

Navigating Tough Conversations with Confidence

April 29, 2026

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EMPATHY 

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Introductions

Jen Porett, Speaker

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The logo for WIPFLI, consisting of the word "WIPFLI" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font centered within a solid blue rectangular background.

Kevin Dale, Moderator

- *Job Title, School District, Business Name*



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01

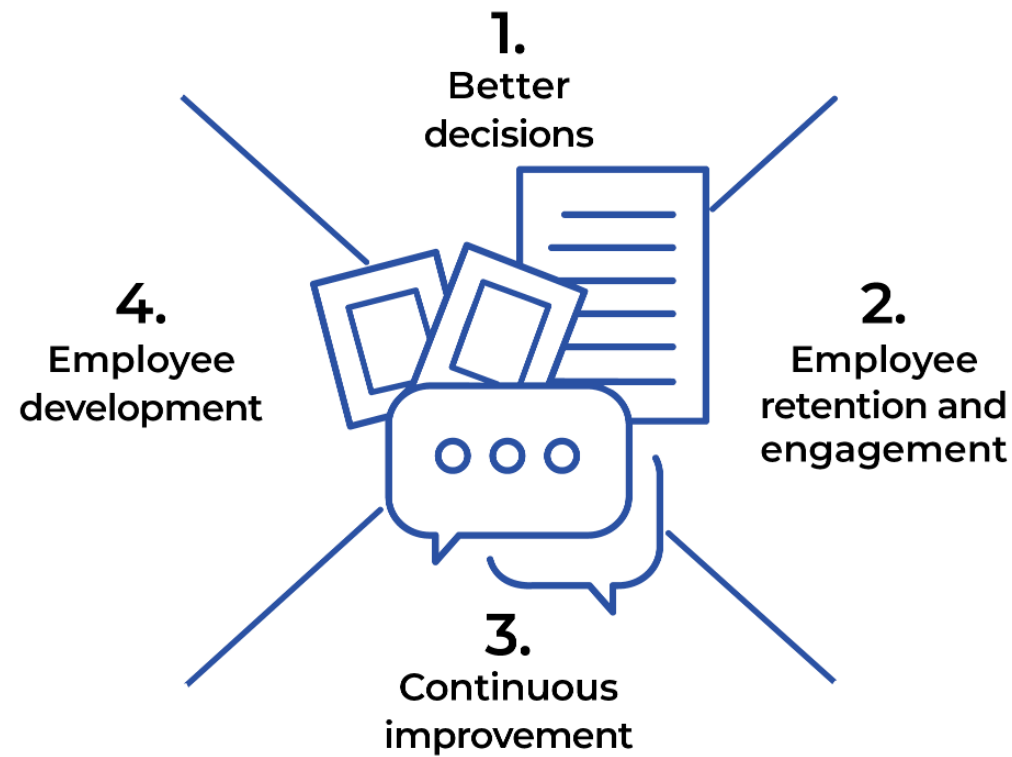
**WHAT IS THE
PURPOSE OF
FEEDBACK?**

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WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF FEEDBACK?



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FEEDBACK AND COACHING

HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT?

FEEDBACK

Feedback is giving a specific observation of something that has already happened.

It is focused on recalling the past.



COACHING

Coaching is helping to develop a plan with the employee for the future.

Good coaching is asking insightful questions and listening to empower another person to solve a problem or make a better decision.

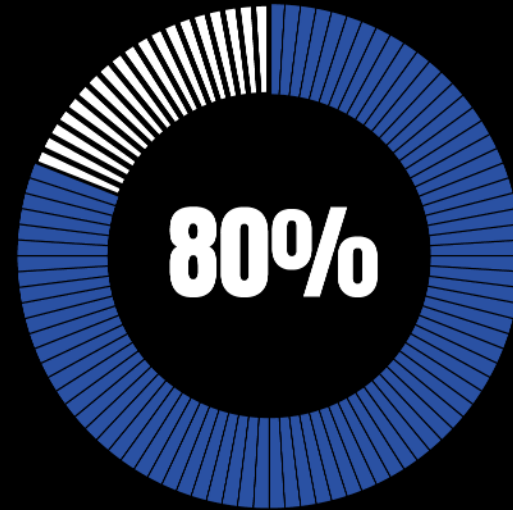


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THE POWER OF FEEDBACK



Of employees who say they have received meaningful feedback in the past week are fully engaged.
-Gallup

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IMPACT VERSUS INTENT

INTENT

What you aim to achieve through an action



IMPACT

How a person receives that action

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FOCUS ON THE OUTCOME

What do my actions communicate about my intent?

What do I really want?

- For me?
- For the other person?
- For our relationship?
- For our organization?

Source: Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue



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UNHELPFUL INTENT

- Be right
- Look good, save face
- Seek to win
- Blame or punish
- Avoid conflict
- Be comfortable
- Maintain control

HELPFUL INTENT

- Find the truth
- To learn
- Find a win-win situation
- Work toward long-term success
- Build and strengthen relationships

Source: Adapted from Crucial Conversations for Mastering Dialogue

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**HOW TO
DELIVER
FEEDBACK**

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“ SA²ID FEEDBACK MODEL

Feedback is not bad or good; it depends on how it's delivered.

”



SITUATION



ADD BEHAVIORS
OBSERVED

ASK FOR THEIR SIDE



IMPACT



DO NEXT TIME

SA²ID MODEL

- **Situation** — define the where and when
 - During yesterday's meeting ...
 - During the training this week ...
- **Add observed behaviors**
 - I saw ...
 - I heard ...
 - I observed ...
- **Ask for their side**
 - How do you see it?
 - Can you help me understand ... ?
 - What's your view on ... ?
- **Impact**
 - Impact on you, others, the department, the organization
- **Do**
 - What might you continue to do or do differently?

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STICK TO THE MESSAGE



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BALANCE THE FEEDBACK

1. REINFORCE

Affirm the positive

2. REDIRECT

Share the constructive to help your employee know what to improve



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THE BENEFITS OF BALANCED FEEDBACK

POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Helps build confidence

Creates a culture in which employees nurture and support one another

Enhances employee engagement

CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Clarifies expectations

Helps people learn from their mistakes

Is vital to employees' ongoing development

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IT'S TIME TO REFLECT

Think about on of your employees that you need to provide both positive and constructive feedback.

Use the SA²ID model to outline the discussion.

Capture your notes in your Leadership Guide.



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PARTNER ACTIVITY

GIVING FEEDBACK – explain the situation and practice delivering the constructive feedback using the SA2ID model.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK – how would you react to the feedback?

OBSERVATIONS – how did your partner do delivering the feedback?

- Did they stick to the message?
- Use the model?
- Were they clear & concise?



TIPS FOR GIVING FEEDBACK

Make giving positive and constructive feedback part of the culture

Be timely

Focus on a specific behavior, not the person

Allow the feedback to sink in

Avoid the feedback sandwich

Ask for feedback

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TIPS FOR RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Ask for regular feedback

Be open-minded

Listen

Be mindful of your emotions

Express gratitude

Reflect

Allow for self-compassion

Take action

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03

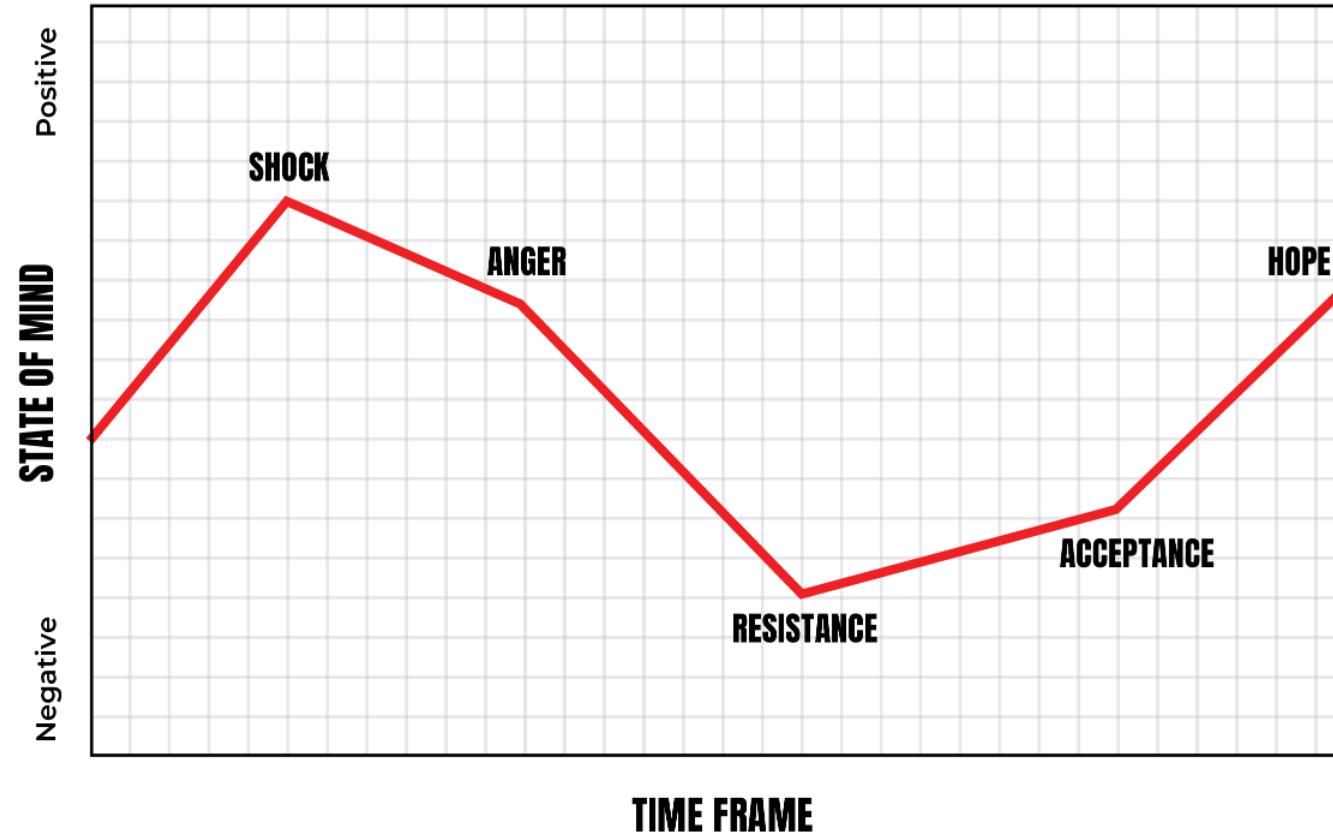
**DEALING WITH
EMOTIONS**

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SARAH: EMOTIONAL PROCESSING MODEL



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DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES

Regulate your own emotions

Actively listen to them

Validate their feelings and emotions

Be curious; not judgmental

Ask open-ended questions

Watch your nonverbal communication

Express empathy



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DE-ESCALATION STRATEGIES

Phrases

- I've noticed that _____ what's happening for you ...
- Please correct me where I'm wrong, here's what I'm hearing so far ...
- I understand what you're saying.

Use positive language

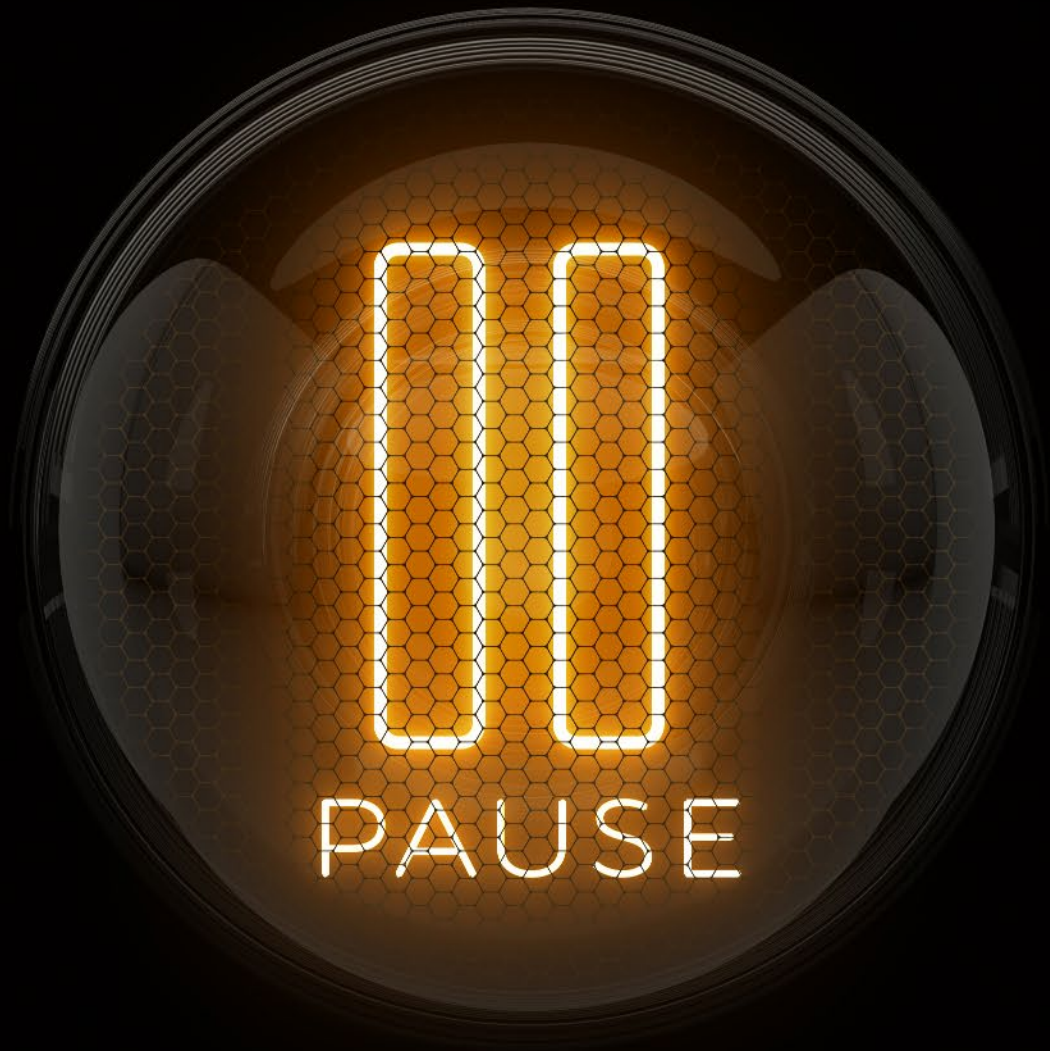
Move – go for a walk



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Questions and Answers

We thank you for your time!

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