

Sheila Heen

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Thanks for the Feedback (Even When It's Off Base, Unfair, Poorly Delivered, and Frankly, You're Not in the Mood). The fastest way to change the feedback culture in any organization is to teach leaders to become better feedback receivers. Honest feedback is a challenge in organizations around the world, and the usual response - teaching leaders how to give feedback more effectively - has failed to solve the problem. Heen turns conventional wisdom on its head and demonstrates why the smart money is on teaching leaders the dark art of learning about themselves. Receiving feedback - particularly for smart, experienced professionals - is a distinct leadership skill. Sheila's warmth and authenticity helps even seasoned executives recognize our own (normal, human) triggered reactions to feedback -- "that's just wrong," "who asked you?" "I'm not the real problem here" -- and she offers practical advice for turning even unskilled, crazy-making feedback into genuine learning. And once you get leaders motivated and eager to learn -- willing to engage with others to see their blind spots and look at their own areas for growth -- you get a modeling effect that quickly catches fire.

Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most. Leaders, managers, colleagues and direct reports face difficult conversations every day, and as leaders become more senior, they spend more and more of their time tackling difficult conversations. These difficult conversations—conflicts between functions or geographies with key alliance partners or your biggest clients—are the complex messes that get kicked upstairs because no one below has clear answers. Handling these conversations efficiently is no longer just a good idea, it's integral to the success of each leader, their division and ultimately, the entire organization. Failure comes at a high cost—conflicts that fester and consume energy, sap creativity and destroy teamwork.

Based on 20 years of work at the Harvard Negotiation Project, this session provides a framework for understanding why some of our most important conversations are so hard, examines the common mistakes we all make, and offers a step-by-step method for handling them with less anxiety and better results. Tailored to the day-to-day challenges leaders face, this session offers insight and strategies for looking beneath the surface to understand disagreement, increase accountability, and manage your own reactions when under stress.