



Episode 31 Show Notes: Giving Feedback – A Two-Way Conversation

This episode will be of particular value to HR professionals who are looking for ideas on how to coach managers/leaders on giving effective feedback, especially around performance reviews. Sylvana Rochet discusses creative and impactful ways of approaching feedback, which she proposes should be a two-way conversation. Instead of viewing feedback as a one way flow of information (where one person provides feedback on what went well and what did not go well), she invites us to think of feedback as a two-way conversation where both people walk away with value.

Sylvana is a holistic intelligence advisor and international speaker. She guides executives on how to better manage their internal psychology so that they can lead from a place of clarity and confidence. Prior to coaching leaders at some of today's most innovative companies, Sylvana spent the better part of a decade working globally in international development, learning firsthand about leadership, human nature and what makes organizations thrive. A political scientist by training, Sylvana is a certified Professional Coach and also studied Hatha yoga in India. Her multidimensional educational background and extensive travels have enabled her to approach human challenges with a wide set of tools. She founded [The Insightful Executive](#) and is a partner at [Evolution](#), a boutique coaching and consulting firm that partners with startups and high growth companies to develop consciousness across all dimensions of the business.

Key Learnings From This Episode

- **Sylvana is passionate about supporting leaders in making an impact, not just at their companies, but throughout the world at large.** She grew up in France, living a very sheltered life. At the age of 10, the family moved to Colombia, South America where Sylvana saw poverty for the first time. It impacted her in a way that drove her to want to do something in the world and this guided her career. She studied political science and worked in developing countries where she felt she was making an impact, a common thread throughout her life and career. When she shifted to coaching, she realized the decisions that are made by political and business leaders impact less advantaged individuals.



- **When we are put in situations that are different from what we are used to, we are forced to draw from skills that we may not know we have.** We are forced to learn patience. We are forced to look at things from a different perspective.
- **How did Sylvana decide she wanted to focus on coaching?** Early in her career, she had a few, really great managers and a few great leaders. But mostly, she was exposed to really poor leadership. She saw when an organization and project thrived, it was not just because they had a great strategy or great technology. The difference was the leadership. She saw this regardless of which country she was working in. This grew her interest in the concept of leadership and how the right leadership can completely transform a group of people and lead them to succeed. She began to study and focus on emotional intelligence, leadership theories, and studying real-life leaders to understand what makes them leaders that people are inspired by; what makes them leaders someone wants to give their all to.
- **Leaders may have the potential to lead.** They just may not have the tools to do it, but they can learn them.
- **Marry what you are naturally good at, your strengths and your passion.**
- **In school we learn theory. We don't learn how to communicate.** We don't learn how to give feedback properly and we don't learn how to use our awareness of ourselves at work.

It is the same with leaders. They may have made it to the top of their companies in their field, but when it comes to doing end-of-year performance evaluations with their people, they are 'shaking in their boots'.



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- **Feedback as a two-way conversation.** When we give someone feedback, or we are receiving feedback, we believe that one person will provide feedback on what went well and what did not go well. People should be invited to think of it as a two-way conversation where both people walk away with value. **Feedback is a gift for the other person, the person receiving feedback.** It is something that can impact their life. When we understand that, we will be much more mindful about preparing to give feedback. We will be much more mindful about the intention behind it. Giving feedback is not an opportunity to unload and/or unleash whatever you have been holding back. The intention should be to make a contribution to the other person.
- **Be creative in how you give the gift of feedback.** Approach it showing that you are curious about something you want to hear more about, such as what their experience was like leading a team. When you indicate you are curious about something; or you want to learn more about something; or you want to explore something; the individual is likely to be more receptive. When you meet, if you remember it is a two-way conversation and a gift for the recipient of the feedback, you will approach it very differently. You are going to ask questions and you are going to see if you can help individuals reach their own conclusions or see for themselves what you are trying to help them see.
- **Most people know when they have failed at something.** When they feel they are being attacked, or having a finger pointed at them, they typically are not going to acknowledge it. If they feel it is safe to acknowledge it, they can say *'you know what, I know I messed up, and thank you for asking me these questions because I want to talk more about it and look at it together'*. Resistance comes when someone says *'let me give you some feedback'*. Sometimes it is best to not even use the word 'feedback'. A better approach is to say you would like to discuss whatever topic it is you would like to discuss.

During the conversation, you can say there are some things you would like to share.

- I'd like to give you some input.
- I'd like to share some observations with you.
- I would love to give you some ideas.

The word 'feedback' has a bad rap. Sell the conversation in a different way, and people will be more open to it.



- **Sylvana likes the ‘sandwich’ technique** (lead with a positive, provide observations and then close on a good note). Approach feedback as a two-way conversation:
 - Explore the topics together
 - Share observations on what you saw
 - Close with what the person has done well

Everyone is so focused on improving that we tend to overlook what is being done brilliantly.

Leave the best for last.

Recommended Reading and References From this Episode

- [The Insightful Executive Blog](#)

To Follow Sylvana

- [Sylvana on LinkedIn](#)
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- Twitter: [The Insightful Executive](#)

Sylvana’s Question to HR Studio Podcast Group Members

[What makes you lose sleep at night when it comes to your work relationships? What kinds of situations, things planned in advance or that come up, make you lose sleep?](#)



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