

Receptivity

Frontline Communion of Churches

How can we grow in receptivity?

Your _____ says “I would like to see you grow in _____.”

Maybe what they are pointing out was already on your radar. Or maybe it's the first time you've ever been offered this particular bit of feedback.

When we are given feedback, it can provoke a swirl of thoughts and emotions. Defensiveness, disagreement, panic, insecurity, or even the anxious desire to remedy the failing as quickly as possible.

How can you reframe feedback as a gift instead of an attack? As an invitation to grow, instead of a grade? As a gift from God, instead of a commentary on your worth?

After giving you time to digest the feedback, your _____ says, “Don't be discouraged. You're not failing. This isn't an ultimatum.”

You get your guts up to admit what you're actually thinking, and you say, “But what if I try to improve in this area and I don't succeed?”

Your _____ replies, “I'm just asking you to try, and I'll be here to help along the way.”

How can we grow in receptivity? It's a valuable skill, a *virtue* even. But for most of us, it doesn't come naturally. How can we learn to welcome and even *seek out* feedback, correction, and coaching?

Here's a simple exercise to aid in digesting and metabolizing feedback. The exercise aims to help you clarify what you need from God and others, so you can pray more intelligently and ask for help more constructively. Ask yourself: *What are you thinking or feeling about the feedback you've received? How might you be internally resistant to this invitation to grow?*

1. Mark the phrase in the “Resistance” column that most closely matches any internal resistance you might feel in response to the feedback you've been given. (Feel free to mark more than one as needed.)
2. Let the matching “Lack” and “Need to Explore” columns jumpstart your prayers, your requests for help, and your next steps.
3. If nothing in the “Resistance” column captures your situation, try filling in the blank provided at the bottom of the table. Then, try filling in the accompanying blanks provided under “Lack” and “Need to Explore.”



✓	Resistance	Lack	Need to Explore
☐	"I don't know how."	<i>Lack of ability to change</i>	How might I need to explore and name my past deficits and current needs? How can I speak about them to the Lord and a trusted friend?
☐	"I'm not sure the pain is worth it."	<i>Lack of desire to change</i>	How might I increasingly reverse-engineer my life, count the cost, and discern the difference between short-term pain and long-term gain? How do I want my spouse, kids, and friends to remember me at my funeral?
☐	"I don't see it."	<i>Lack of awareness of the need for change</i>	How might I increasingly see myself through the eyes of others? How can I grow in my curiosity about how others experience my presence?
☐	"I don't have the time or energy to address this."	<i>Lack of margin to change</i>	How can I make space to pay attention to and receive the invitation being offered to me in this season? To what do I need to say no or lay down?
☐	"I'm scared."	<i>Lack of courage to change</i>	How might I posture myself to better hear God speak words of comfort and encouragement to me in the pages of Scripture? How might I ask for prayer on the spot for the courage I so badly need?
☐	"I feel defensive." "I feel exposed." "I feel weak and threatened."	<i>Lack of identity in Christ to disarm defensiveness</i>	How might I increasingly receive the Father's love in and through the finished work of Christ? How might I increasingly learn to take criticism since that's how I became a Christian? How might I increasingly work <i>from</i> my acceptance instead of <i>for</i> my acceptance? How might I embrace my weakness as an opportunity for Christ's power to rest upon me?
☐	"I feel like a failure." "I feel less like I've done something wrong, and more like something's wrong with me."	<i>Lack of nourishment by grace that covers shame</i>	How might I increasingly receive the free grace that I boldly offer to others but fail to believe is available to me? How might I function as a "gospel" man or woman for others, but a "law" man or woman for myself?
☐	"I haven't seen it modeled well."	<i>Lack of experience</i>	How might I find a model to study and learn from? Who can I look to as an example to imitate and follow as he or she follows Christ?
☐	"I'm not sure I agree."	<i>Lack of unity of perspective</i>	How am I seeing things differently than the other person, and why? How might I have been misread? How might I be mishearing him or her? How might we be working from different mental maps? How might we increasingly fill the "pool of meaning" instead of drain it? How might we get on the same page?
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