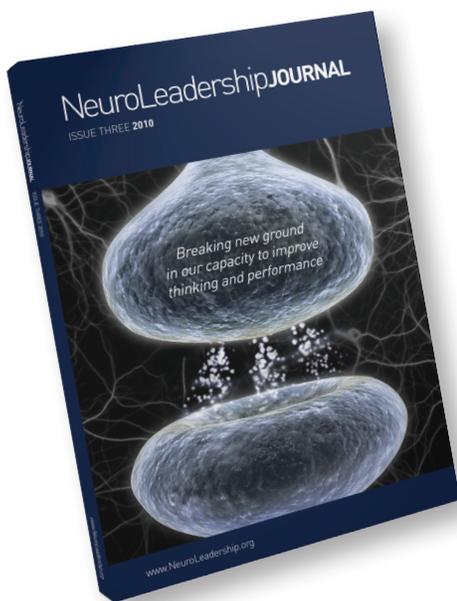


# Turn the 360 around

**Phil Dixon, Dr. David Rock and Dr. Kevin Ochsner**



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# Turn the 360 around

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## Turn the 360 around

*"Bill should let go of the details and lead the 'big picture'."*

*"Jessica can sometimes be too frank and rub people up the wrong way."*

**These are real examples of feedback recently given to managers. Performance reviews, and 360-degree feedback processes, jointly referred to as feedback interventions (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996), are widespread in Western corporations. Research data varies, but perhaps as many as 95 percent of Fortune 2000 companies use feedback interventions (Edwards & Ewen, 1998). There are numerous processes, systems, and training programs specifically developed on how to give feedback effectively. Feedback interventions consume a significant amount of time, energy, and money, and create anxiety, both for the giver and the receiver. Leaders and managers the world over shudder when they hear the phrase: "annual performance review season", as they anticipate their organization almost grinding to a halt.**

Organizational feedback interventions have four main objectives. These objectives are separate, but often linked.

Firstly, feedback may be for talent management purposes. In this instance, the organization seeks to identify patterns within the talent pool, looking for people who should be promoted, and for those who should be removed from the organization. This might be an informal process, or a more formal 'forced ranking' system such as the one GE and many other companies installed at the end of the last century (Blume, 2006). This kind of feedback may be used

to determine people's performance, to assist in calculating an annual bonus from an incentive pool, and to determine salary increases, and so forth.

A second objective involves an employee who is seen as underperforming, or who has significant behavioral issues. In this context, feedback is often being given within a legal framework in order to be able to terminate a person's employment, or to give that person 'fair warning' that their job is in peril if their performance doesn't improve.

*There has been wide debate over the past 50 years whether feedback actually gives rise to improvement in performance...*

A third objective of feedback interventions is developmental; i.e. to help an individual improve their performance. This may be an annual event, or part of a leadership or other development program, or a one-off feedback event to help with an individual's growth.

Lastly, feedback interventions are an inherent part of most companies' periodic performance review processes.

While the ideas in this paper have relevance to all four approaches to feedback, we are going to focus primarily on the third area, where feedback is given in order to improve an individual's performance through a change in their behavior.

Although, according to Atwater & Waldman (1998), feedback interventions are "one of the most notable management innovations of the 1990s", their value and efficacy have yet to be proven. There has been wide debate over the past 50 years whether feedback actually gives rise to improvement in performance or whether it has a neutral, or even a negative, impact. Each 'side' cites examples that 'prove' their case, but it is difficult to reach a definitive conclusion.

The current concept of performance feedback appears to have taken root in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries, with Arps (1917) being an example of an early paper. In the first half of the 20th Century, most of the papers seem to endorse the efficacy of performance feedback, culminating in Ammons' (1956) meta-analysis indicating that feedback interventions had a positive effect. By the late 50s, however, the debate about the value of feedback was gaining traction (e.g. Kelly, 1958; McGregor, 1957; Meyer, 1965).

In a seminal meta-analysis, Kluger & DeNisi (1996) reported that feedback interventions, on average, improve performance only 41 percent of the time and make matters worse 38 percent of the time. Later (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000) they illustrated that doubts about the positive relationship between feedback and performance have been around for a considerable time and questioned why the inconsistencies weren't more widely known. They surmized that most researchers rested their hypotheses on the Ammons' (1956) paper, which they now call into question. They add: "...subsequent findings that were inconsistent with [Ammons] were largely dismissed as flukes or the result of poor research design" (p. 130). They believe the value of feedback and its positive link to performance has become widely, but incorrectly, accepted primarily as a result of the wide acceptance and citations of Ammons' paper.

So how much is this potentially wasteful effort costing corporations? Direct, specific financial estimates on the amounts currently spent on feedback interventions are difficult to ascertain, especially given the recent economic climate and associated cutbacks. It is also unclear in the available research whether reported costs include internal costs, such as lost time and psychological costs. With regard to overall management and leadership development, Avolio & Hannah (2008), citing *Training Magazine's* Industry Report (2007), state that corporations, in America alone, spend USD12 billion on management and leadership development. It is reasonable to assume that a significant percentage of this amount is spent on feedback interventions of some sort.

At the organizational level, Watson-Wyatt (2002) carried out a study of over 750 large North American companies addressing the impact of their HR practices. This study throws "...a cautionary flag in front of some conventional practices..." See in particular at p. 10:

"Multisource feedback continues to enjoy mass popularity, and many, if not most, businesses report that they feel it is successful. *Yet, when the impact on market value for evaluating superiors and evaluating peers is combined, our research suggests it is linked to a decrease of 10.6 percent.*<sup>1</sup> The truth is that it is a challenge to get multisource feedback right. It succeeds when an open culture is already in place. It succeeds when participants have been well trained to give and receive feedback. It succeeds when there is valid and reliable instrumentation and appropriate follow-up. When one or more of these elements is missing, multisource feedback can be a lengthy distraction that interferes with teamwork and reduces productivity and, ultimately, shareholder value."

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According to Hogan (2007), organizational climate surveys routinely show that about 75 percent of working adults report that the most stressful aspect of their job is their immediate boss. Further, while exact differences vary across different studies over the past 25 years, they predict that between 40 percent and 70 percent of managers will fail through incompetence, and that a large portion of these failures are due to "overriding personality defects" (Hogan, 2010). One would think that the feedback systems that are in place in many corporations are intended to correct some of these personality defects, and reduce the employee stress factor. When examined closely, however, there are two inherent conundrums in most feedback processes. The first concerns the focus of the feedback. DeNisi & Kluger (2000)

<sup>1</sup> *Emphasis added.*

warn that feedback directed at the behavioral (or self) level is likely to be ineffective. Indeed, most treatises on feedback recommend that the focus should be “problem oriented rather than person oriented.” (e.g. Smither & Walker, 2004). Yet the self, according to Hogan *et al.* (2010) is exactly where the change is required.

The second conundrum is with regard to the content of the feedback. Feedback comes primarily in two forms i.e. quantitative and qualitative (the latter is also referred to as narrative feedback). While much of the literature addresses the quantitative aspects, overall there has been little attention to the narrative aspects of feedback. Smither & Walker, (2004, reporting on work by Ferstl & Bruskiwicz) suggest that recipients pay more attention to narrative comments than to quantitative data and indicate surprise at how little attention has been paid to narrative comments. Brutus (2009) states that: “there is an overall lack of consideration for narrative comments in performance appraisal research.” Recent studies (Dixon & Underwood, 2010) indicate that 66 percent of narrative comments regarding behavioral change requests were oriented to the self – exactly the sort that DeNisi & Kluger (2000) suggest don’t work!

*...there is an overall lack of consideration for narrative comments in performance appraisal research.*

Dalton (1996) and Ashford (2003) warn that we should not be cavalier about feedback as it “...may well strike at the very core of a person’s identity” (Dalton, 1996) and “Feedback is not like any other information. As information about self, it is more emotionally charged.” (Ashford, 2003). Rock adds another dimension by likening the statement “Let me give you some feedback” to “...the feeling that one gets when walking down a dark alley and hearing footsteps behind you.” (Rock, 2009b). “Hence it is crucial to provide conditions such that the feedback can be heard, and the likelihood of change increased.” (Dalton, 1996).

The issue of taking care during the feedback process is brought into focus when one considers the brain functioning involved. Feedback is often perceived as ‘threatening’, because

of our fundamental need to maintain a sense of ‘status’ (Rock, 2008). When status is threatened, we experience what is known as social pain (Lieberman & Eisenberger *et al.* (2003, 2004, 2007). Social pain, it turns out, lights up brain regions that are largely the same as physical pain (Lieberman & Eisenberger, 2008). The threat of an attack on one’s sense of self is construed by the brain’s biology in a similar way to the threat of physical pain, which explains the strong reaction to criticism that people experience.

So the central conundrum of feedback is that, on the one hand, the feedback content suggests the need to address the self and behavioral issues; and, on the other hand, best practices tell us not to focus there! Part of this conundrum is that we don’t have a good working model for successfully focusing on the personal issues that are so often the focus of feedback requests.

For a process that is so embedded in the corporate world it still amazes us that there is little proof that the feedback process is actually a valid approach. The only real result of the research to date is that one cannot say that feedback never works, only that it won’t always work. (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000). If feedback doesn’t always work, if there are good indicators that it is unlikely to be effective, if it is unreliable, if we have no good methodology of predicting when and why it is effective, and if it can be shown to be linked to a decrease in shareholder value, then why do we continue using feedback in such a central fashion? Shouldn’t we be looking at drastically changing the feedback process, or replacing it with something completely different?

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to identify some models and approaches that may lead to some much-needed improvements in the feedback process, and thereby increase its chances of success.

### **What neuroscience tells us about change**

The presumed purpose of giving feedback is some form of sustained performance improvement, typically a change of behavior, or a change of task focus. In order for such an improvement to take place, the recipient needs to be aware of the need for change (probably via some form of feedback intervention), and to then elect to do something different from what he/she has done in the past i.e. whatever has been his/her habitual behavior. Thus, the recipient needs to be aware of, and interrupt, their normal pattern and replace it with something new – presumably something that is in line with the feedback that was given and subsequently heeded. This interruption and replacement are what this section of the paper addresses.

Without any form of feedback intervention, life for the feedback recipient would continue as normal. They would respond to the world using their habitual patterns with most of their behavior being guided by systems that operate fairly automatically

outside of their conscious awareness. These are the systems of habit (e.g. Dickinson, 1985, Poldrack *et al.*, 2001). These habit systems are optimized to quickly analyze what people say, what is happening in the greater world, and what is perceived through all of the sense organs, and to then match these data to patterns that have already been stored. In response, these habit systems trigger whatever sort of behavior seems to be appropriate based upon that stored past experience. The term 'habit' here refers to a whole sequence of thoughts or actions, or the habitual way of doing something, where that something involves a coordinated series of behaviors or thoughts. Using this definition, driving is a habit, typing is a habit, and how you might think about something is a habit. In addition, an emotional response is an emotional habit – the particular way we interpret information from the world leads us to have a particular kind of emotion. The critical thing about this 'habit system' is that all of this happens outside of awareness and doesn't really require any conscious monitoring. It is surmized that this is what the brain has evolved to do best. The brain didn't evolve to do best at conscious, deliberate thought; it evolved to do best at taking everything it could outside of awareness, and make it as habitual, automatic, effortless, and seamless as possible – and is very good at doing so. The brain is good at sensing a pattern and acting in a way that is habitual towards that pattern.

*The brain didn't  
evolve to do best  
at conscious,  
deliberate thought...*

The good news is that we are capable of interrupting this habit system. The brain has also evolved a large prefrontal cortex (PFC), which is able to exercise 'top-down' control over this habit system so that it can deliberately control behavior. That's the good news. The bad news is that, while the PFC is very powerful, it is very capacity-limited and easily disrupted. It will forget to do this task of interruption, and, if the individual is stressed, hungry, low on sleep, or debilitated in any way, the PFC's ability to focus and interrupt is reduced even more. Thus, relying on this 'top-down' mechanism to interrupt and impose a change of behavior is a risky strategy at best. Furthermore, in order to be at all effective with this intervention strategy, the feedback that precedes the identified change needs to be delivered proximally to the behavioral act in question; i.e. if someone is perceived to behave in a manner that needs improvement, then any feedback needs to be given very soon after the behavior, or else the impact is lost. The current manner in which feedback is given in the corporate world makes this

proximity unlikely. No doubt, Bill and Jessica's behavior, which resulted in the feedback comments at the beginning of this paper, occurred days, weeks, or months before this feedback was given.

In addition, the 'habit system' has evolved to resist change; it takes the long view and regards individual 'change requests' as likely to be anomalies, and, as such, best ignored. The habit system learns and changes slowly and uses a long-lasting representation of what behavior should be adopted for the vast majority of times.

Hence, there are two systems that have different strengths, which are almost in opposition. Firstly, a highly reliable, efficient, experience-driven, habit system that controls behavior automatically most of the time, and secondly, a 'top-down' intervention system, that is very powerful, but easily distracted.

### **Expecting change through feedback**

In general, we assume that giving feedback will initiate a change in the recipient. Indeed "managers typically assume that providing employees with feedback about their performance makes it more likely that performance on the job will be improved." (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000). All other things being equal, however, the two-system model outlined above will tend to ensure that old behaviors, based on old habits, continue. But the feedback-change link gets even more tenuous. There are many more aspects of receiving feedback that, compounded, make it even less likely that change will occur. Let's now examine the act of giving feedback.

*Research  
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when they are in  
a threat state...*

There are widely held views that a) people want to know how they are performing, and b) the best way of letting them know is through feedback. It is common experience, however, that the feedback conversation is a difficult one to have, from both the deliverer's perspective and from the recipient's perspective. It is easy for people to feel threatened when receiving feedback. In fact, we may have

drastically underestimated the degree to which this threat is experienced. The threat response tends to take over, and the recipient responds to the threat, typically defensively, rather than responding in a “what could I do differently” way. Research shows that it is significantly more difficult for people to self-regulate when they are in a threat state (Rock, 2009a) and, as a result, they will tend to resort to the habit system described above. In short, in the threat state, there is increased functioning in the brain of automatic motor function regions, and decreased resources for high-cognitive functions. Also, in a threat state people accidentally class information as threatening even when it is not, and they err on the side of withdrawing and not taking risks (Rock, 2009a).

Rock (2008) proposed the 5-dimension SCARF (Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness and Fairness) model of looking at these types of processes. We can use this model to examine the setup to a feedback conversation, and the feedback conversation itself. Let’s take a typical feedback situation, that of a performance review for Bill, one of the examples from the beginning of the paper. Frequently the prelude to such an event might go something like this: “*Hey Bill. It’s time for your performance review. Let’s meet in my office at 2pm tomorrow and I’ll give it to you.*” Each of the five SCARF components has immediately been thrust into the threat state:

- The boss stating that there will be a review will raise Bill’s Status threat level because of the potential for a drop in his status. Just speaking to someone of higher status tends to create a threat response on its own. If the higher status person provides information that makes someone look bad, a strong threat response can result.
- As a recipient, Bill has little knowledge of what is to be expected of the feedback process, and hence the Certainty dimension is also in a threat state. He doesn’t know about the nature of the upcoming feedback, so he wouldn’t know if his job was perhaps on the line, or if the feedback will be insignificant.
- Bill has been given little or no input into the situation; hence the Autonomy dimension is also in threat. He has no say in when, where, or how the feedback has been collected, or is being delivered.
- The Relatedness domain is possibly threatened because the boss is now perceived, by Bill’s brain, as a foe. Additionally, knowing that others may have given him feedback without him knowing, he may now class his peers as potential foes as well.
- Fairness issues are common in performance interventions with people comparing themselves to others, so the Fairness domain could also be threatened.

Rock has also proposed the idea of the multiplier effect with SCARF. The multiplier effect is where individual threats, say to status, are significantly increased if there are threats in

other domains. So if feedback is being given that attacks someone’s status, the threat response is going to be amplified if there is uncertainty and no autonomy, for example. The same attack on status, certainty, and autonomy would be worse again if there is no sense of relatedness between the giver and receiver of feedback. (Note: The multiplier effect is a hypothesis that is yet to be studied formally in the lab, but appears to have validity from observations of behavior.)

Now let’s take a look at the conversation itself: “*Hi Bill. Take a seat. This shouldn’t take us long, as I’m sure that we both want to get this over with. I’ve spoken with a number of people, and there are several things that we should focus on, but one that every one agrees on, is that, for your position, you need to focus less on the detail and focus more on the big picture.*”

If we review this part of the conversation through the SCARF lens, then even within this brief monologue, the manager has again sent most, if not all, of the SCARF components into red alert.

- Status is in the threat state, partly as a result of Bill being reviewed as outlined above, but additionally with the dismissive way that his boss treats the review, as though it is not important and hence shouldn’t take long.
- Certainty is also in the threat state, as Bill has no information about what is about to happen.
- Autonomy is also in the threat state, as Bill has had zero control over the process, and zero control over what happens next.
- Relatedness will still be threatened as the boss has done nothing to lessen Bill’s internal, but unconscious, view as boss as foe.
- Fairness is in the threat state, as Bill most likely feels that the whole process is unfair.

*In a threat state,  
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In a threat state that is overwhelming, someone receiving feedback is likely to discard the feedback as not being relevant to themselves. In a threat state, we act defensively, and are not likely to agree with statements that make us look bad. For most of us, in such situations, the threat state is so activated that it is virtually impossible to learn – which is the whole point

of the feedback. So one of the central challenges of feedback is that, in many situations, people don't get to the first base of recognizing and accepting that there is a habit to change.

Given that feedback interventions themselves create strong threats, someone giving feedback needs to be able to reduce these threats somehow. This brings us to the idea of the 'offsetting effect', the flipside of the multiplier effect. Rock proposes here that a threat response may be reduced by activating rewards in other domains in order to offset that threat. A common example is in a time of crisis, when certainty decreases, people tend to want to connect with others more, to increase their sense of relatedness, reducing the overall threat.

So if someone is feeling a status threat, it might be reduced by increasing their sense of autonomy, such as giving them aspects of a feedback session that they can make choices about: when and where it is held for example, or who to get the feedback from. These small changes appear to help. You may not be able to reduce the status threat directly, but you might be able to offset the threat by focusing on creating the perception of reward in another SCARF domain.

*...there are deep-rooted, biological reasons why behavior and habit change are difficult.*

Clearly there are deep-rooted, biological reasons why behavior and habit change are difficult. It is also clear that our current approach of feedback/goal setting isn't bringing about the performance changes that we are looking for. Another strategy needs to be invoked in order to provide a better mechanism for inducing change.

### **How the chances of change can be improved**

Let's assume that Bill has had a feedback session during which the SCARF domains were handled sufficiently well that Bill has been able to regulate his threat response enough to hear the need for a change in his behavior. Using the Transtheoretical construct for the stages of change (Prochaska *et al.*, 1992) i.e. precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and termination, let's also assume that Bill is 'ready' for the suggested change, and has decided to take action.

In this case, for Bill to change behavior, he needs to develop a real intention to change. Gollwitzer (1993) refines the concept of 'goal intentions' (e.g. Bill – "I am going to increase my focus on the big picture.") by adding in the concept of 'implementation intentions' (e.g. Bill – "If I find myself distracted by details, I will ignore the distraction.") Gollwitzer *et al.*, in many studies (e.g. 1993, 1997, 1999) suggest implementation intention as a method for increasing the chance of an individual achieving a goal, or acting upon an intent to change.

It is difficult for a person to remember and identify in the moment that they should regulate, and to recognize that this is the moment to implement their intention (in Bill's case, not to get into the details). Gollwitzer suggests that, in addition to creating a goal statement, they should also create a statement in an 'If-Then' format: "If I am in circumstance x then I should do y in order to achieve goal z." In this statement, they specify the moment when they need to become aware – that's the 'if' part i.e. *Under these circumstances, I will... etc.* The statement follows with a description of what the person should do when they encounter that situation... *then I should do the following* – that's the 'then' part. Gollwitzer has shown that, by comparison to people who only hold goal intentions, holding implementations intentions proves to be significantly more effective. By forming an implementation intention, the mental image of the specified situation or cue becomes highly activated and more readily accessible (Gollwitzer, 1999). Gollwitzer refers to the process as 'instant habit'. He has also shown this increase in effectiveness to be true in a variety of different situations. In addition, it also turns out to be effective, even if the individual doesn't remember that they were supposed to be doing this self-regulatory act, i.e. once the situation occurred, the response is immediate (Gollwitzer & Brandstätter, 1997) and without deliberate intent (Achtziger *et al.*, 2008, referencing Bayer *et al.*, 2007). The act of making the statement seems to help the brain automatically trigger the top-down control when it needs to trigger it, and removes or lessens the burden for the person to be continuously monitoring their behavior to check whether they are supposed to be regulating. To the PFC, the constant monitoring is taxing and burdensome and is likely to be quickly forgotten and taken over by some other short-term goal. Indeed, Einstein *et al.* (2003) suggest that this effort is expensive in terms of resources, even in the short term, especially if the individual is frazzled, stressed, interrupted, or has other goals in mind.

Gollwitzer & Brandstätter (1997) suggested that implementation intentions had greater impact for difficult goals as opposed to easy goals. Dewitte *et al.* (2003) argue that the effect for easy goals and difficult goals depends on external circumstances, and suggest that for difficult goals, implementation intentions may not have any impact unless they specify what action needs to be taken rather than *when* or *where*.

Achtziger *et al.* (2008) also showed that the efficacy of the implementation intention remains, even if the cue or situation is internally driven (e.g. desires, cravings, or fears) rather than external situations or cues. They indicated that by creating an if-then statement around “inner states as initiators of goal-shielding responses” people had a self-regulating strategy that could be used across a variety of external contexts. This eliminates the need to anticipate multiple kinds of external cues and situations in order to form an implementation intention.

Henderson *et al.* (2007) refine the implementation intention process yet further, and suggest that the ‘then’ portion of the if-then statement has greater impact if it is an action-oriented statement (“I will change my approach”) rather than a reflection-oriented statement (“I will think about the approach I am using.”)

*...imagining an action is equivalent to actually carrying it out...*

Dholakia *et al.* (2007) suggest that the formation of an implementation plan (of which implementation intentions are just one of four variables) is just one strategy to facilitate successful goal pursuits. A parallel strategy is to remember actions that have been performed successfully in the past to accomplish similar goals. They highlight the fact that these two strategies use different cognitive bases; formulating intention plans requires future thinking, while remembering past actions involves retrospective memory, an activity that is less effortful than the former.

In an empirical study, Knäuper *et al.* (2009) suggest that by refining the use of implementation intentions by adding in mental imagery, there was a yet greater impact in goal success; they refer to a recent theory that “imagining an action is equivalent to actually carrying it out as it activates the same area of the brain” as a possible explanation of this improvement.

In the translation of these concepts to the business world, it appears that a combination of all of these aspects might be appropriate, i.e. to construct an if-then statement, and then review when similar efforts have been made in the past and what caused their success. This review, in turn, might inform and refine the if-then statement. Once formed, the individual might be encouraged to imagine him or herself executing the if-then statement.

Some of the latest research suggests that how good people are at performing this if-then intervention in the very first moments, predicts how successful they are going to be over a subsequent longer period. The combination of the raw top-down horsepower an individual has (i.e. their PFC’s capacity and inhibitory control), together with the if-then implementation intention method to action follow through, can be a powerful way of changing behavior.

If this proves to be true then it starts to become clear that not every strategy is going to work for everybody and that there are real individual differences in the best way to address the likelihood of someone adopting a behavioral change.

For some people the top-down control doesn’t work very well. They’re either too anxious and distractible; or, for whatever reason, they’re not good at it. Where this method is not suitable, giving the individual in-the-moment feedback is a strategy to encourage behavioral change. Other people may be frustrated by the in-the-moment feedback, finding it too slow, annoying and irritating, as they are very top-down (i.e. they have a lot of top-down control).

When would this if-then approach be most likely to work? Recent work in the field of emotional regulation can help shed some light. Gross (1998a, 1998b) proposed a five-stage process model of emotion regulation. His model identifies five strategies that can be differentiated along the timeline of an emotional response. At its broadest level, the model distinguishes between antecedent strategies and response-focused strategies. John & Gross (2003) argue that antecedent regulation strategies are more effective than response-focused strategies, i.e. it is better to rethink and reappraise what’s going on ahead of a possible emotional ‘event’ rather than to try and suppress it after it has happened.

Let’s take a look at the four antecedent strategies, using the example of someone getting upset at a baseball game:

- Situation Selection: select situations, in advance, which minimize the chances of this emotional event from occurring (e.g. don’t go to the game).
- Situation Modification: change the topic of conversation to steer away from the emotional event (e.g. go with friends and sit in a corporate box).
- Attention Deployment: choose a change of focus of attention (e.g. read a book).
- Cognitive Change: choose to reassess the underlying meaning of what is happening (e.g. look at it as a way of connecting socially).

Having received legitimate feedback, if someone has volitionally indicated that they intend to change, one could combine the if-then approach with the five-phases concept and build a series of if-then statements focused on each of the five different phases. Using the two examples (Bill and Jessica) of feedback that we used as illustrations at the

Antecedent strategies		
	<i>"Bill should let go of the details and lead the 'big picture'."</i>	<i>"Jessica can sometimes be too frank and rub people up the wrong way."</i>
Situation selection	"If I am invited to a meeting, then I will determine the agenda in advance, and will only attend those that address the big picture."	"If I anticipate that I will be faced with the need to voice a strong opinion in a meeting, then I will adopt an alternative method of putting my opinion across."
Situation modification	If I am in a meeting and the conversation starts to focus on the detail, then I will suggest that we move on to the next topic."	"If a situation arises when I feel like being frank and stating my opinion, then I will respond by asking if there are any other ideas."
Attention deployment	"If I start to feel that I should enter into the detailed discussion, then I will make a note of the fact in my notebook, but not speak out."	"If I feel the need to be frank with my co-workers, then I will simply stop and count to ten – slowly."
Cognitive change	"If the conversation turns to detail, then I will review in my mind whether we have covered all of the big-picture items."	"If I find myself getting worked up, then I will give myself 10 seconds to focus on my breath."

Table 1: Possible implementation intention statements

beginning of this paper, we could work with each of them to construct if-then statements that they could use in each of the four success-oriented phases. These if-then statements could be a mixture of those based on inner states, and those on external situations and cues.

## *SCARF points to ways to minimize threat in a feedback intervention...*

### Summary

1. Feedback as it stands doesn't work for individuals or organizations at creating change. It chews up a lot of resources.
2. We propose that one reason for this is a lot of the time people don't get to the point of being willing to change, i.e. to 'contemplation' in Prochaska's model. SCARF explains why this occurs through the multiplier effect.
3. SCARF points to ways to minimize threat in a feedback intervention through the 'offsetting effect'.
4. The if-then framework, focused on actions, improves the likelihood of behavior change.

5. The phases of self-regulation give us a framework for where in the emotional timeline an if-then formula can be used.
6. All this points to managers needing to be better trained at the process of giving feedback if organizations are going to invest time and money in the process.

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