

23. Attitude Activity: Managing Reactions to Feedback

Our response to getting feedback can vary considerably. Some people are hungry for feedback and want to know how they can improve; others avoid feedback like the plague and take it personally. If you want to get good grades at GCSE you are going to have to get comfortable with feedback. Steve Bull, in his brilliant book *The Game Plan* (2006, p. 125), has developed an acronym, SADRAA, to help you with the process. He suggests that when you get feedback you might not be happy with, you should work through three stages: the red zone, the blue zone and the green zone.

The table below explains the zones. Low performing pupils can sometimes get caught up in the red zone and some might never leave. You might know people like this! It's fine to have these initial emotions, of course, but then you must push through the next two stages.

<b>The red zone</b>  Emotions	<b>Shock</b>	Wow – I did not expect that! I'm really surprised by those comments.
	<b>Anger</b>	How dare they say that! That teacher has never liked me. Wait till I get my own back.
	<b>Denial</b>	I'm not like that at all. That's totally wrong.
<b>The blue zone</b>  Thinking	<b>Rationalisation</b>	OK, maybe it seems true from their perspective. But the reason they think that is because they don't know what kind of pressure I'm under.  Anyway, that's the way I am and why should I change? And even if I wanted to, how could I?
	<b>Acceptance</b>	OK, maybe I need to change something. Maybe I could look at a few different ways of doing things to see if they improve matters.
<b>The green zone</b>  Behaviour	<b>Action</b>	Right, what do I need to do?

The next time that you have some feedback that you might not be happy with, use the table below to either record your own thoughts or check in with your emotional response to the criticism and see which zone you're in. Then look ahead to the next zone and see what kind of thoughts you might try to have to move yourself through the process more quickly. Ultimately, you'll be much happier if you avoid getting stuck in the red or blue zone!

It might be tricky to get to the green zone, so feel free to leave it a day or so – maybe longer – before completing the final box or considering the ideas you see there.

The zones	Your thoughts ...
<b>The red zone</b>  Emotions	.....
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	.....
	.....

The zones	Your thoughts ...
<b>The blue zone</b>  Thinking	..... ..... ..... .....
<b>The green zone</b>  Behaviour	..... ..... ..... .....

## Final Thoughts

One way to fully understand Bull's model is to watch other people responding to feedback. Watch for feedback after a sporting fixture, and see how players react. Watch out for how your parents describe taking feedback, or even your teachers. Most of all, watch for how your friends talk about feedback. If you're surrounded by people who can't take feedback, it makes it harder to learn how to handle it well.

Austin Kleon (2014), a writer and artist, warns us to make sure we have positive friends. He calls negative friends 'vampires'. Kleon advises that, *"if, after hanging out with someone you feel worn out and depleted, that person is a vampire. If, after hanging out with someone you still feel full of energy, that person is not a vampire."*

It's worth thinking about the five people you spend most time with, and asking yourself five questions about them ...

1. Are they positive people?
2. Do they enjoy their lives?
3. Are they a good influence?
4. Have they helped you through problems?
5. Do they make you feel good about yourself, and about life?

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