

# FUEL

## for Challenging Conversations

### Versions for:

1. Influence & Problem-Solving
2. Group Decision-Making
3. Conflict Resolution
4. Negotiations
5. Negative Feedback
6. Holding People Accountable
7. Repairing Trust (Cleanups)
8. Role Underperformance
9. Letting Someone Go

Online: [www.NeubergGore.com/FUEL](http://www.NeubergGore.com/FUEL)

# FUEL Introduction

## F

### RAME THE CONVERSATION

- Framing the conversation is setting the conversation up for success.
- Creating clarity about the goal of the conversation and the agenda will help everyone align and focus on the desired outcomes. Don't beat around the bush--even if it's a tough conversation, and make sure you both are willing to have the conversation.
- In most conversations, we want to establish a mood of openness, collaboration, and connection. Be soft on the person and hard on the problem.

## U

### NDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S WORLDS... THEIR WORLD FIRST

- The best solutions and highest follow-through will come when there is mutual understanding of each party's underlying interests. Don't argue over the solutions--build them together.
- Most people are poor listeners, especially if they are upset or have strong opinions. Set up their listening by first understanding them. Even if they say something you disagree with, stay curious and ensure they feel heard. Paraphrasing is an extremely powerful and much underused tool.
- Also be sure to share your interests and priorities.

## E

### XPLORE OPTIONS

- This is the time in a conversation to create value--to find ways that all the parties can be satisfied. Brainstorm together and expand ideas.
- If you get caught into narrowing into one solution too fast or critiquing solutions, it will shut down creativity and you'll likely leave value on the table.

## L

### EAD A COMMITMENT LOOP (3 C's)

- **Commit:** Make sure everyone is clear and aligned on next steps (who is doing what by when). Often, commitments that may have seemed obvious were misunderstood.
- **Collaborate:** See all commitments as mutual ones; work together to make them successful.
- **Complete:** When the task is complete, discuss what worked well and what can be improved in both the task and your next collaboration.
- A commitment loop is further clarified on the next page.

# A Commitment Loop (3 C's)

## Commit, Collaborate, Complete

### COMMIT

- At the end of all meetings, ensure there is clear agreement of who-is-doing-what-by-when.
- Get a committed response (yes, no, counter offer, commit-to-commit).
- Don't accept unclear or half-commitments.
- Be clear on the desired outcome (not just what they are doing, but why).
- Be clear on the action plan if there are multiple steps. If the commitment is over a longer period or critical, setup milestones and check-ins.
- Document the agreement together in an email or plan. Reconfirm alignment.

### COLLABORATE

- Understand your role in the commitment--it's a mutual commitment, not just "theirs."
- Help them win. Give them the advice, support, resources, people, etc. to be successful.
- Offer encouragement and appreciation.
- For longer/critical projects, have regular check-ins to track progress and offer support.
- If you are concerned a commitment won't be kept, have a conversation. Resolve broken commitments as they arise by initiating a conversation.
- Be clear that not all commitments should be kept. Encourage risks and failures to be communicated promptly.
- If they need to renegotiate a commitment, be open to it. Explore options for how to move forward.

### COMPLETE

- Share your satisfaction and dissatisfaction. A simple tool to use is to share plusses (what worked) and deltas (what can be better).
- Learn what you can do better to support their success and be open to their critical feedback. Own your contribution to their challenges--be both a student and a teacher.
- Offer frequent appreciation with specificity, depth and authenticity. It's a bank account of positive regard that allows you to share negative feedback more easily now and in the future.
- Share negative feedback using the FUEL model. Be sure to be committed to their success and understand their obstacles.

# 5.0 Negative Feedback

## FUEL Best Practices

### F

#### RAME THE CONVERSATION

- The goal is for everyone to be calm, centered, and connected.
- Assume they have positive intentions around their actions and what happened.
- Share your positive intent and support for them and your commitment to their success.
- Request a conversation to give them some feedback and find ways to increase their effectiveness.
- Find a good time for you both to have the conversation.

### U

#### NDERSTAND EACH OTHER'S WORLDS... THEIR WORLD FIRST

- Be soft on the person, hard on the problem.
- Share a plus/delta--where you were satisfied and where you weren't around the tasks or projects. Do not generalize and make it about them.
- Be clear about the impact on you and the severity of the situation.
- Own your assessments. Separate facts from interpretations.
- Ask them how they see it. Appreciate the other person's view of the situation even if it's inaccurate or sounds like an excuse.
- Stay curious about what you did to contribute to the situation.
- Create a shared reality and take responsibility for your roles.

### E

#### XPLORE OPTIONS

- Co-create many possible solutions to resolve the situation.
- Discuss how to reduce variability in the result and increase communication.
- Also discuss how to handle it if (and when) it happens again.

### L

#### EAD A COMMITMENT LOOP

- Decide and fully align on clear next steps. Agree to specific actions to deal with the situation if (and when) it happens again.
- Setup a check-in to discuss changes, progress, and course corrections.
- Reconfirm your support for the other person.
- Work together to make it happen and stay in communication.

# 5.1 Negative Feedback Common Mistakes

## F

### RAME THE CONVERSATION

- Going in off-center, in bad timing/location, or when anyone is ready to “snap.”
- Assuming negative intent or making generalizations or attributions.
- Forgetting that the goal is to collaborate around a change in behavior, not to deliver a message or beat them up.
- Not acting from a mood of support and encouragement.
- Being too nice and not naming the real intent of the conversation.
- Not being prepared.

## U

### NDERSTAND EACH OTHER’S WORLDS... THEIR WORLD FIRST

- Waiting to address it as a theme about them, rather than addressing it as specific feedback around a task--making it about them, rather than their behavior.
- Assuming it’s “their fault” and not looking at how you contributed.
- Getting caught up in your own story and not being curious. It’s easy to want to be “right” rather than focus on the desired result.
- Not understanding or empathizing with their challenges, obstacles or other uncontrollable factors.
- Not sharing the level of impact on you or the severity of the consequences.
- Assuming what’s easy for you is easy for others.

## E

### XPLORE OPTIONS

- Making demands rather than exploring next steps together.
- Not exploring options for offering continued support and resources.

## L

### EAD A COMMITMENT LOOP

- No clear next steps or check-ins to accelerate the learning.
- Approaching this as their issue rather than your issue.
- Underestimating the possibility of a radical shift and overestimating your ability to quickly replace them.

# 5.2 Negative Feedback

## FUEL Preparation

### FRAME

What happened—what are the facts, not your opinions/generalizations?

What are some good reasons why they didn't fulfill expectations? What could you have done better?

What additional support, clarity, prioritization, resources might they need to succeed?

What's the impact on you and the consequences if this is not resolved?

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### UNDERSTAND YOUR INTERESTS

What is your specific request—translate your complaint into a request?

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### GUESS ABOUT THEIR INTERESTS

What are their obstacles and concerns?

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### EXPLORE OPTIONS

Brainstorm what you both can you do differently moving forward:

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How will you stay in communication to handle the situation **when** it arises again?

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### LEAD NEXT STEPS

Who is doing what by when?

When will you check-in about this?

What will you do if this arises again?

# FUEL Checklist Review

## FRAMED THE CONVERSATION

### The What

- Created a shared vision of success.
- Set a forward-looking positive tone.
- The elephant was named (the problem, the complaint, the request).
- It is clear what is being discussed or decided (and what is off the table).

### The Relationship

- Friends not foes—they know you are a support for them .
- Context of appreciation.

### The How

- Agreed on topics, agenda, and timing for the conversation.
- For decisions: identified who else needs to be consulted.

## UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER'S WORLDS...THEIRS FIRST

### Their world

- You understand their world and their point of view even if it's inaccurate (interests, cares, feelings, priorities challenges, or concerns).
- You demonstrated understanding through paraphrasing.
- For cleanups, you identified what you did to contribute to the problem and took responsibility for any negative impact you had.

### Your world

- They understand your world, point of view, and underlying interests and priorities.
- You owned your opinions as interpretation not fact.
- You ask to be paraphrased if there was any doubt of understanding.

### Shared reality

- You have a shared reality—where you agree, disagree, or are uncertain.
- Identified common priorities and differences.

## EXPLORED OPTIONS

- Brainstormed options; avoided debate and assessment.
- Developed several options and did not narrow too quickly on the first solution.
- Let the ideal path be generated through the brainstorm.
- For cleanups, also discussed the relationship and how to ensure the misunderstanding doesn't happen again.

## LED A COMMITMENT LOOP

- Gained clear commitment on next steps (who is doing what by when).
- Left the meeting in a way that WE had a shared commitment.
- For cleanups, agreed to specific actions to deal with similar breakdowns in the future.
- Reconfirmed your support for the other person.