nucleus accumbens triggers a dopamine response to positive experiences. This can trigger more positive feelings resulting in more dopamine...

The activity of the nucleus accumbens varies between individuals, so does the duration of our positive feelings

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P 156: Recalling negative feedback can retrigger negative feelings AND recalling positive feedback can extend our positive sustain—this affects our outlook

P 157: Four Sustain/Recovery Combinations

How long we sustain negative feelings is independent from how long we sustain positive feelings.

Based on this the authors created a chart (P 158) summarizing four categories of feedback response.

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P 158: Wiring Is Only Part of the Story

Our wiring is not unchangeable—we have some neuroplasticity

About half (50%) of our happiness is wired into our brains.

About 40% of our happiness is rooted in how we interpret and respond to what happens to us. ***This is the piece that we can control*** (but emotions can impact this)

About 10% is due to our circumstances (who, what, where)

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P 159: Emotions Distort Our Sense Of The Feedback Itself

We can get better at handling tough feedback so long as we understand how emotions distort the stories we tell ourselves about what the feedback means.

Our internal stories comprise both thoughts and feelings with no distinction.

P 160: Thoughts + Feelings = Story

Feelings or thoughts can lead a story, sometimes there is a cycle where feelings trigger thoughts that trigger more feelings...

This means that we can change the story by changing the feelings or changing the thoughts (two ways to effect change).

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P 161: How Feelings Exaggerate Feedback

Predictable ways our feelings distort our stories

1. Our Past (google bias)

How we feel now can affect how we remember the past

2. Our Present (not one thing, everything)

How we feel affects how we contain or limit the feedback

3. Our Future: Forever Bias and Snowballing

How we feel affects how we imagine the future

These distortions create a gap between our thoughts and reality. We cannot see this gap unless we are consciously looking for it.