LEADERSHIP INSPIRATIONS

Feedback-It Ball

See the value of different forms of feedback while trying to accomplish a goal

TIME
10-20 minutes

MATERIALS
3 balls, box or bucket

TEAM STAGE
Norming

SUMMARY

Participants will offer positive, negative, or no feedback to three blindfolded "free-throw shooters" and examine how this impacts their performance.

SET UP

- Select three people who are going to be the "free-throw shooters."
- Give each of these people a blindfold, take them outside (or to a place where they cannot hear the instructions being given to the rest of the group) and have them wait for instructions.
- Place balls in different parts of the room and the basket in the front of the room.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Tell the large group that their task is to give feedback to the three "free-throw shooters" as they attempt to locate the balls in the room and shoot them into the basket in the front of the room.
  - For the first blindfolded person that walks into the room, don't say anything.
  - For the second blindfolded person, yell out negative comments and wrong directions.
  - For the third blindfolded person, yell positive comments and correct directions.
- Then, tell the free-throw shooters that there are three balls scattered throughout the room and that their job is to find them and throw them into the basket.
- Bring one blindfolded person into the room at a time to complete the task.

Facilitator Note: Make sure that the blindfolded individual does not walk into anything or hurt themselves. Also, be cautious of who gets selected for the round with no feedback, the round with positive feedback, and the round with negative feedback. Make sure the most quiet person in the group does not go during the "no feedback" round, and make sure the one that everyone seems to pick on does not go during the "negative feedback" round.

VARIATIONS

- The type of feedback that each "free-throw shooter" receives can be changed, such as only getting negative comments but correct instructions, etc.

Large Group: To facilitate this activity for a large group, choose more than three "free-throw shooters." There can also be more than one "free-throw shooter" participating at a time in each round.

Medium Risk: To facilitate a more medium risk version of this activity, tell the "free-throw shooters" that they may either receive positive feedback, negative feedback, or no feedback. This way it is not surprising or upsetting if they start the activity and encounter their peers making negative comments or remaining silent.

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VARIATIONS *(continued)*

Online: To facilitate this activity virtually, choose the three volunteers and move them to a breakout room to receive instructions separately from the rest of the group. One at a time, have the volunteers leave the breakout room and come back to the main room to participate in either a maze activity or a drawing activity.

- For the maze activity, create a Google Jamboard slide with obstacles spread across it and a clear path from one side of the slide to the other. Have the volunteer look at the maze and then close their eyes as they try to draw short line segments to mark their path from one side of the slide to the other without touching an obstacle. Each time they touch an obstacle they must restart.
- For the drawing activity, show the volunteer a simple drawing (such as a house or a person) that they must recreate with their eyes closed. Have them close their eyes while they draw on a Google Jamboard slide.

Use either variation, but have all volunteers complete the same activity so that the group can compare the differences in experience for the volunteer getting positive feedback, the one getting negative feedback, and the one getting no feedback. ***[click here for video]***

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
  - What did it feel like to give/receive positive feedback? Negative feedback? No feedback?
  - What impact do you think the feedback had on outcome of the various rounds?

- So What:
  - Why is feedback important?
  - How can the content or tone of our feedback change the message we are trying to send?

- Now What:
  - How can we improve the communication of feedback in this group?
  - What are some areas where feedback will be particularly useful for this group?

Facilitator Note: These questions can be used to guide your debrief, however, pick the questions that best match your group's experience and add or change questions as needed.

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