

## Book Review

by Linda Lagason

Stone, D. & Heen, S. (2014). *Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well*. New York, NY: Penguin Group. 348 pp. \$27.95

*Thanks for the Feedback* is the second book from collaborating authors, Douglas Stone and Sheila Sheen. Although geared for working professionals, this book is appropriate for everyone who receives feedback. It sheds an honest look on reasons why receiving feedback is difficult, and provides a framework and tools for a more effective feedback experience.

Receiving feedback is often difficult because of our natural, albeit conflicting need: acceptance and knowledge. Citing feedback is one of the biggest organizational and relational challenges today, the authors highlight that the key to being effective receivers of feedback is the understanding of the three triggers that block feedback. Truth triggers are set off by the contents of the feedback, while relationship triggers are set off by our relationship with the person who is giving the feedback to us. Identity trigger on the other hand is all about the receiver and who they perceive themselves to be.

A big question that the authors answer in the book is whether it is all right to turn down feedback: Their answer? Yes, It is. When feedback becomes destructive, the authors recommend that clear and explicit boundaries be set and while doing so - the request, the time frame, the consequences and assent need to be specifically stated. Some other tools that the book offers include ideas on ways to get feedback, to accelerate learning and to gauge feedback.

Thoroughly well-researched and based on their extensive study on the subject, the authors did an effective job in exploring the reasons why feedback can be challenging. The only glaring gap that the authors fail to attend to is the cultural consideration that should be weighed in together with the other components that they considered. That aside, this book offers readers many insightful strategies and practical tools that can be used to effectively manage feedback conversations.

As Stone and Heen stated early in their book, the ability to receive feedback well is a skill that needs to be cultivated, and although it almost goes against our grain to ever be good at it, the substantial benefits that can be reaped from it—richer relationships, a more stable self-esteem, creativity boost, better adaptability and higher adaptability—may well be our motivation to try out the strategies given by this book. This book is a must read for anyone who wishes to reap the countless benefits of feedback