

# Feedback - Feedback



# Need feedback?

- Almost all people have a need to cooperate with others, both to be able to solve tasks of different kinds and because it is in our social nature.
- When we collaborate with others, we communicate together in different ways. Partly we speak to each other with words or text, partly we use body language and, in addition to that, we have various more or less subtle (discreet) ways of conveying messages. (For example, arriving late, choosing not to do something, giving a gift - getting coffee, etc.).
- We send and receive different signals all the time - which are interpreted by us and spirit - for example part of the attribution process
- To be able to send the right signals, which are interpreted in the way you want - *self-awareness is required*.
  - *In order to increase self-awareness, it is required that other people react to our behaviour.*
  - It is required that other people interpret and give us feedback, otherwise it is very difficult to become more skillful and choose the best behavior in a given situation.
- Feedback is thus a necessary part of personal development

## More about feedback

- Feedback is a way to prevent conflicts and the cornerstone of development
- Although most people know that feedback provides an opportunity to develop, many are afraid of it and have one resistance to both giving and receiving feedback.
- 'Bad' feedback (unsorted and unspecific) can create conflict. “You are bad at...”
- Good feedback is a tool that you can use both professionally and privately
- Most employee surveys conducted in Sweden show that employees generally want more confirmation and feedback

...hearing that you are doing wrong threatens your existence?

## Maslows behovstrappa

- According to neuroscience, the brain tries to protect us and can go to great lengths to make sure we always think we're right - even when we're not.

- When we receive criticism, the brain tries to protect us against the threat it perceives to our place in the social order.

- Threats to our reputation in the eyes of others are astonishingly powerful, as are threats to our existence, according to Daniel Goleman (psychologist).

- If we take a look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one would think that criticism would be linked to stage 4 or 5 (self-actualization, respect)

**Självförverkligande**

**Kreativitet, att skapa något.  
Att leva ut sina drömmar.**

**Uppskattning  
och respekt**

**Att man blir uppmärksammas och respekterad för den man är och gör**

**Gemenskap  
och kärlek**

**Att känna gemenskap och tillhörighet  
med vänner och familj.**

**Säkerhet och  
trygghet**

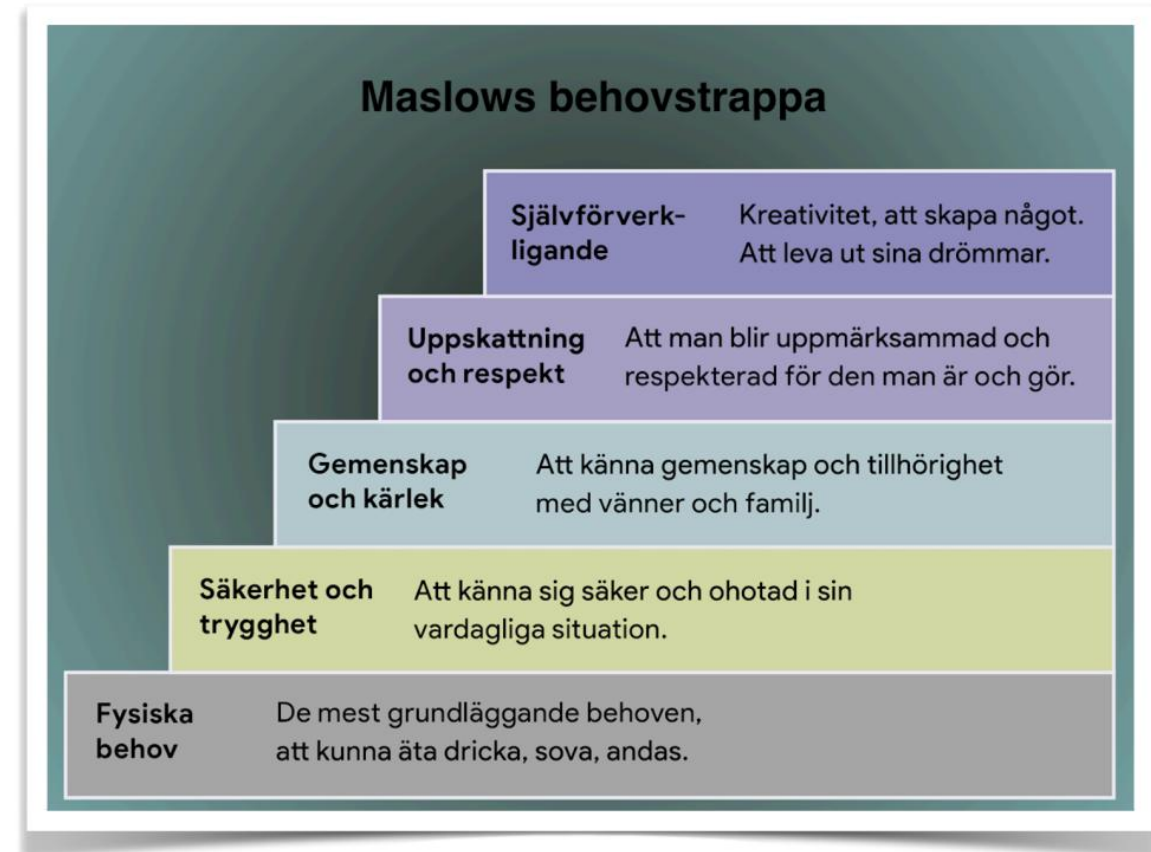
**Att känna sig säker och ohotad i sin  
vardagliga situation.**

**Fysiska  
behov**

**De mest grundläggande behoven,  
att kunna äta dricka, sova, andas.**

## ...hearing that you are doing wrong threatens your existence?

- According to neuroscience, the brain tries to protect us and can go to great lengths to make sure we always think we're right - even when we're not.
- When we receive criticism, the brain tries to protect us against the threat it perceives to our place in it the social order.
- Threats to our reputation in the eyes of others are astonishingly powerful, as are threats to our existence, according to Daniel Goleman (psychologist).
- If we take a look at Maslow's hierarchy of needs, one would think that criticism would be linked to stage 4 or 5 (self-actualization, respect)
- Because the brain experiences criticism as such a strong threat, it rather lands around stage 2 - safety and security.
- This may explain why we reacts so strongly to criticism and poorly worded feedback



# Criticism leads to excessively strong negative feelings - or 'forgetting'

It is very common that we do not remember criticism quite correctly.

- Some research suggests that when we hear information that contrasts with our self-image, our primal instinct to change the information, rather than ourselves.
- Think about whether you make mistakes sometimes? Are you purely 'human' and make many mistakes?
  - Can you (quickly) remember many mistakes you made? more than three? anything at all?
  - Kathryn Schultz highlights that we do not remember mistakes per se, that the brain does not save memories under the category "wrong" and that we also do not have any physical sensation corresponding to "being wrong", but only feelings when we realize "that we *had* wrong". (*from the book Being Wrong, K. Schultz*)

It is also relatively clearly established that we have a so-called "negativity bias", which means that we remember negative things more strongly than positive things.

- The brain has developed unique and more sensitive parts to deal with negative events and information. These “process” bad things in more detail than positive ones. This results in it will always make a bigger impression to receive criticism than to receive appreciation.

*Much of the problem, challenge and benefit of feedback is connected to our self-image.*

# Johari - a simple model of self-image

In the 1950s, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham developed a simple and small model to illustrate a person's self-image and the person's signals to the environment. (The name comes from their first name).

The model assumes that you imagine a square, in which we imagine everything that can be known about you

person can be accommodated.



Everything you can know about a person



# Johari - a simple model of self-image

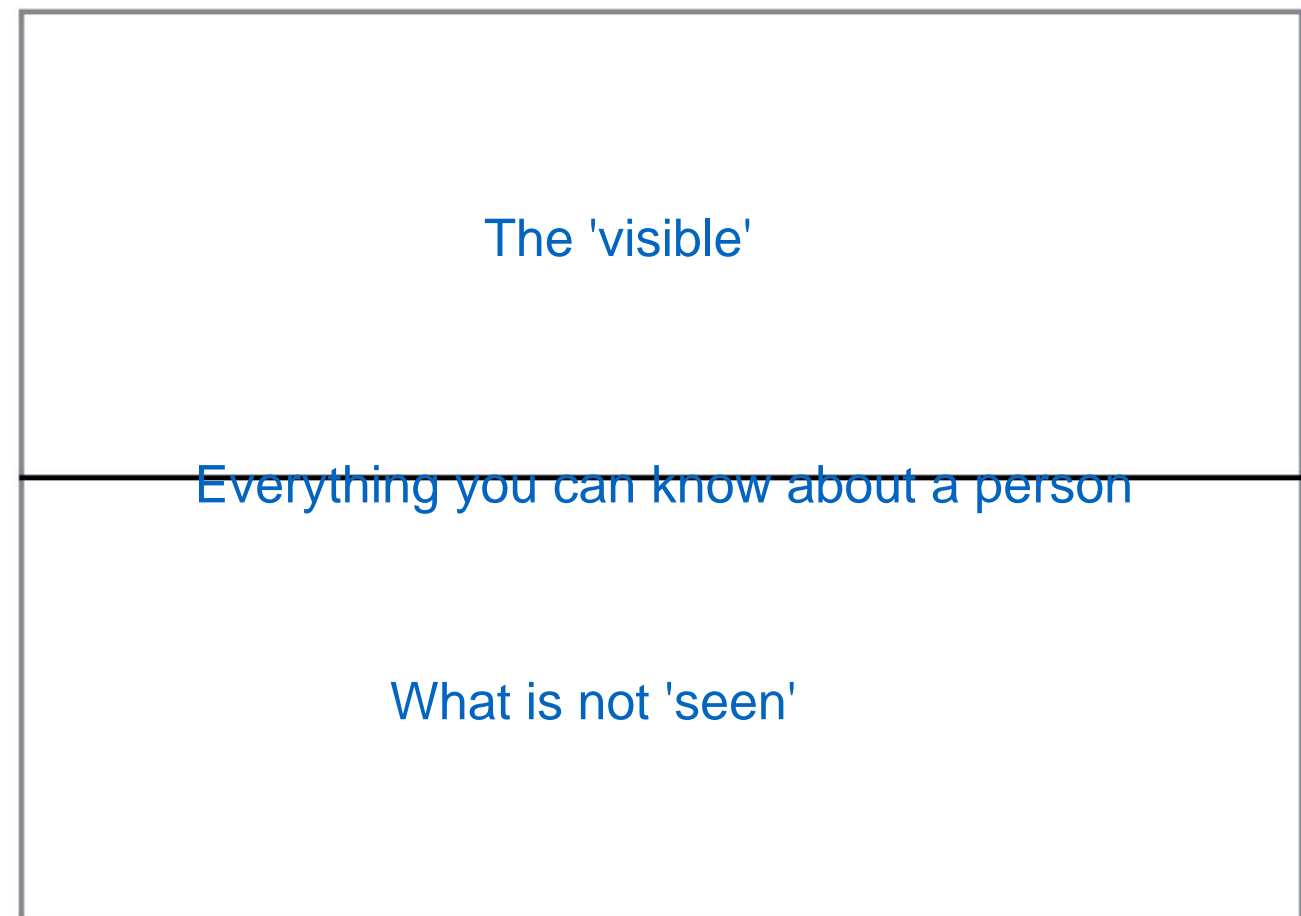
The square with "everything you can know about a person" is divided by a horizontal line. Above the line is everything that is 'visible' about a person, that is, what others can find out about the person by associating with them. Something that can be sensed with the help of the senses, i.e. both concrete and interpreted behaviours.

Underneath the line are things that are hidden from others. There are the person's *own* feelings, values, thoughts, how they behave in situations other than those where 'we' have spent time with the person. There is something there that the rest of us haven't discovered yet.

Sometimes the line ends up high, and the person hides most of himself.

It can be when the person feels insecure. In other situations, it ends up way down.

Different people have different 'basic' levels for the line

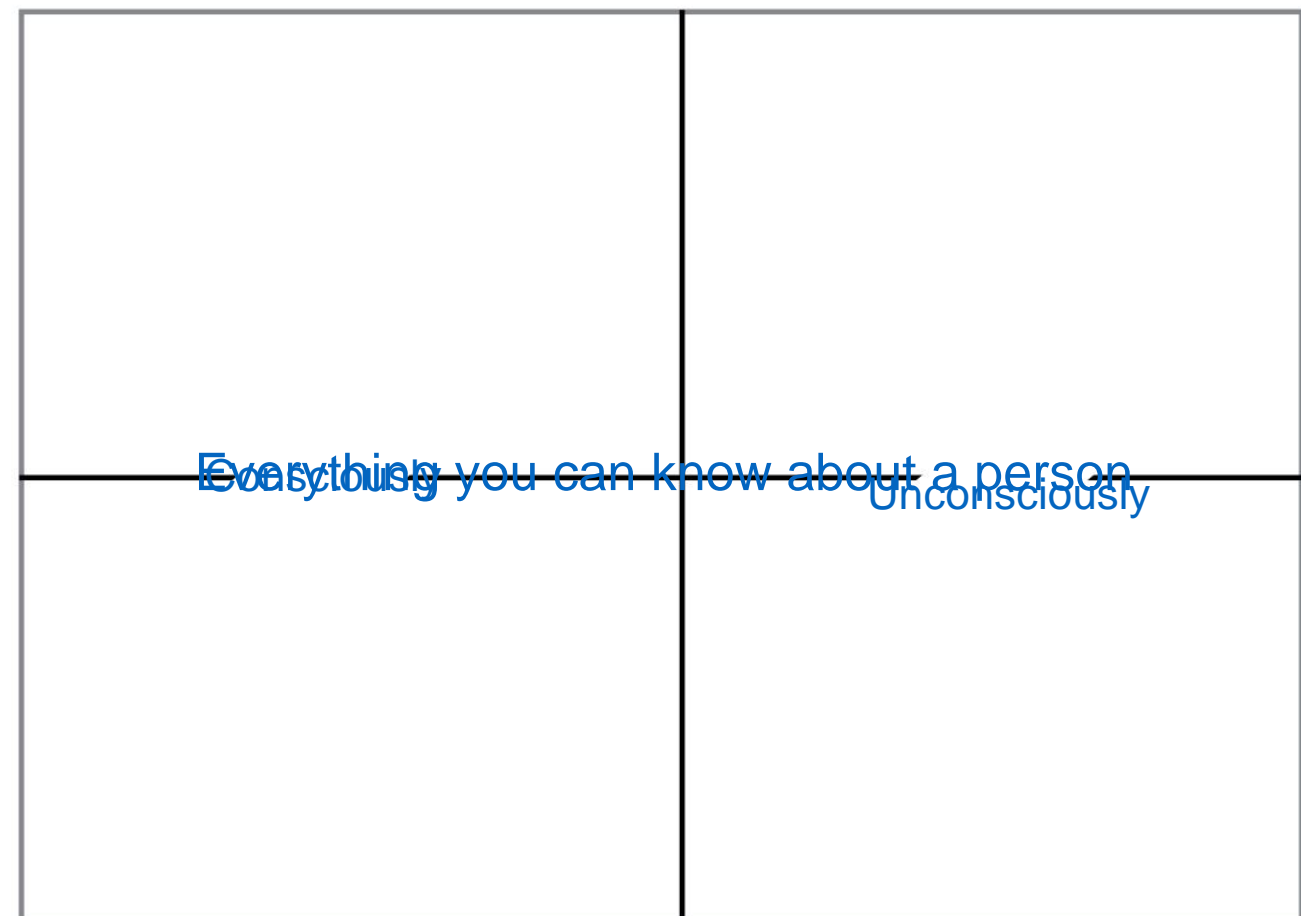




# Johari - a simple model of self-image

When the square of "everything you can know about a person" is divided between the 'visible' and the not 'visible', we can divide it again, with a vertical line. Everything that ends up on the left is what the person knows about himself. What ends up on the right is things that the person himself is not aware of.

The sound of one's own voice can illustrate something that is unconscious to the person themselves, but that everyone else knows. Parts of body language and certain reactions are other such examples.



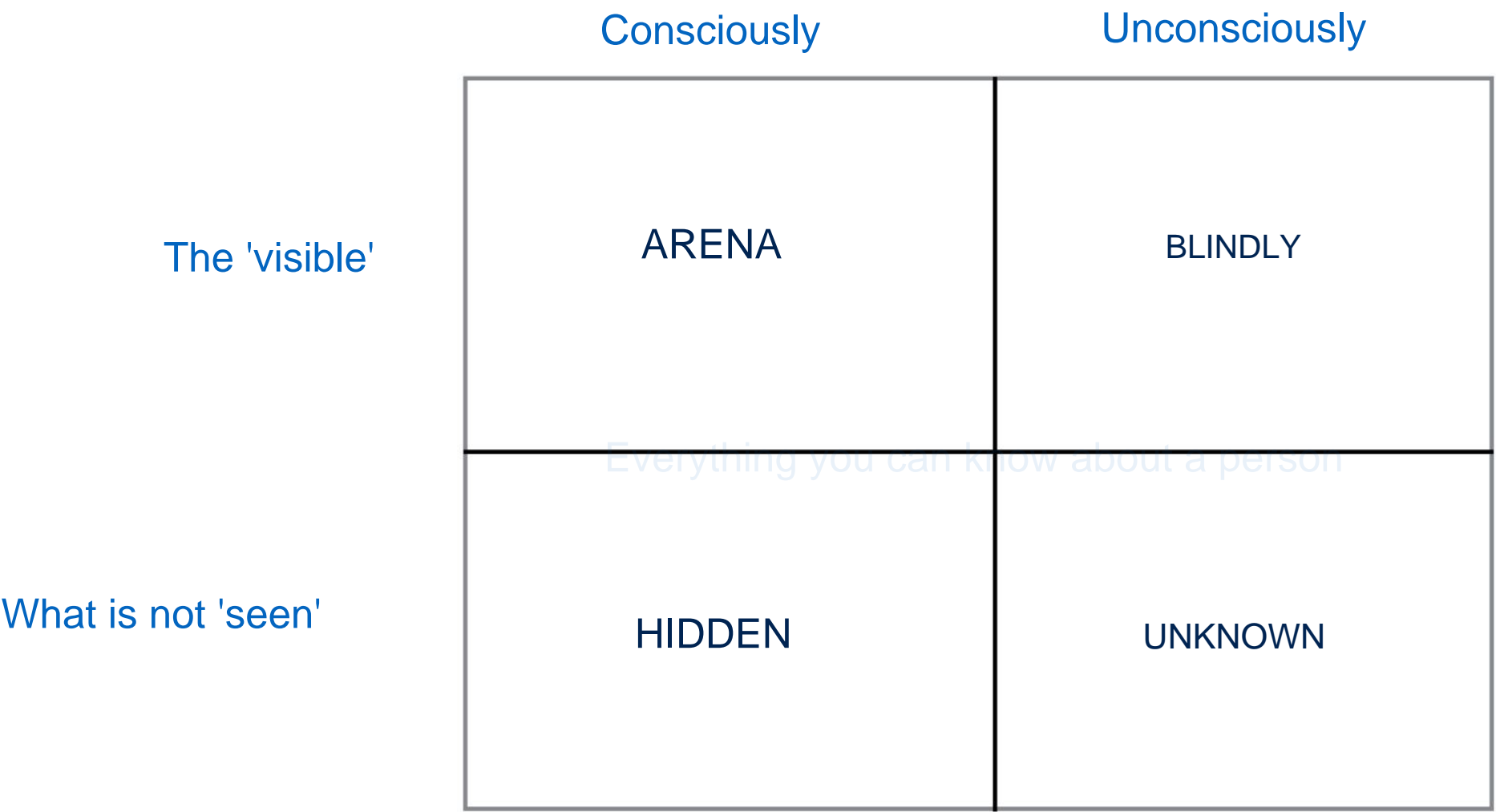
# Johari - The Four Parts

The Arena: *What I know about myself and intentionally show to others*

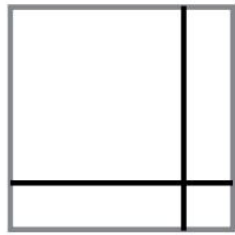
The hidden: *What I know about myself, but choose to hide from others.*

Blind spot: *What others perceive about me, but of which I myself am unaware.*

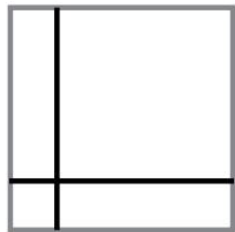
The unknown: *What is unknown both to myself and others. Could, for example, be my potential to act in a situation I have never yet been exposed to.*



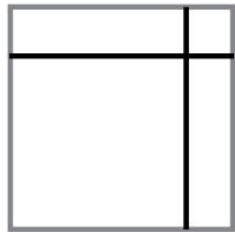
# Johari - a few different types



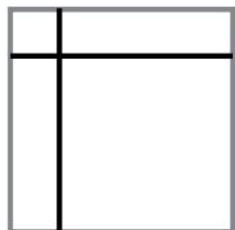
**Stor Arena: Dare to show a lot of myself.** People with a large arena tend not to be afraid of what they are signaling. They are happy to let others take part in their reactions and are happy to invite others to react to what they contribute.



**Big blind spot: Unaware of the impression I'm making.** A person with a large blind spot also displays a lot of themselves, but is unaware of how others perceive it. Can be perceived as assertive and disruptive, risks hurting others with their directness. They tend not to listen to the reactions of others.



**Large hidden field and small blind field: I deliberately withdraw.** People with the line high may deliberately hide large parts of themselves, but this may be unintentional. It can be rooted in anxiety or uncertainty in a situation. They may feel threatened and like to withhold information. Often such a person may ask a lot of questions, to know what others think, but will not reveal much themselves until they are sure how it will be received. They may very well know what they are doing, but dare not expose themselves to the possibility of criticism.,



**Large unknown field: I feel like a 'shell'.** These people almost always act cautiously, closed and quiet. They are difficult to get hold of, as they do not send out enough signals. They are often unaware of their own behavior, which is why it becomes confusing when others are on guard. With such a small arena, it is difficult for the person to develop their ability to cooperate - if you don't send any signals, you don't get any back - it becomes impossible to develop.

# Johari - reduce your blind spot

- It is reasonable to assume that it is an advantage in cooperation that the participants are aware of which signals they sends out
- You can avoid misunderstandings if you are aware of the impression others get of you
  - Then you want as small a blind spot as possible.
- It is also an advantage to be observant of other people's signals. By perceiving the small nuances in what others mean, you can discover if others have misunderstood your signals.
  - This is also conflict prevention
- In order to reduce the blind spot, **you need to get feedback** from others.

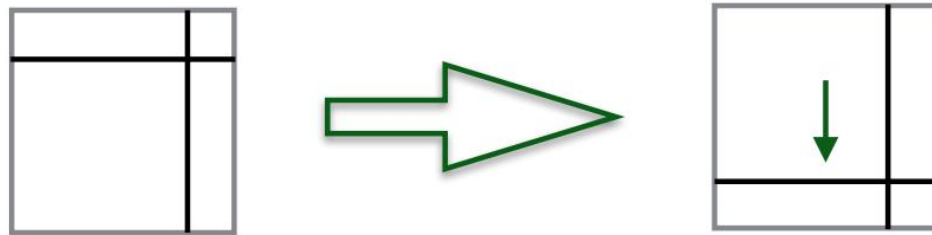
# Johari - reduce your blind spot

- If you pay attention to how others react, you can learn new things about yourself
- Every reaction to what you do, or fail to do, is information to you about how others perceive your behavior.
- A reduced blind spot leads to fewer and fewer unexpected reactions in interactions with other people.
- How can you then influence others to be (more) generous with their reactions?



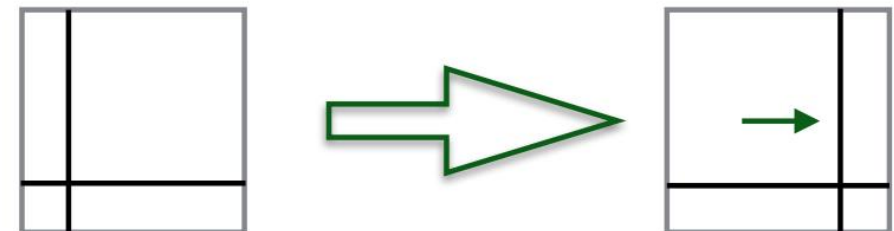
# Get feedback by daring to show trust

- When the reactions to something you did did not turn out as you thought, you have a particularly great benefit not only from the others reacting - but also daring to *explain* what they perceived in your behavior that caused them to react the way they did.
- The one that hides a large field, however, does not provide much feedback. Then you have to influence them to show more of themselves and react to you.



- When we react to others, we also show something of ourselves. (So there is a way to reduce it blind field).

- When we show more of ourselves, we become more vulnerable.



- Therefore **trust** and **confidence** are important components of feedback.

# Feedback - risk and opportunity

- When someone gives feedback, they run the risk of being ignored or humiliated. The recipient can e.g. laugh at it or shrug it off.
  - If the recipient 'ignores' the feedback, and therefore hides more, or reacts aggressively in defense - the giver withdraws or makes the situation worse by behaving aggressively back.
- If the feedback is instead welcome, so that the giver receives signals of trust back, the mutual trust usually increases and there are good opportunities for more feedback (immediately or later) and the relationship is strengthened.

## 1-2-3

- Self-awareness requires feedback
  - Functional feedback requires that the other person feels trust
    - The feeling strongly depends on whether we show trust.

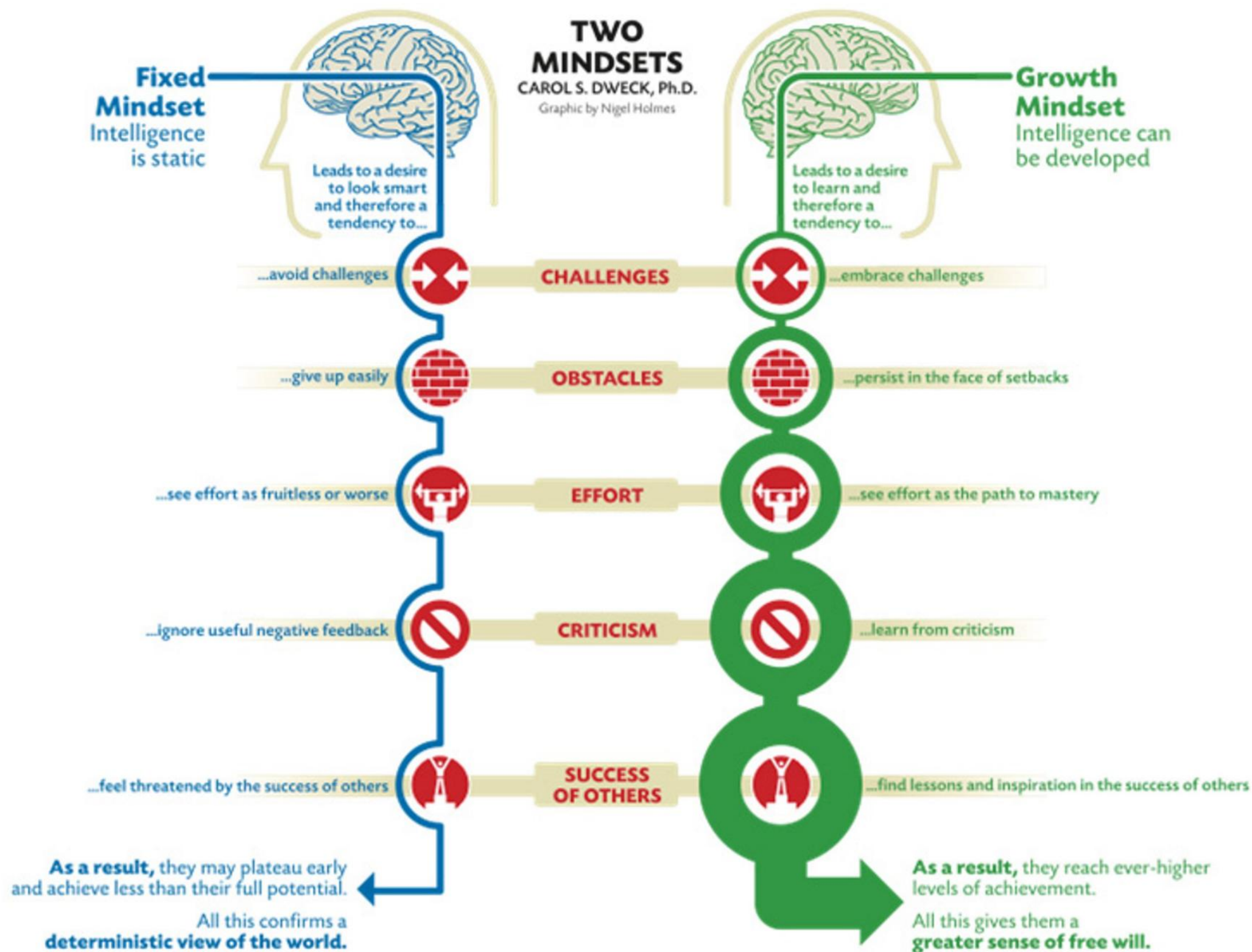


# Feedback - a sensitive issue

- Many people tend to hold others back and hesitate to give feedback.
- It is also common to protect oneself from exposing oneself to other people's feedback on one's own behavior. We are afraid of what we might hear.
- Both giving and receiving feedback is charged.
- Carol S. Dweck Ph.D has developed theories about "Fixed vs Growth Mindset" - which can be roughly translated: "Preset or developable attitude", which can be a help in your own handling of feedback.
  - It is unusual for a person to be 100% one or the other, instead the attitude can vary between subjects and different areas of life. But there is also a kind of "natural style" one tends to have in most occasions.
- Fixed mindset means a perception that one's ability is limited and basically locked since birth.
 

This means that you tend to like things you are good at as "innate talent" but not be so fond of things that take time and energy to become good at. As a consequence of this, you 'judge' yourself by results, so that a good result = you are good and bad vice versa. If you have the image of "being competent" it becomes devastating if the opposite seems reasonable - easier then to both escape challenges and criticism - both damage the ego too much. Things that take time to learn are also not attractive as they also become signs that you are "not competent". When one escapes challenges, criticism and thus development, the basic idea that abilities are "innate" and cannot be trained is proven...
- Growth mindset instead measures themselves not from results, but from what they learned. This makes them open to criticism, that they embrace challenges and grow "without limit".

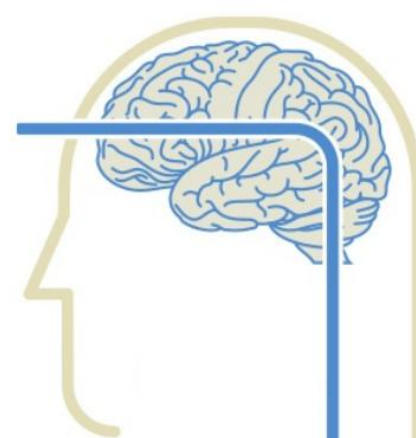
# Fixed vs. Growth Mindset (Dweck)





# Fixed Mindset (Dweck)

## Fixed Mindset Intelligence is static



**Leads to a desire to look smart  
and therefore a tendency to ...**

People who hold a Fixed Mindset believe that “we are the way we are”, but that does not mean that they have less desire than anyone else for a positive self-image. So of course they want to perform well and appear to be smart.

**... avoid challenges**

A challenge, by definition, is hard and success is not assured. So rather than risk failing and negatively impacting their self-image, Fixed Mindset individuals will often avoid challenges and stick to what they already know they can do well.

**... give up easily when faced with obstacles**

This same thinking applies to obstacles. The difference is that challenges are things that they can decide whether to face while obstacles are external forces that get in their way.

**... see effort as fruitless or worse**

Fixed Mindset individuals ask themselves, “What’s the point of working hard and making efforts if afterwards I might still be on square one?” Their worldview tells them that effort is an unpleasant thing that does not really pay dividends, and so the smart thing to do is for them to avoid it as much as possible.

**... ignore criticism or useful negative feedback**

The Fixed Mindset logically leads people to believe that any criticism of their capabilities is criticism of them as a person. Useful negative feedback is ignored, in the best of cases, and taken as an insult the rest of the time. This usually discourages people who are around a Fixed Mindset individual and, after a while, they stop giving any negative feedback. This further isolates that person from external influences that could generate some change.

**... feel threatened by the success of others**

Fixed Mindset individuals see the success of others as benchmarks against which they will look bad. When others succeed, they will try to convince themselves, and the people around them, that the success was due to either luck (because almost everything is due to luck in the Fixed Mindset world), or to objectionable actions. They may try to tarnish the success of others by bringing up things completely unrelated, (“Yes, but did you know about her ...”).

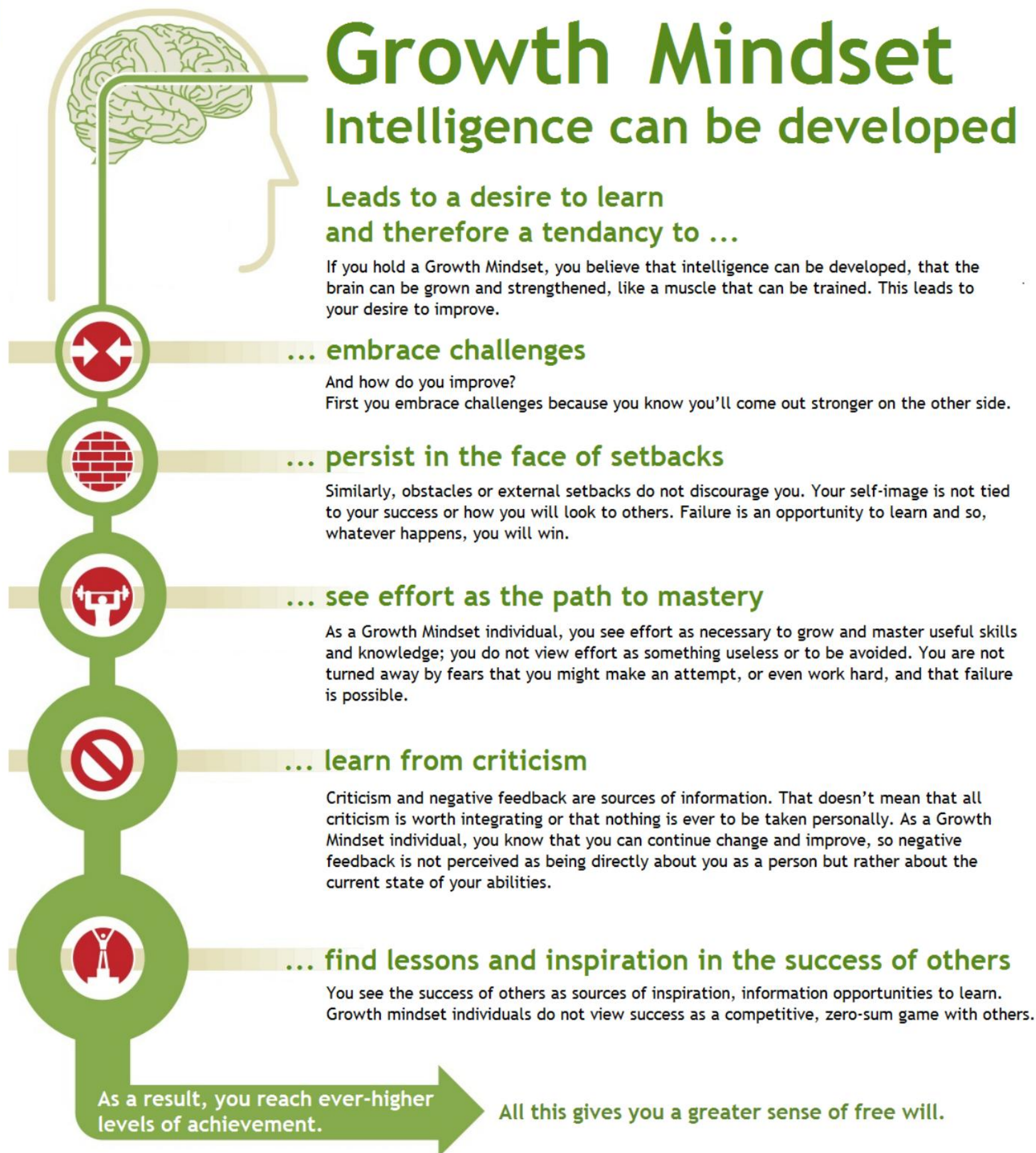
**All this confirms a deterministic view of the world.**

**As a result, they may plateau early and  
achieve less than their full potential.**

Fixed mindset individuals do not reach their fullest potential and their beliefs feed on themselves, forming negative feedback loops. They don’t change or improve much of the time, if ever, and so for them this confirms that “we are the way we are”.



# Growth Mindset (Dweck)



As a Growth Mindset individual, you note your improvements and this creates positive feedback loops that encourage you to continue learning and improving.

Most people do not have a 100% Growth Mindset or a 100% Fixed Mindset; most of us have some of both. The good news is that it is possible to change your worldview from Fixed Mindset to Growth Mindset. Carol Dweck's research indicates that both children and adults can be taught to change their mindsets.

GRAPHIC BY NIGEL HOLMES

# Feedback - three methods

To succeed with feedback, it is helpful to use an established and proven method, we shall consider three different variants;

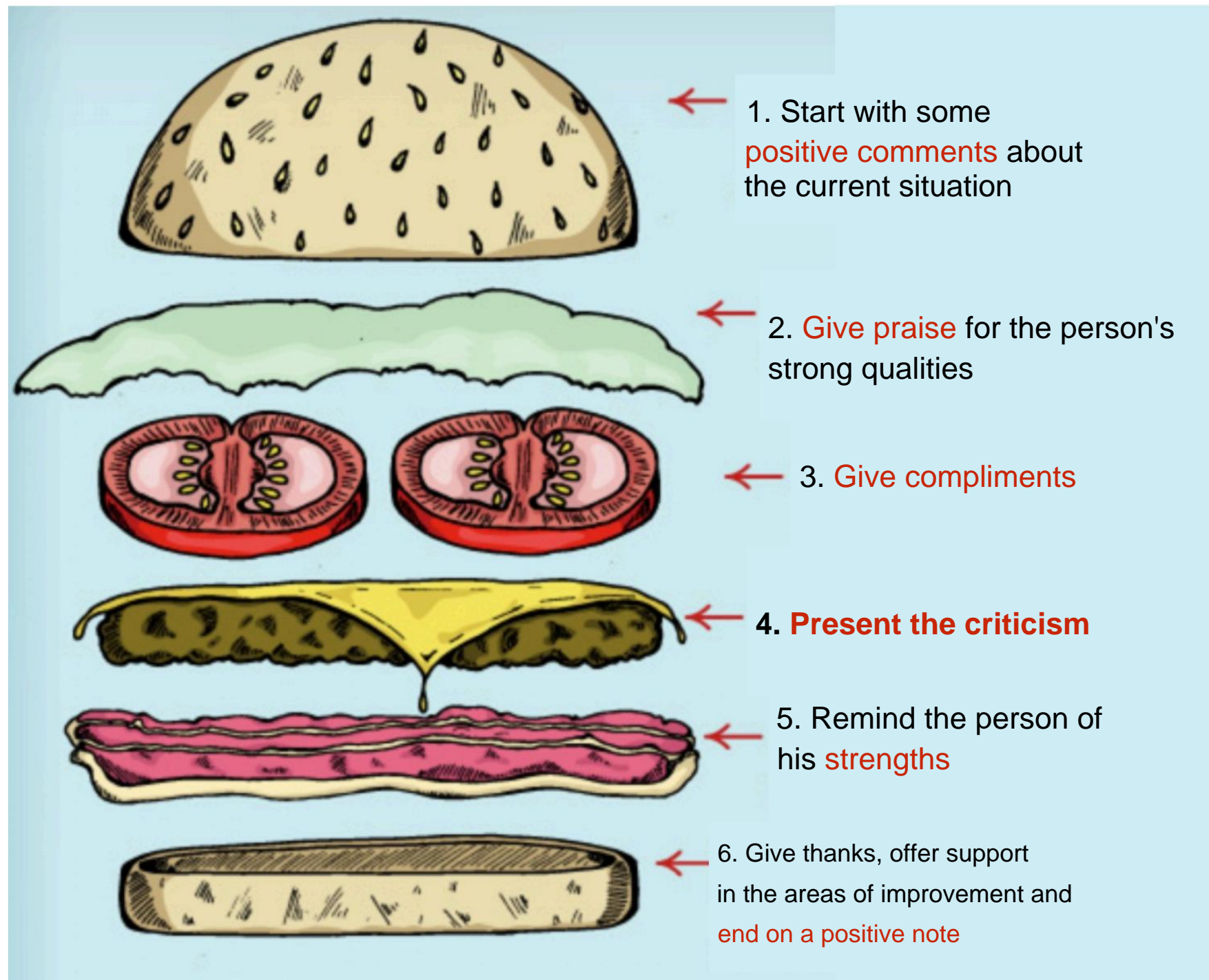
- Feedback sandwich is a method many people recommend
- Me messages are a simple tool
- Sorted feedback is an effective method

*(Active listening is the best attitude of all.)*



# The feedback sandwich, a way to help the criticism get across

- The feedback sandwich technique involves beginning and ending with positive feedback, and present constructive criticism in the middle - like the meat in a hamburger.



# Me message

The technique consists of three parts, where only one part is about the receiver. (The third step is the most difficult and can sometimes be omitted)

- Describe the behavior
- Describe your reactions to the behavior
- Describe your thoughts about your own future behavior.

## The behavior

The first part is thus about describing the recipient's behaviour.

Stick to what you can observe, i.e. *external factors* from the senses.

Be careful not to interpret or describe inner experiences as feelings.

ex) "You were late for the project meeting today".



# Me message (2)

## The reactions to the behavior

- In step two, your inner experiences are allowed to speak
- Here you describe how you felt and thought.
- It explains that the observing behavior has reactions in others.
  - eg "I felt frustrated that we lost time waiting for you"

## Your thoughts about **your own future behavior**

- Here you describe what consequences you see from the situation
- That is, it is about the consequences for your own part.
- This can be difficult with more trivial behaviors, but is usually worth a try.
  - ex) "I feel unsure of how committed you are to what we do and therefore become doubtful about how much I myself will get involved."

# I message (Exercise 1)

## Exercise

You work in a work team that has regular weekly meetings on Monday mornings at 9.15. Due to the high workload, this is the only possible time to discuss work issues with everyone at the same time.

The Monday meetings always have an agenda sent out in advance, but your manager often presents small changes or additions to the meeting order at the beginning of the meetings. At the end of the agenda you always have "other questions", but it is unusual that you have time for any of these. You believe that this is because many of your colleagues bring up things outside the agenda at any time during the meeting, which means that you who are waiting for "other questions" rarely get a chance to raise your questions.

You think it's time to address this problem and want to raise the issue with your colleagues, and after consulting with your boss, you've got this item high on the agenda for the next meeting. When you realize that this is a kind of feedback and something that can be perceived as negative criticism (especially by some!) you want to use so-called I-messages.

*Write down a few sentences in which you address the question using the I-message method.*

- Describe the behavior
- Describe your reactions to the behavior
- Describe your thoughts about your own future behavior.

# Give and take graded feedback

## Two types of feedback - Constructive and Positive

- The positive feedback can also be called strengthening feedback.
  - This reinforcing feedback aims to help the recipient become aware of what is good and that it can use again.
- The constructive feedback (sometimes called negative feedback) aims to alert the recipient to behaviors that can be replaced or changed.
- Everyone can give feedback! It doesn't matter how "good" the person is at giving feedback, compared to, for example, what you are. You have very little opportunity to observe your behavior yourself, from the outside and with a certain distance. By taking in the perspectives of others, you can increase your awareness.
- It is more interesting to take part in what others **see** than to take part in what the others think and interpret.

# Give and take graded feedback

## Sorted feedback

The expression assumes that we 'get' information in two ways: **From the outside**, from our senses (sight, hearing, smell, etc.) and **from the inside** - our interpretations, summaries and conclusions of the sense impressions.

Often we move quickly from impressions from the outside to interpretation from the inside, so that we 'sort out' what we saw or heard in detail. Through attribution errors or 'passive listening' we also distort what we have seen or heard and even deceive ourselves.

Sorted feedback is about explaining to another person what you have seen, heard, felt, etc. that made you make a certain interpretation.

By focusing on identified behaviors - not your interpretations - and giving feedback on these behaviors, the recipient gets better guidance on how to change their behavior.

ex) *“I felt you were nervous during your draw on Monday” -is not graded feedback*

ex) *“...You fingered a pen during the presentation, I also heard you regularly say 'eeeeeh', I also saw you look very often at your papers. - is sorted feedback.*

Seeing that someone is nervous is an interpretation that probably won't help the person in question change their behavior. When the feedback is given descriptively, without evaluating, there is a greater chance that the recipient will listen and not get defensive.

# Give and take graded feedback

## More examples

"I have thought that when you meet customers, you talk a lot, and tell the customer about our solutions and offers. I have also thought about the fact that the customers are not allowed to say much during the meetings. I get the feeling that you know a lot about our business. I'm wondering if you're not learning as much about the client's business as you could in these meetings?"

*Observation - followed by explanatory interpretations*

"When you speak, you have a neutral voice, without major differences in tone, emphasis or melody. It makes me experience you as something absent and a feeling that you don't really believe what you say yourself"

"You told me you were happy with the result, but your body language and voice gave off a downbeat impression - so I wasn't sure which to believe"

# Give and take graded feedback

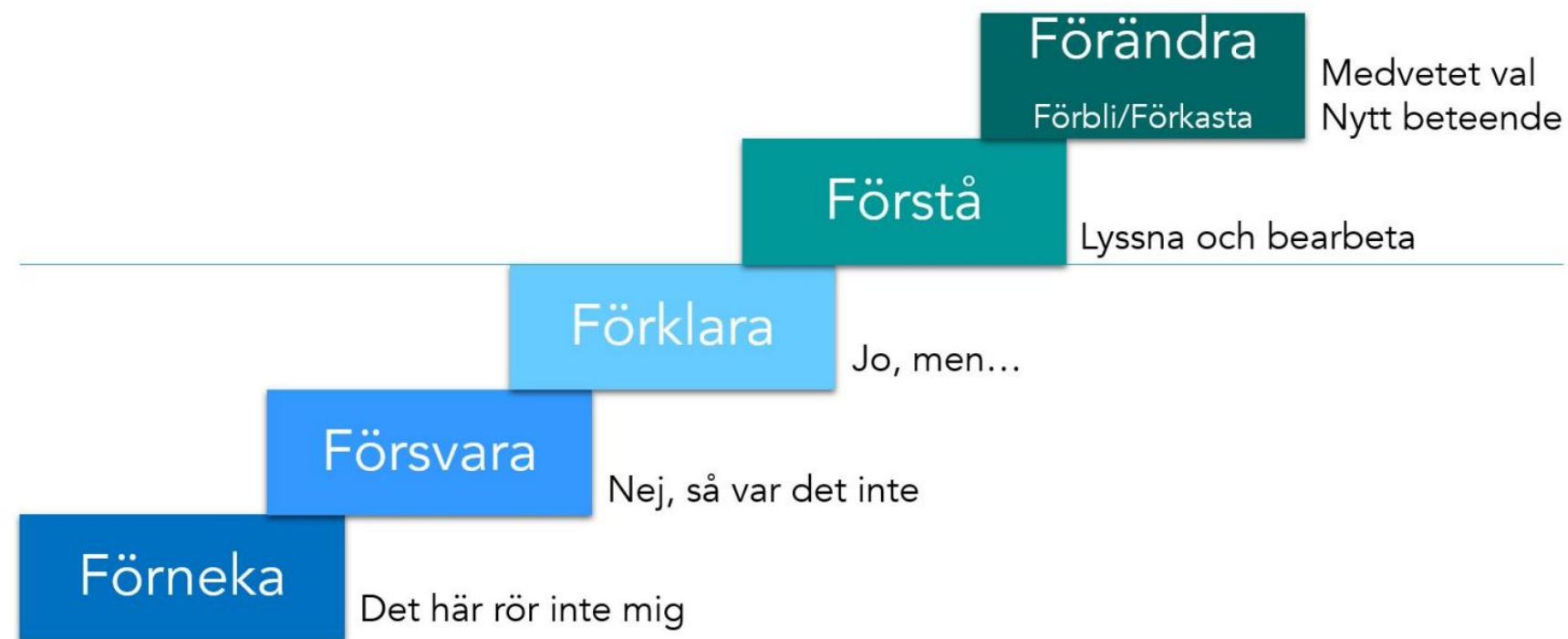
## To think of

- **Feedback is given for the sake of the recipient** - not for the giver. It is important to check that the recipient *wants* the feedback, otherwise it will be meaningless. (It may be enough to ask before)
- Be as **strict and concise** as possible - Avoid complicated introductions and lack of clarity. Instead, be straightforward and clear.
- **The amount of feedback** needs to be adapted to the recipient. Therefore, divide the feedback into different parts, observe the receiver and read the situation, and listen to see if it is receptive to more. Otherwise, save the remaining for a later time.
- **Regular training** increases the benefit and quality of the feedback - from both the donor and recipient perspective.
- **Unfavorable feedback can be handled**
  - You can stop someone who doesn't give you good feedback
  - have a "filter" around you, where you decide whether you receive interpretations or observed behaviors. Interpretations are not truths. In such a case, interrupt with questions about which behavior is the basis for the interpretation. ex "What was it about my performance that made you perceive me as nervous?"

# Give and take graded feedback

## The feedback staircase

- When we receive feedback, it is common for us to become defensive. It is possible to work with this process, and you can benefit from the model in the so-called feedback staircase - which describes the steps you take on the way to changing your behavior:





# Give and take graded feedback

## Exercise

1. Think of and write down something you have accomplished relatively recently that you are glad you accomplished. (This is likely something that was a bit challenging and difficult, or awkward or mentally taxing, but that you managed and are happy with - eg moving, a sporting achievement, having a tough conversation, a construction project, etc).
2. Write a point or sentence about what was the actual challenge of the whole thing
3. Write a point or sentence about how you solved it / went about it.
4. Write a point or sentence about what you are most satisfied or proud of.
5. Prepare to tell and present the event to others.

# Give and take graded feedback

practice first)

1. In groups of two or three, introduce each other and tell about the event. Those listening must give feedback to the presenter. For notes in point form - not on the content but on what you experience from the person presenting.
2. Divide the feedback note into external and internal observations, i.e. observed behaviors and your interpretations/conclusions. Prepare to give feedback: Internal observations may only be included if they can be linked to external ones, e.g. "You were very happy when you told me, I think so because you smiled and had a positive tone in your voice" - "You looked a lot into your note, and interrupted several sentences and changed them - so I perceived that you were uncertain."
3. Give feedback, starting with one or two things from each audience. The presenter can practice using filters and distinguishing between interpretations and behaviour. If loose interpretations emerge, ask questions about the underlying behaviors.
4. Keep conversations calm and friendly
5. It's always OK to say stop as a receiver if it doesn't feel rewarding.
6. Repeat the process so that everyone has presented and received/given feedback.

# Discussion - Feedback in working life

- Discuss in groups of two or three, in which different situations in working life it may be relevant to give and take receiving feedback?
- Discuss different ways of approaching giving feedback in the different situations. How can you go about it if you want to give (constructive) feedback in different situations?
  - Don't forget specifically versus, for example, a customer. How to give constructive feedback to a customer?

# Feedback to 'thing' or person - does it make a difference?

- Often when we give feedback we can feel that there is a difference between the 'thing' and the person - the content or 'the performance'.
- It is common in working life that we are both expected and want to give feedback to colleagues, customers, managers or others, but usually to something concrete, non-personal such as;
  - *a report*
  - *a contract proposal*
  - *an idea in a project meeting*
- A **very common mistake** is to think that this is therefore disconnected from the usual concerns feedback related to affected self-image, trust, openness, defense mechanisms, etc.
  - For the person who feels 'ownership' of the thing in question, the reactions (feedback) are general transferred to themselves, which is why the feedback to the thing becomes synonymous with feedback to the person.
  - It is very easy for us to feel ownership of things, it can be enough to be the one who talks about something in a meeting to feel responsible for it.

# Feedback to 'thing' = person, same technique works...

- Since there is a great risk that a seemingly factual opinion about an idea or an object will be transferred to an assessment of another person, it is just as well to start from this as a basis and plan your approach based on it.
- The techniques we have gone through, I-messages and sorted feedback, in principle work well even in these cases, and the risk we take if it goes wrong is relatively low. There is minimal risk of the relationship being damaged, instead there may be misunderstandings about trivial details, which we can correct with, for example, active listening and good conversational methodology.

*For example;*

- I thought that there were many pictures and figures without captions in the report. I found it difficult to understand what they were about, so then I was unsure if I would even care about the pictures when I read the text.
- Your suggestion of choosing a variant and quickly testing it on the market sounds effective, but I feel unsure if it is a reliable method to find the best solution?