



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
2026 PROJECT MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

The Art of Giving Feedback: Valuing People, Getting Results

Briana C. McManus, M.Ed.

Louisiana State University
CP Education & Consulting

PMSYMPOSIUM.UMD.EDU



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

Hi Friends! I'm Bri.

She/Her/Hers

- Carolina Girl
- Avid Reader
- Theatre Kid/Music Major
- Zillennial (With 7 Years Experience)

“Hey Y’all, Hey Bri!”



2026 Project Management Symposium



Reflect, Pair, Share

Reflect

Describe a time when someone gave you difficult or critical feedback. How did you handle it?

Pair

Find 1-2 other people in the room to chat with!

Share

Briefly share about the situation, how did that feedback impact you or the relationship?



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

Story Time

Bri's First PM Role





PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

Emotional Bank Accounts

Dr. Stephen R. Covey





**“How do I give effective feedback
while positively depositing into
someone’s EBA?”**



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

PART 1

Redefining Feedback



Redefining Feedback



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

- Feedback is a **normal** part of **healthy** relationships.
- Feedback **is not** inherently **BAD**
 - Affirming Feedback (Continue)
 - Constructive Feedback (Adjust)
- Feedback is **information** for **growth!**
- Feedback isn't punishment or simply correction it's an **INVESTMENT**

Affirming Feedback



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

- Recognizes & reinforces actions/behaviors that are **working well**
- Opportunity to **adjust** your EBA with someone
- Bigger than “good job”. **Make it specific!**
- **INVESTMENT:** Affirming feedback highlights what’s working and should be repeated!



Affirming Feedback

EBA Deposits	EBA Withdrawals



Affirming Feedback

EBA Deposits	EBA Withdrawals
• Recognizes and reinforces what is working well • Names specific behaviors to continue • Builds confidence and clarity • Helps people understand why something was effective • Encourages Consistency	• Vague or Generic • Feels Inauthentic or Forced • Used to avoid REAL feedback • It is a set up for a criticism sandwich • It's comparative • It is poorly timed or misplaced

Constructive Feedback



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

- Identifies a behavior or action that needs to **change or improve**
- Opportunity to **adjust** your EBA with someone
- Feedback is **information** for **growth!**
- **INVESTMENT:** Constructive feedback isn't just pointing out a problem—it's helping someone move forward.



Constructive Feedback

EBA Deposits

EBA Withdrawals



Constructive Feedback

EBA Deposits	EBA Withdrawals
• Direct and honest without being harsh • Given in a timely manner • Choosing the right setting • Offering clear and actionable next steps • Demonstrating care for the person's growth and success • Staying calm, respectful, composed • Following up and supporting improvement	• Vague or Generic • Avoiding the conversation altogether • Letting frustration build up, then unloading all at once • Being condescending or dismissive • Making it personal or character-based when it isn't needed • Focusing on only what is wrong without guidance • No follow-up or acknowledgement of improvement

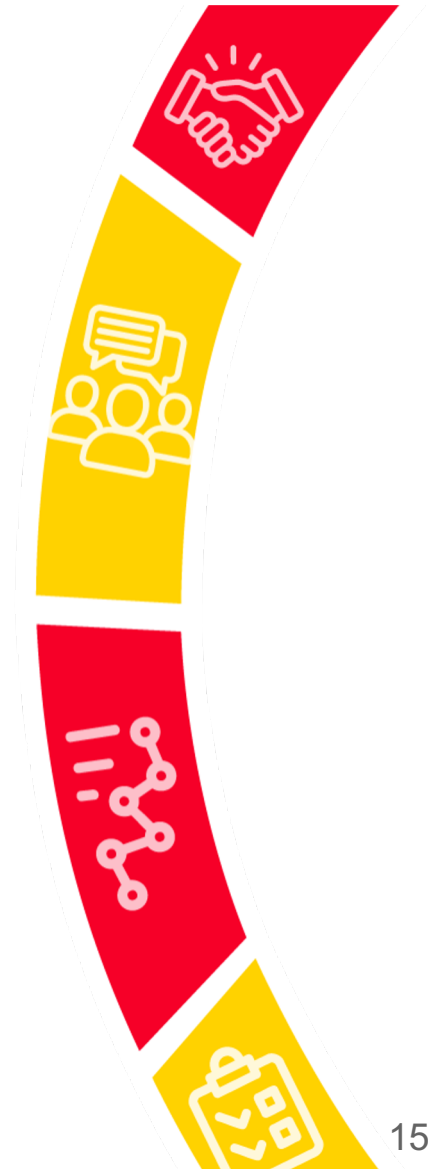


PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

PART 2

Delivering Feedback



The ART of GIVING Feedback



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

- Delivery Matters
 - Truth, Tone, Timing all can impact your EBA with someone
- Direct does not mean destructive
 - Directness without care is cruelty
 - Care without clarity is confusion
- We want people to be able to handle hard truths not just nicely packaged ones
- View Feedback as an **Investment!**



The Craft

Truth

What needs to be said

Timing

When it is said

Tone

How it is said

The ART of GIVING Feedback



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

Truth

What needs to
be said

- Focus on **observable behavior and actions**, not assumptions
- Example
 - “You’re Careless”
 - “This deliverable was two days late.”
- Acknowledge emotions but **separate facts from feelings**
- Don’t overthink it – some feedback can just be said.
- **INVESTMENT**: Pause, breathe, take notes, and stick to facts before feelings and emotions have an opportunity to take over.

The ART of GIVING Feedback



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

Timing

When it is said

- Deliver feedback **close to the event**, not weeks later.
- Don't be **reactive** but **don't procrastinate** either
- Private vs. Public, Written vs. Spoken
- Manner matters – is this a conversation or not?
- **INVESTMENT**: Timely feedback respects the person, the moment, and the opportunity to improve

The ART of GIVING Feedback



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

Tone

How it is said

- Tone conveys intent and shapes perception
- Calm, respectful, and constructive delivery is a deposit
- Harsh, sarcastic, condescending is a withdrawal
- Are you delivering medicine or poison?
- Tone + Trust = Safe Delivery
- **INVESTMENT:** Trust makes necessary conversations safer and more likely to land well

Feedback is NOT one size fits all



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

- Know your people! Ask better questions!
 - How do you like feedback -> When do you feel the most supported?
- Everyone says they want direct feedback...most of them are lying.
- Does your team trust you?
- **INVESTMENT:** Feedback rooted in value doesn't just correct behavior, it **reinforces confidence and capability.**

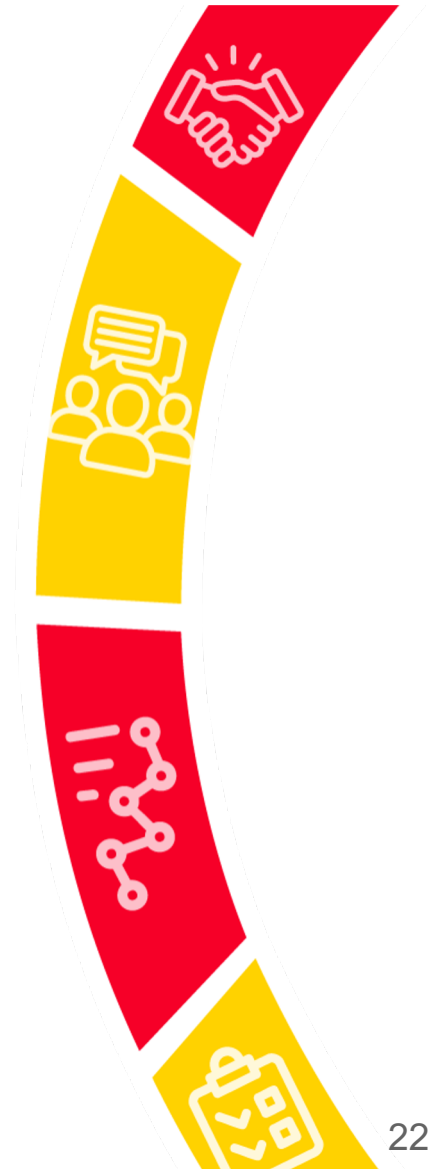


PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

PART 3

Feedback is EMPOWERMENT



Protect your Investments!



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

- The goal is NOT to disguise feedback – throw out the sandwich method!
- You are giving someone feedback because they matter – their contribution, growth, and potential are important
- When people feel invested in, they lean in, they listen, they grow and YOU get a HIGH ROI
- Good feedback reflects what people might not see in themselves AND amplifies what they are bringing to the table
- Build better teams – build better people!

Empowering Feedback



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

- Highlights untapped potential or opportunities or growth
- Focuses on what could be started or added.
- Stretches in a healthy way!
- Delivery should be **specific and actionable**, not just “you have potential.”
 - “You could be a great leader someday” (Not specific enough)
 - “I see leadership potential—I'd love to see you start facilitating part of our next meeting”
- **INVESTMENT:** Empowering feedback encourages innovation, creativity, learning, and forward movement!



**I did it all right...and they still did
not receive it well...**

Note for Self...



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

- Focus on what you can control
 - **You cannot control how they receive it only how you give it**
- Take the time to reflect
 - Was I intentional?
 - Did I manage the 3 T's?
 - Was I direct and clear?
- Feedback can feel like medicine – not always sweet but designed to heal not to please...become comfortable giving medicine
- **INVESTMENT:** When I give feedback that values people and invests in their growth, I am being a good leader.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

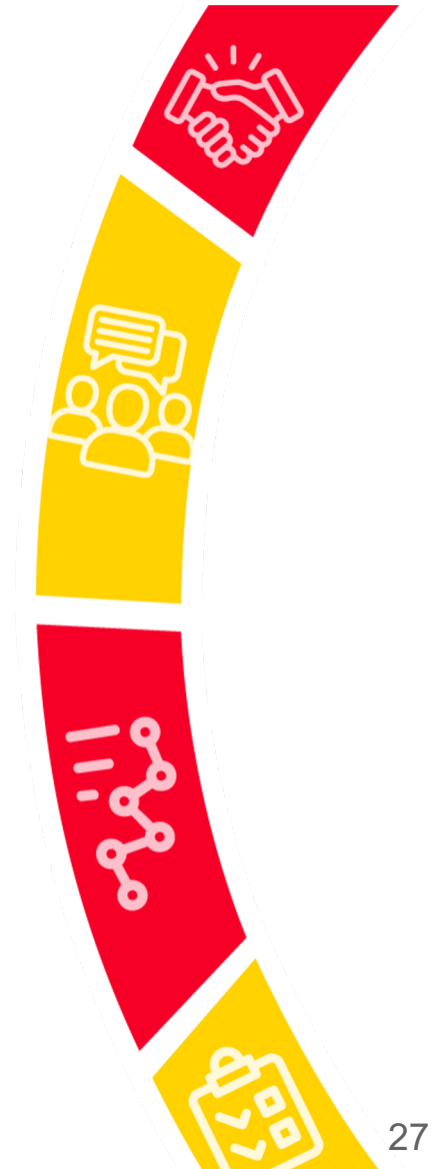
Questions & Evaluation

Evaluate Session:



Contact Information:

Let's Connect!
Briana McManus
Briana@cpedconsulting.com
www.linkedin.com/in/brianacallie



References



PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE
A.J. CLARK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING
Civil & Environmental Engineering Department

- Covey, S. R., & Covey, S. (2020). *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Revised and updated: Powerful lessons in personal change* (30th anniversary ed.). Simon & Schuster.