



# Coaching Effectiveness

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## Feedback Report

**Personalized Report For: Sample Report**

**Completed: 3/4/2017**

# Introduction

This Coaching Effectiveness Feedback Report consists of six components, which are described below.

## 1. Overall Summary

The summary results chart provides a quick visual representation of your scores in the seven competencies that make up the Coaching Effectiveness profile. The areas to concentrate on are those scores above 3.5 (strong) and below 2.75 (need further development). Please note that these competency scores are averages; individual question scores can be viewed by clicking on the individual competency link.

## 2. Category Descriptions

There are three sections for each of the seven competencies. The first of these three sections explains the competency, lists average scores, and then provides high and low score interpretation notes. The second section provides a graphical representation of individual question scores. The third section provides broadly-based improvement actions for those individuals wanting to develop their competencies.

## 3. 10/10 Report

The "10/10" Report page provides the raw scores for the 10 highest scoring questions and the 10 lowest scoring questions out of the 84. It also identifies which competency each question is from.

## 4. Course and Reading Suggestions

Development suggestions for the two lowest scoring competencies, including specific recommendations regarding training courses and books that will provide useful information on the topic are included.

## 5. Development Plan

The development plan lists questions with the five lowest scores from the assessment and puts them into a one-page template. Individuals can use this template to record the specific actions they plan to take over the next twelve months based on the general guidance offered in their feedback report and the coaching tips.

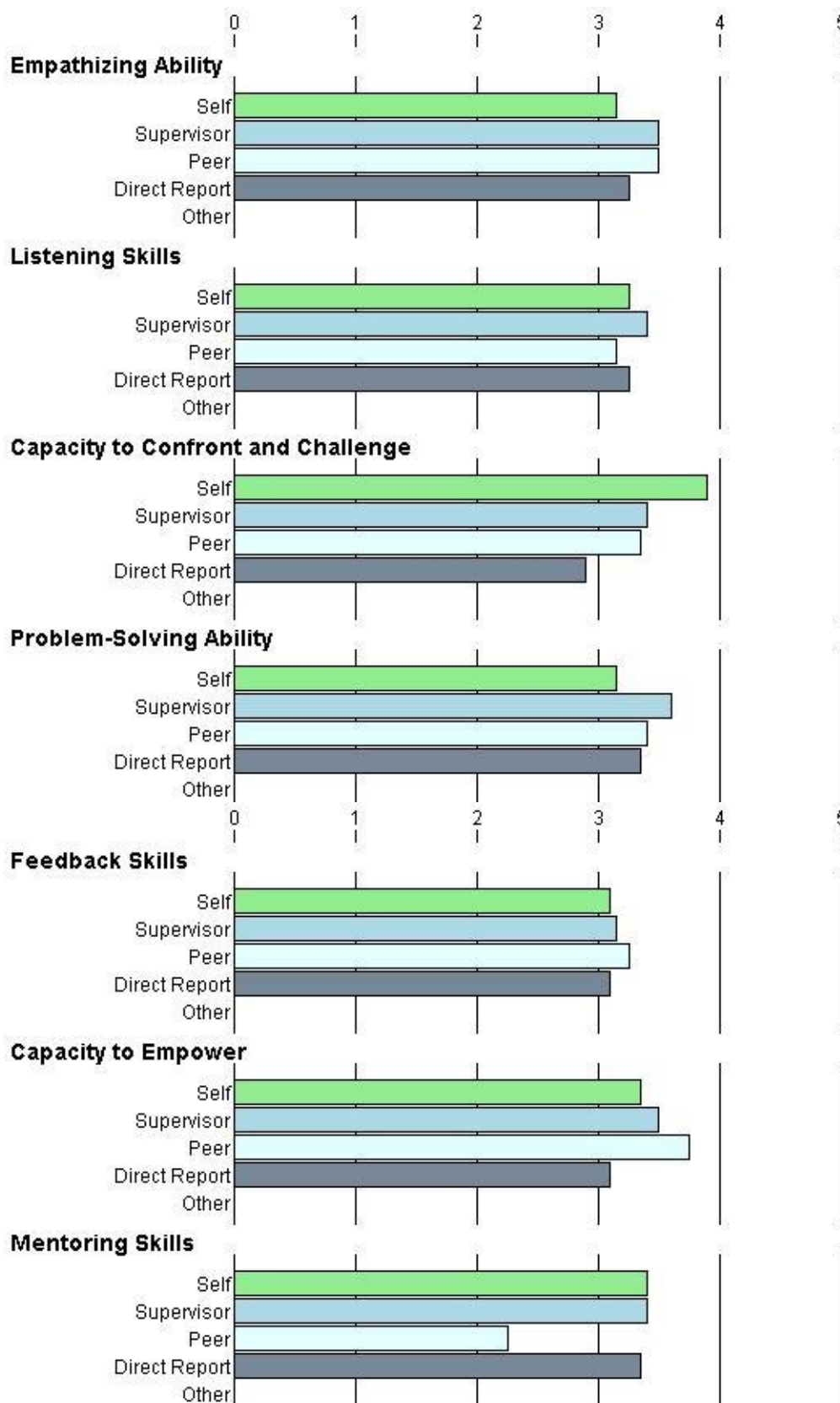
## 6. Coaching Tips

Detailed coaching tips for the five lowest scoring questions are provided in this section. They offer specific advice on what individuals might do to improve their skills in this competency and learn new behaviors.

### Note on 360 Degree Feedback

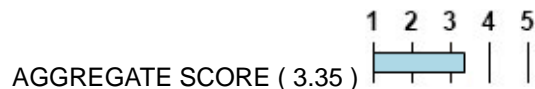
If you received feedback from your supervisor, direct reports or peers using this assessment, please note the following: Ratings responses from all persons who completed the assessment are averaged to produce the results in the 10/10 Report, Course and Reading Suggestions, Development Plan, and Coaching Tips.

# Overall Summary



# Empathizing Ability

This section on Empathizing Ability looks at the extent to which you create a positive climate for coaching communication, and demonstrate an understanding of the other person's viewpoint and feelings. It asks the question: "How well do you build a spirit of trust and sincerity so that people will feel that you identify with them and their feelings and concerns?"



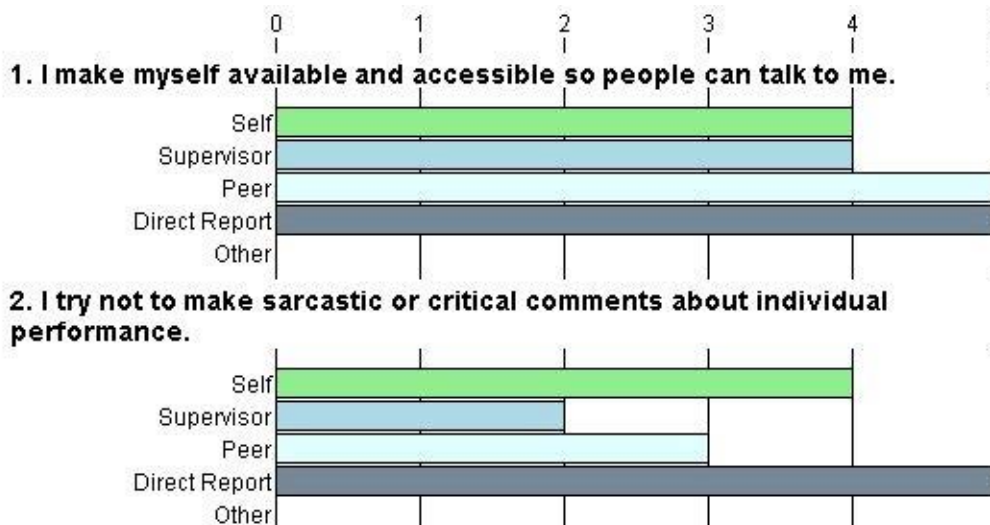
## Interpretation

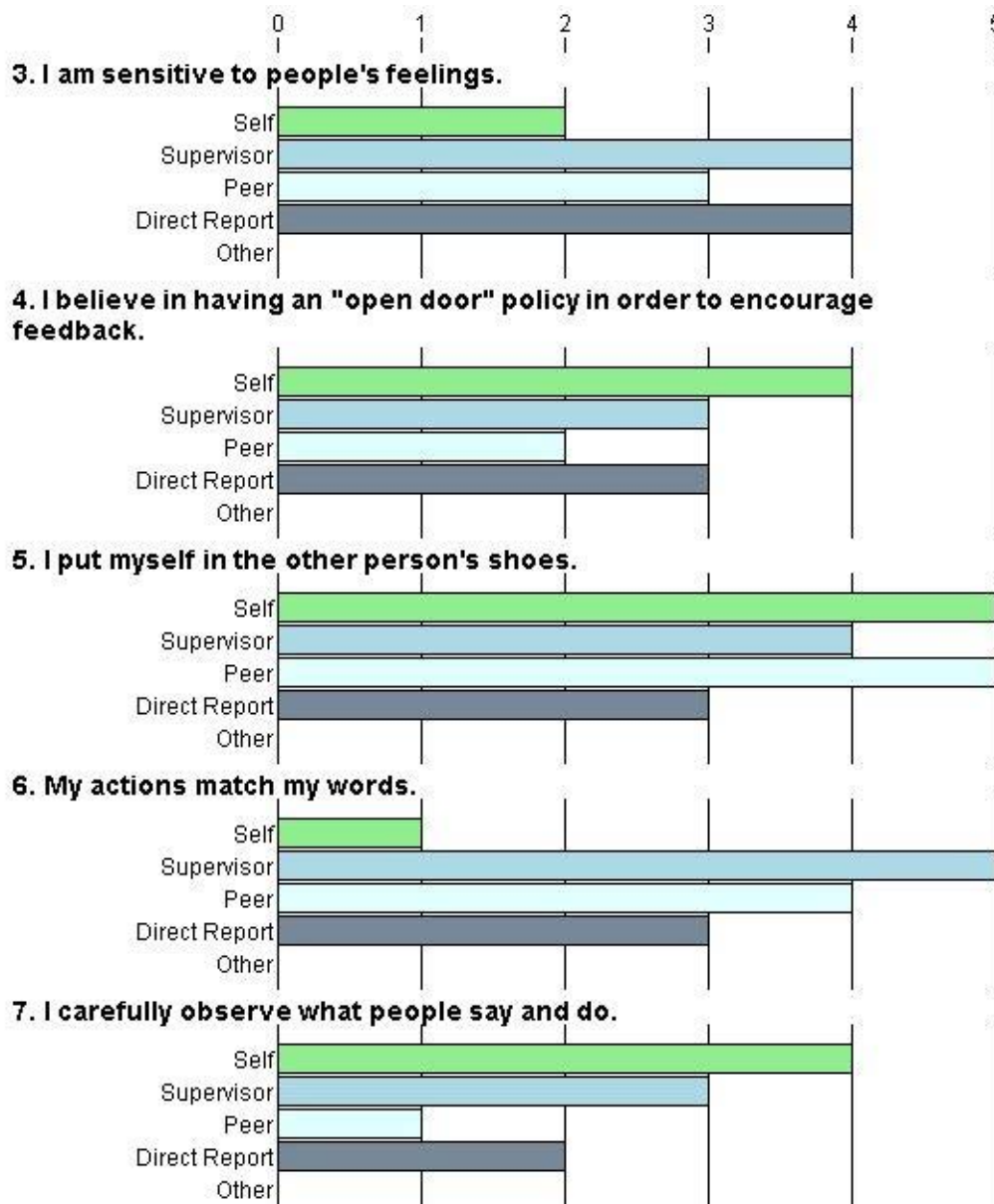
### LOW (less than 2.75)

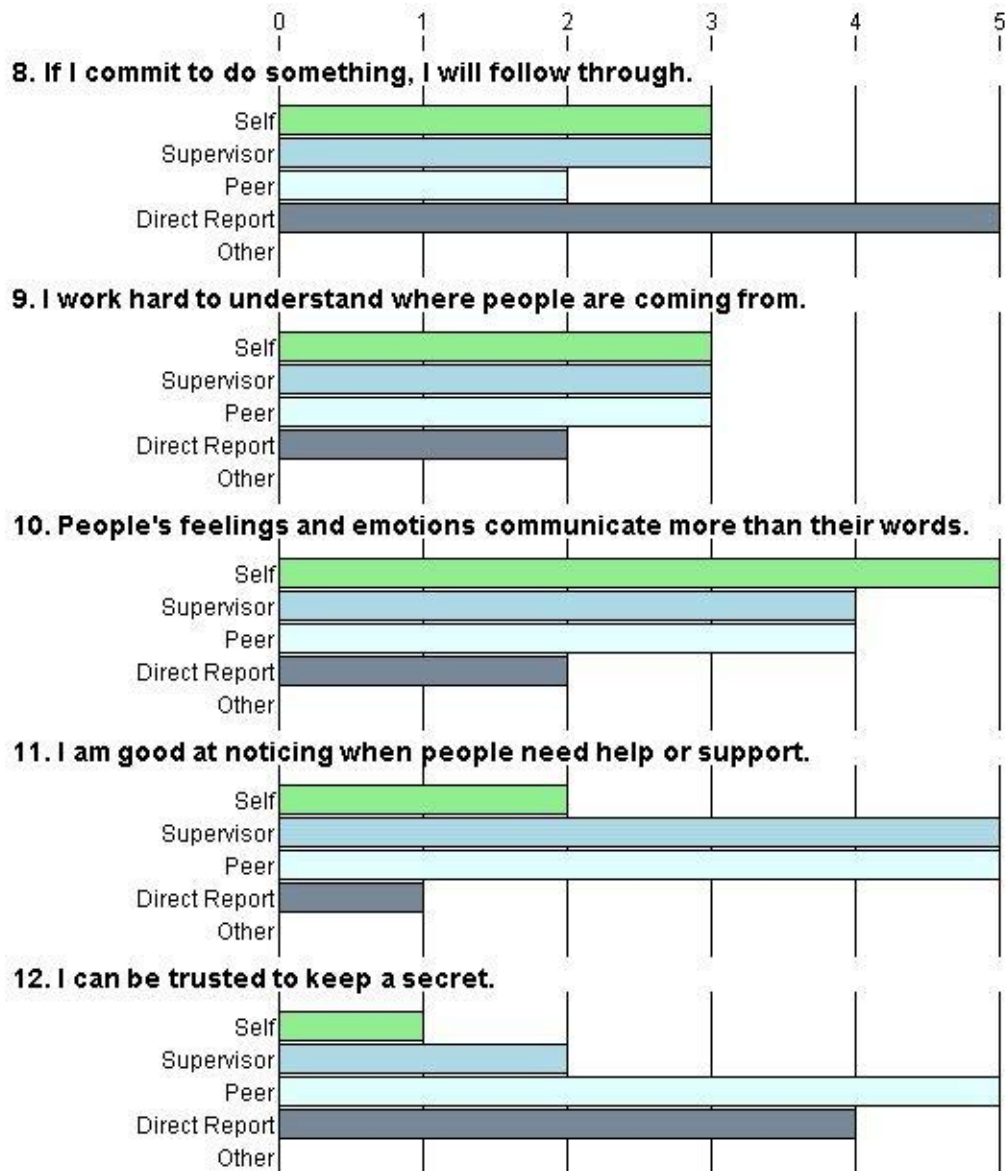
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you are more "cool" or aloof about other people's concerns (and perhaps even deliberately distance yourself from them). You might not be aware of times when people need your sincere advice or support. Even when you find yourself in a "deeper" conversation, you might be oblivious to the depth of someone's feelings or emotions. An individual who scores low is generally not counted on as a useful "sounding board" for other people's problems or concerns. People will seek out others who appear to be warmer and more accommodating. Low scorers send mixed or confused signals, arising from differences in what they say and what they do. People who know you are likely to prefer to keep their relationship with you superficial, or restrict it to mainly analytical issues.

### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you generally like people and enjoy building strong and rewarding relationships through your conversations with them. You are likely to make a sincere effort to understand other people's concerns and challenges, and therefore quickly tune in to their underlying feelings about a problem or concern. A high scorer in this area quickly gains a reputation as someone to whom people can freely talk in confidence and turn to for helpful and patient guidance. High scorers are likely to be seen as balanced, non-critical, and highly reliable. They are also good listeners.







This section on Empathizing Ability looks at the extent to which you create a positive climate for coaching communication, and demonstrate an understanding of the other person's viewpoint and feelings. It asks the question: "How well do you build a spirit of trust and sincerity so that people will feel that you identify with them and their feelings and concerns?"

## Recommendations for Overall Improvement

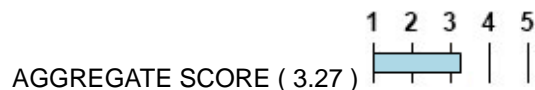
Low scorers need to develop their attentive listening skills and try not to judge what people say in terms of what they themselves would do. Although it is extremely difficult to do in the short-term, low scorers need to first think more deeply about how other people might be feeling and why before they offer any comment or response.

## Ways to Strengthen or Improve Empathizing Ability

- Try to be as positive, sincere, and open as possible in all your conversations with people you meet.
- Be sensitive to people's feelings or emotions, as well as to their words.
- Try to develop mutual trust in your coaching relationships by being as genuine and honest as you can.
- Make sure that you always meet any commitments you make.
- Make sure that your deeds match your words, even if it means putting yourself out.

# Listening Skills

This section on Listening Skills looks at your ability to hear as well as understand other people, and to quickly discover their full communication or overall message. It asks the question: "How attentively do you listen so as to understand other people and help them to successfully share what they are thinking and feeling?"



## Interpretation

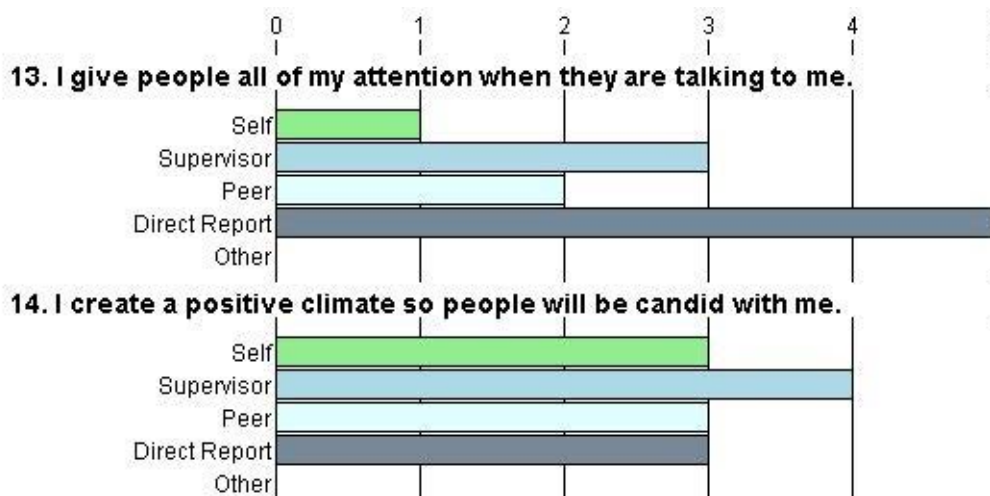
### LOW (less than 2.75)

Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you do not give your full attention to people when they express their ideas or concerns to you, and most likely don't listen attentively, nor select the right listening environment. You tend to interrupt people before they finish speaking, and even let your mind wander off track. An individual who scores low in this area is not generally sought out as a coach because people fear that what they have to say will not be fully valued or given the attention needed for coaching guidance or advice. Low scorers tend also to be impatient and distracted, and are not likely to devote much time to careful coaching or support.

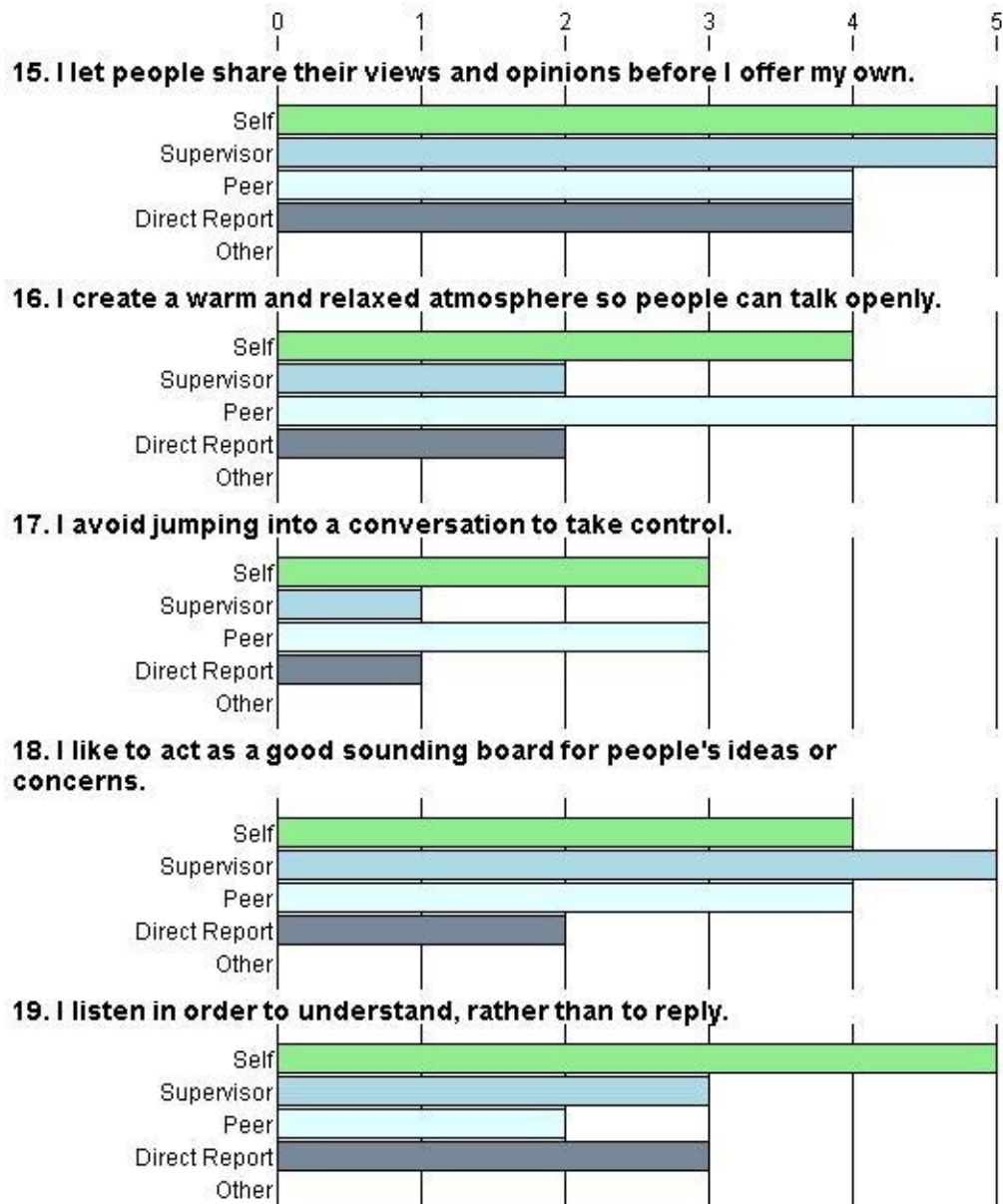
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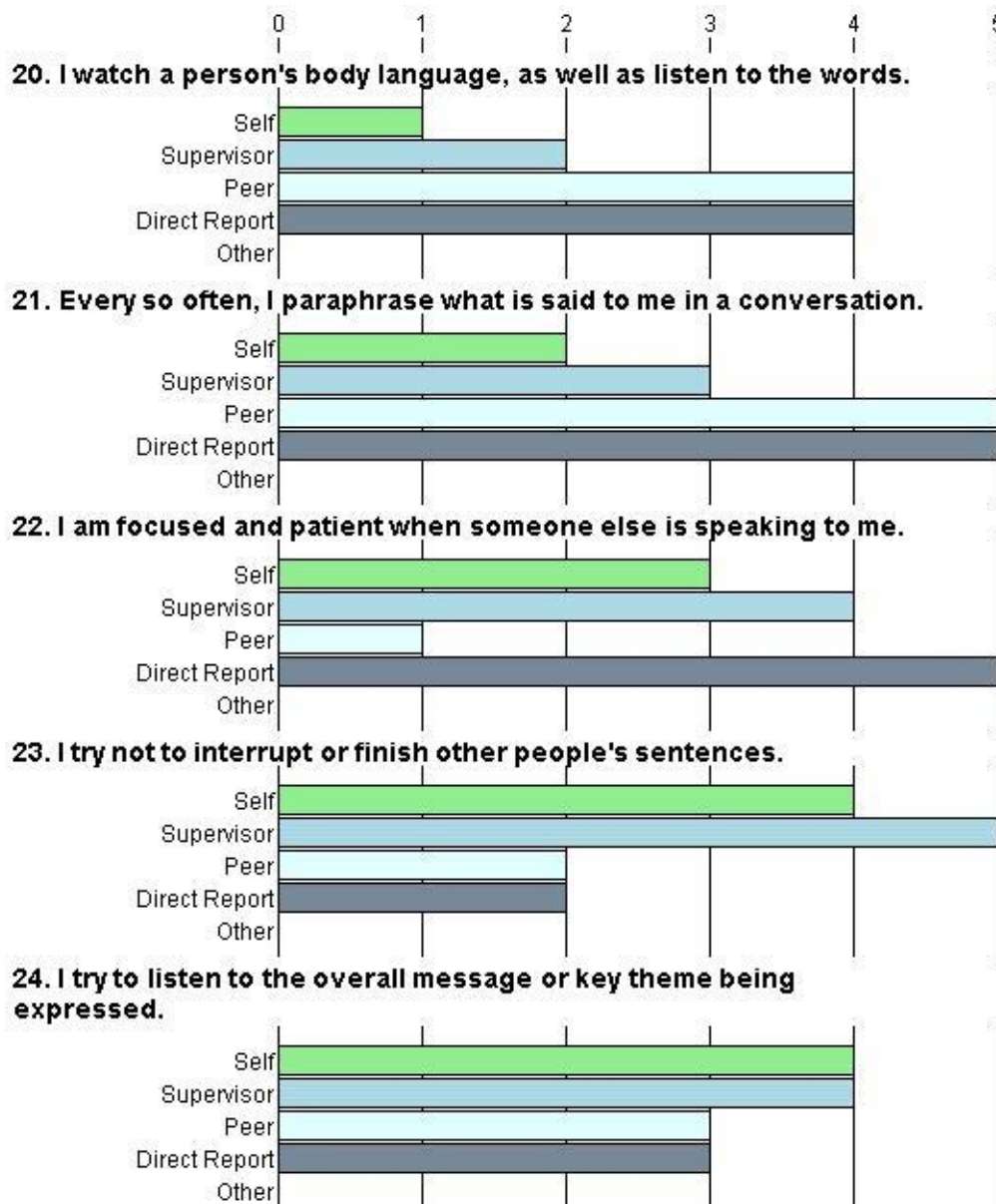
Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you recognize the value of focusing attentively and concentrating on what people are communicating when you are trying to help them improve. You tend to look for the best possible climate for people to talk, allow them to speak without interruption, and carefully assess what they are saying.

A high scorer will quickly demonstrate interest and appreciation for what an individual has to say and has the patience and temperament necessary to guide and offer ideas or concerns. These kinds of people create a quiet, comfortable atmosphere for conversation, and deserve their reputation as reliable sources of support and encouragement.









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### Recommendations for Overall Improvement

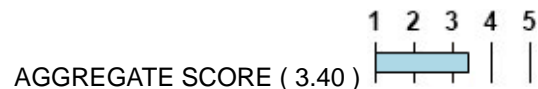
Low scorers need to become more empathetic listeners. They should take more time and pay more attention to people when they are talking with them. They can start to do this by maintaining good eye contact, not interrupting, paraphrasing and summarizing what they hear, and trying to discover all of what the speaker is seeking to convey.

### Ways to Strengthen or Improve Listening Skills

- Find the right kind of climate to listen properly without distraction.
- Give every individual that you are seeking to coach your full time, attention, and concentration.
- Focus on their needs and listen for as long as possible, with minimal interruption.
- summarize what you think you heard from time to time to be sure that you have heard them properly and reassure them that you did.
- Learn how to read body language (your own and other people's) to enhance your listening skills.

# Capacity to Confront and Challenge

This section focuses on your **Capacity to Confront and Challenge**. It looks at the extent to which you help people face up to their personal responsibilities and/or problems in order to deal with them successfully. It asks the question: "How successfully do you work with people to perform an honest appraisal of their shortfalls and encourage new thinking and strategies to overcome them?"



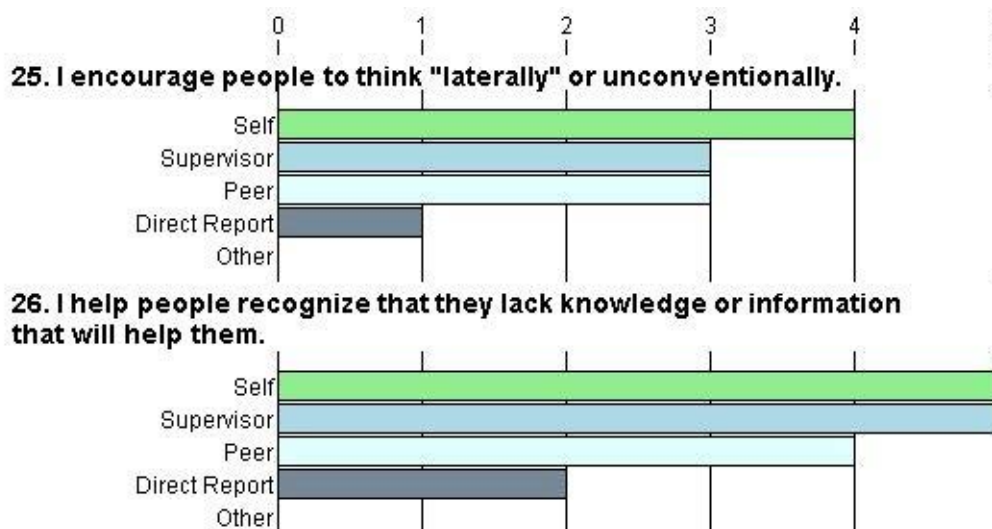
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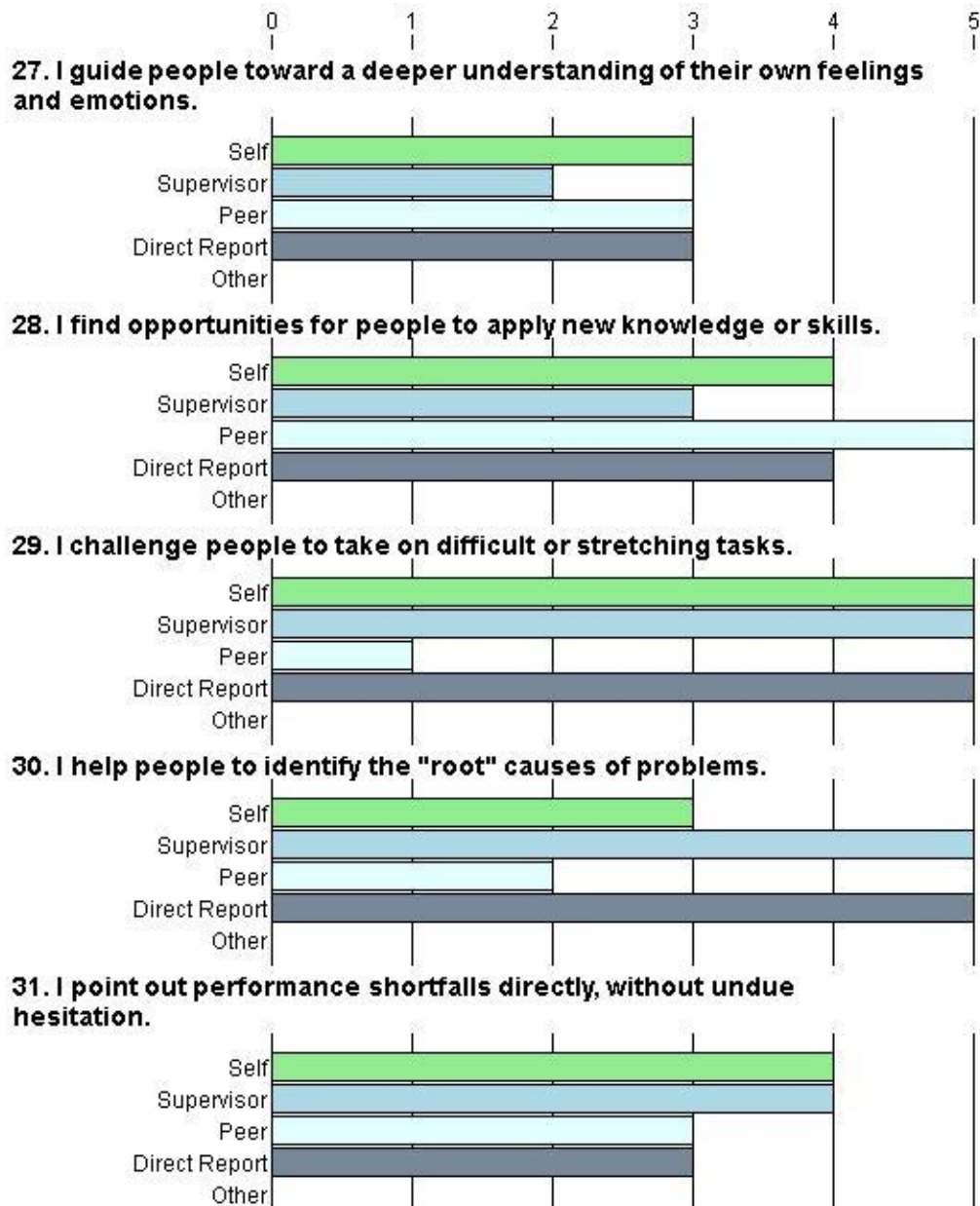
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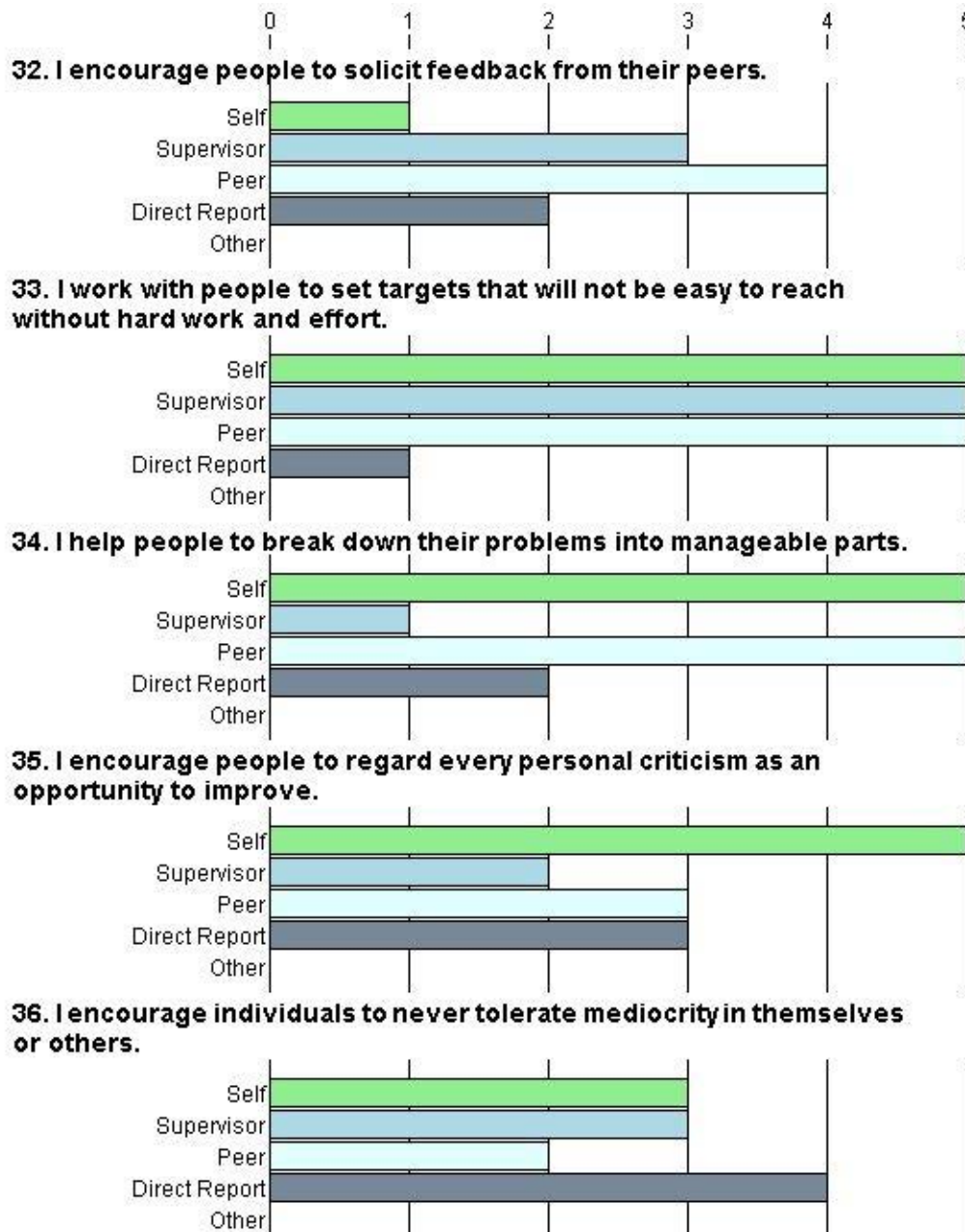
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you rarely challenge people to think about their responsibilities and problems in new or different ways nor encourage them to reflect more deeply about performance shortfalls. You are likely to tolerate mediocrity, and thus do not help others improve or confront their "average" performance. An individual who scores low in this area is likely to find performance coaching more difficult because he or she is not willing to get people to reflect on their poor or average performance or strive to reach higher or better goals. This type hesitates to offer full and candid feedback, and might even fear the negative impact that criticism has on individuals when it is offered.

### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you are effective at playing "devil's advocate" in a balanced and constructive way. You help individuals understand that they can and must do something about their difficulties and concerns, and you help create in them a healthy intolerance of average or mediocre performance or outcomes. A high scorer uses a variety of different ways and means to help people critically focus on their performance as a basis for improvement. He or she is perceived as firm but fair when dealing with others and tends to be solution-focused in terms of future courses of action in coaching situations.







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### Recommendations for Overall Improvement

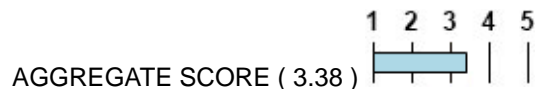
Low scorers need to become more comfortable providing direct and candid feedback to others about performance, and encourage them to "stretch" to overcome poor or average performance. To do this, they should practice asking probing questions, and challenge themselves and others to think deeply and creatively about new or different approaches they can take as alternatives to the current situation.

### Ways to Strengthen or Improve Capacity to Confront and Challenge

- Develop a set of useful questions that you can ask individuals to help them assess whether or not their current approach and actions represent the best they can achieve.
- Use your questions to encourage people to solicit performance feedback from others as a healthy part of personal growth and learning.
- Challenge people to focus on their true development needs and on what they plan to do to address them.
- Encourage individuals you coach to look at the deeper root causes of their problems and challenges.
- Identify specific tasks or projects that can challenge and stretch people's skills and get them thinking in new directions.

# Problem Solving

This section on Problem-Solving Ability assesses your ability to find appropriate methods and means to identify/analyze an individual's problems or concerns and then explore avenues that might lead to solutions. It asks the question: "How well do you provide people with a contextual framework that helps them think about their problems and possible solutions?"



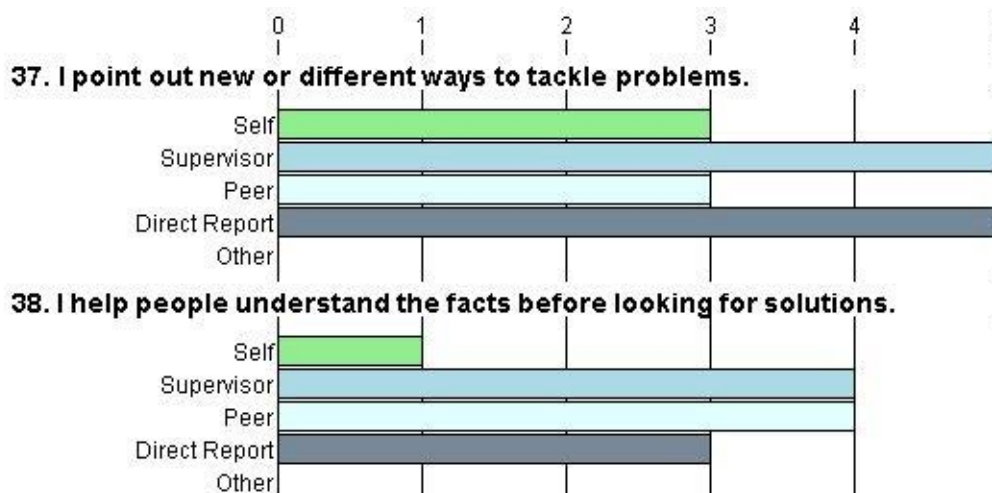
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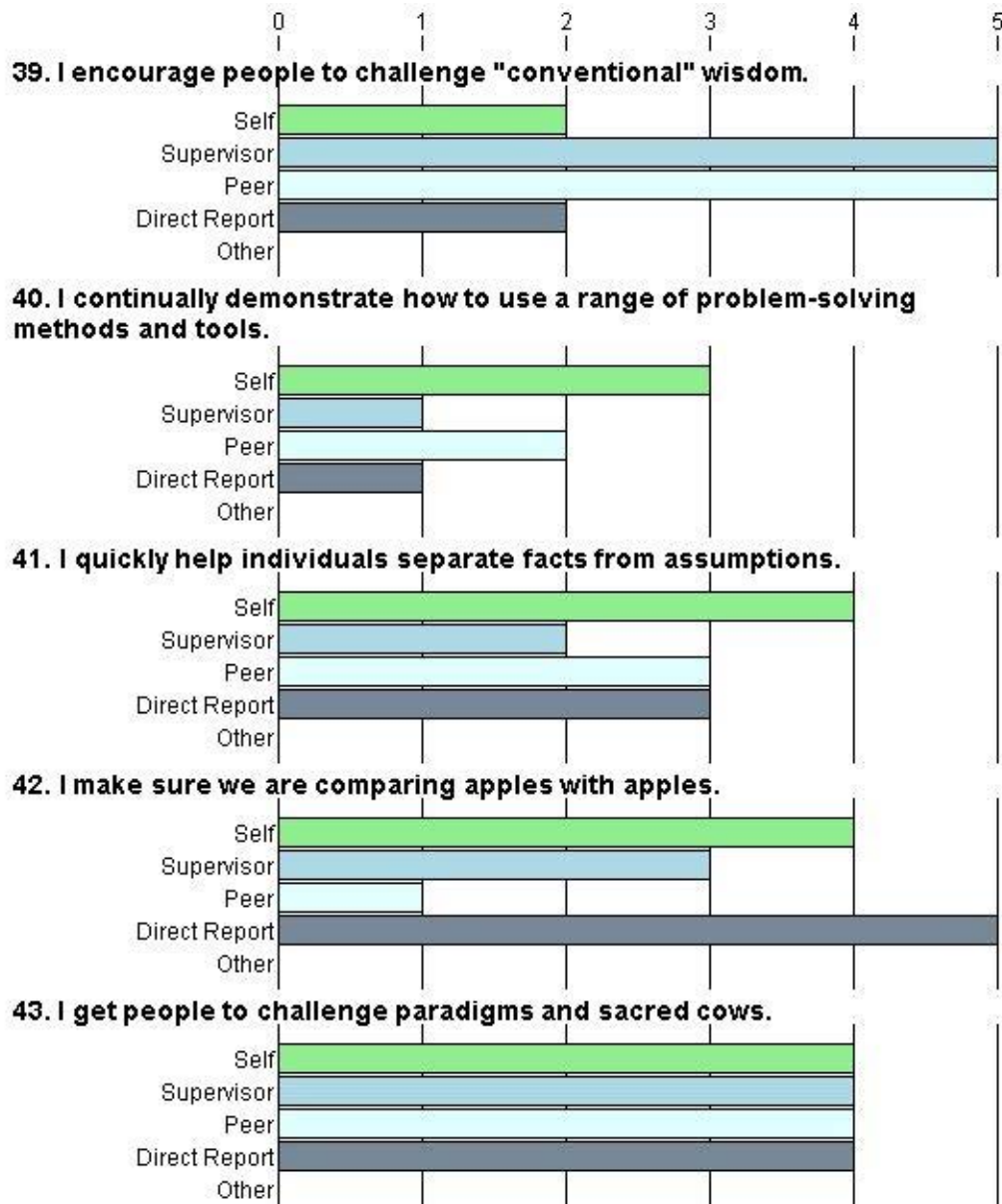
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you rarely offer creative problem-solving or problem-analysis tools, techniques, and methods when coaching individuals. You might not be helping them "think outside the box" to find a better solution or positive way forward. An individual who scores low in this area is probably ill-prepared to help people to look rigorously at the situations or circumstances they face and use careful sifting and analysis to come up with solutions. Such people generally lack the knowledge and understanding needed to introduce useful problem-solving tools or approaches that provide new insights or create a different contextual framework for a problem to be dealt with.

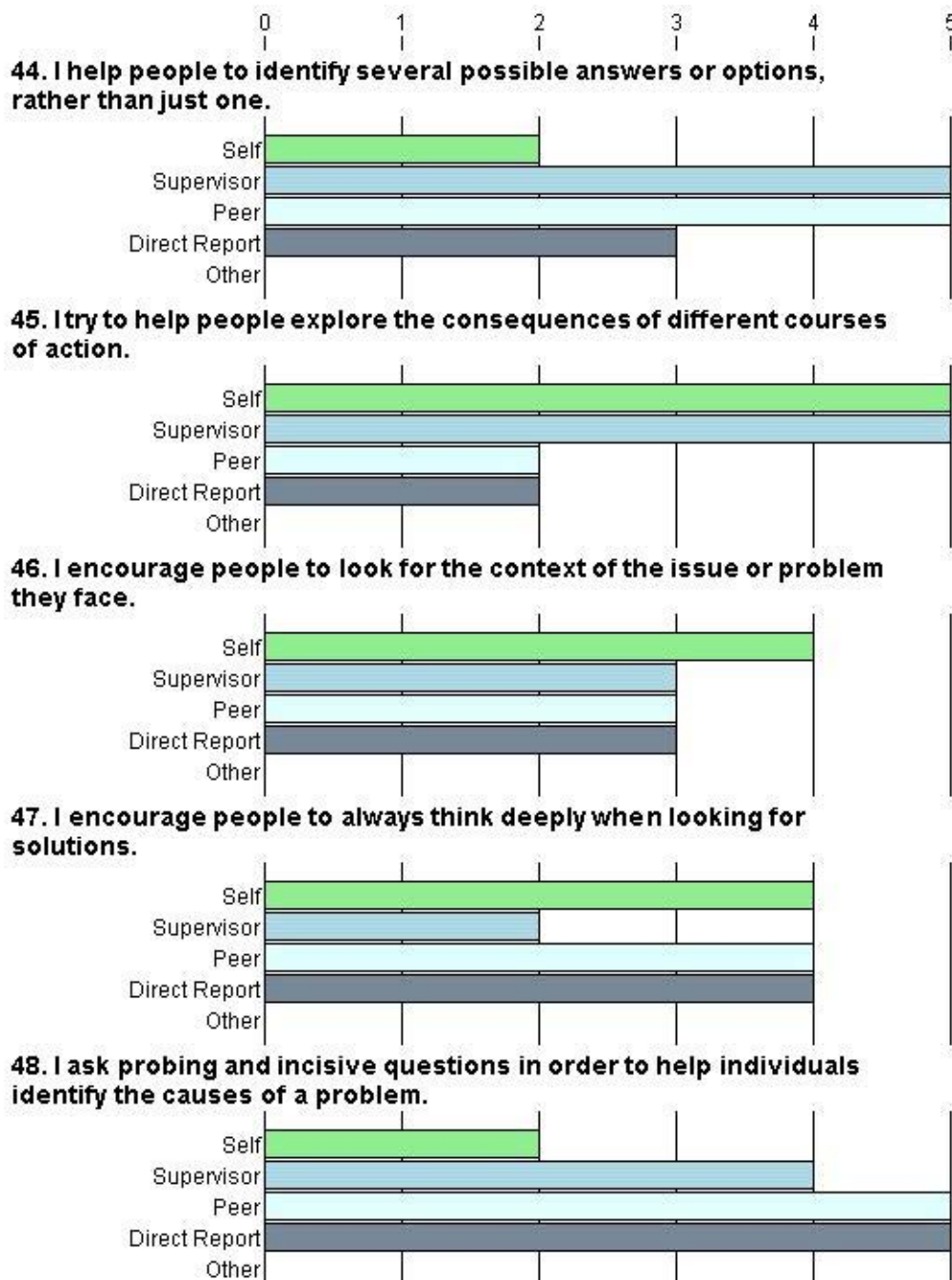
### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you encourage individuals to use different ways of looking at problems or issues and are able to draw on a range of different analytical tools. You also encourage them to generate several possible solutions and then carefully evaluate the best one, based on the evidence, that will provide the best possible course of future action. An individual who scores high in this area is perceived to be appropriately knowledgeable and understanding regarding a range of problem-solving approaches, and is capable of suggesting the most appropriate of these when the circumstances are right to do so.









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### Recommendations for Overall Improvement

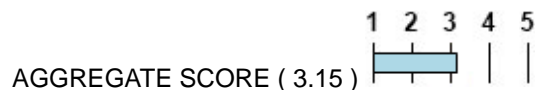
Low scorers need to learn how to use a range of problem-solving so they can suggest appropriate ones when they are coaching others. They should also adopt a more incisive questioning approach and teach individual's they are coaching how to look at a problem in a new context or from a different angle in order to identify a range of solutions.

### Ways to Strengthen or Improve Problem Solving Ability

- Find ways to focus individuals on facts that they might have missed.
- Suggest tools and methods that might help them identify or fully understand and analyze the problem.
- Encourage individuals to challenge their assumptions, even the supposed inevitability of some of the outcomes they foresee.
- Encourage people to challenge fixed thinking paradigms and conventional wisdom.
- Help individuals to broaden their horizons when looking to solve complex problems by getting them to think outside their most immediate or familiar experience and widen their usual array of reading material.

# Feedback Giving Skills

This section on Feedback Giving Skills looks at the extent to which you offer useful and constructive performance feedback that is accepted and acted upon. It asks the question: "How well do you make use of a range of counseling, coaching, and instructional methods and activities to help people perform at their best?"



## Interpretation

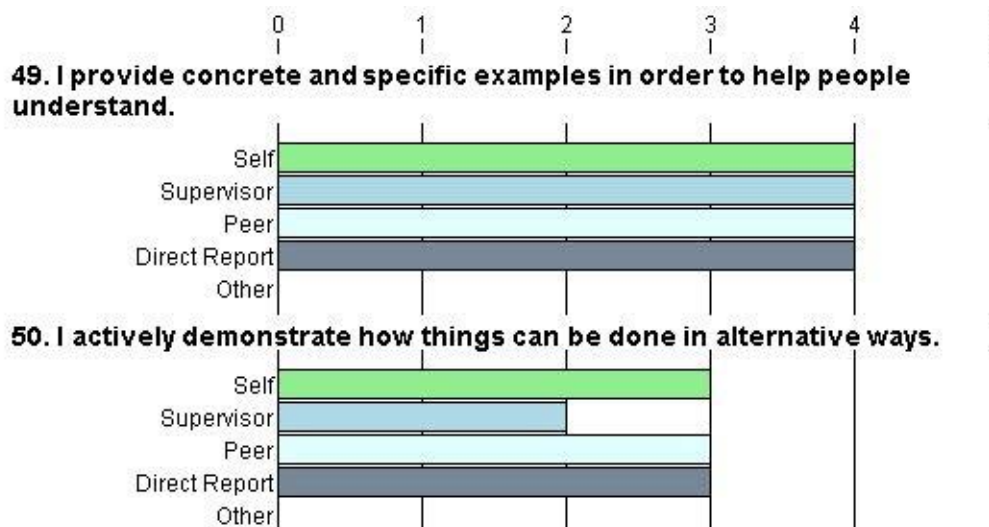
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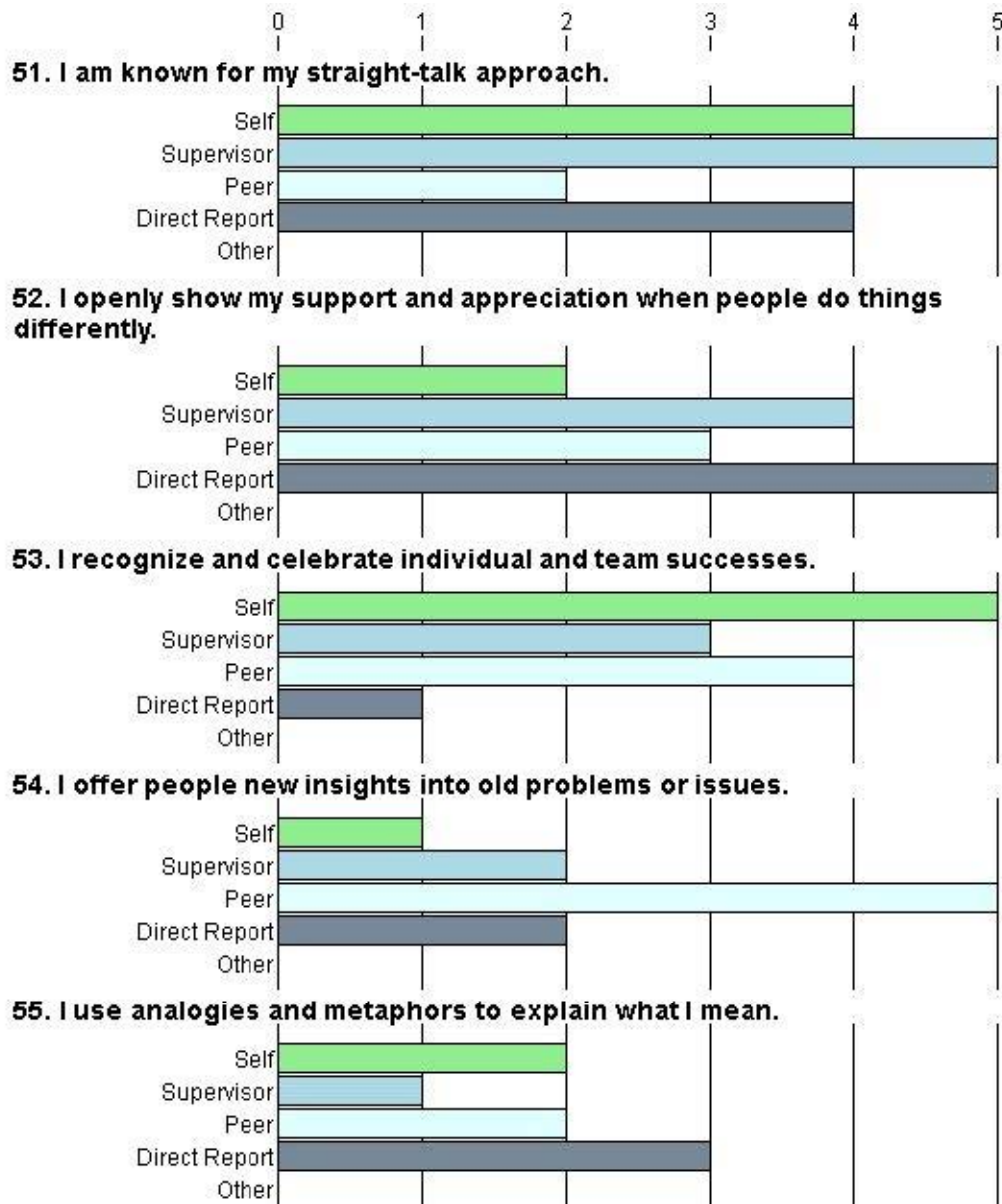
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you are less communicative than you might be in coaching others and use feedback in a limited and less-interesting way. You are more likely to occasionally offer inappropriate feedback or criticize performance or individuals before you have all the facts or a better suggestion. An individual who scores low in this area fails to offer feedback frequently enough. Individuals do not accept their counseling or instructional approach possibly because they are not getting effective feedback and their improved or good performance is not recognized or rewarded.

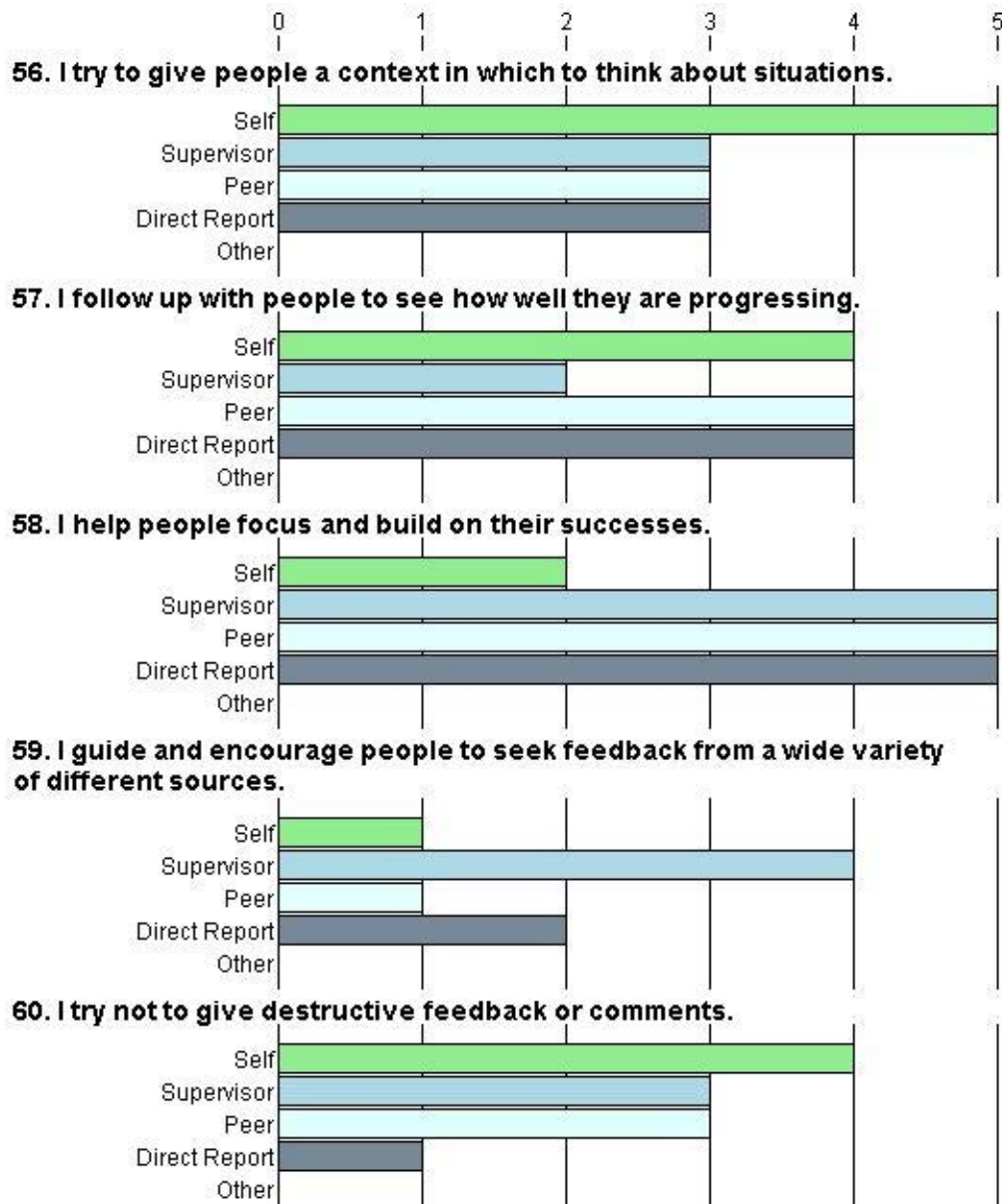
### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you use positive two-way feedback as a primary means by which to offer instruction, training support, or general coaching. You use open and flexible communication and listening styles that allow you to watch what people do and describe ways in which they might improve or be more successful.

A high scorer is likely to offer people "positive strokes" for their successes and improvements, while at the same time offering insights into how they can build on or improve their efforts still further. The effective coach does this by pointing to specific areas that can be improved and helping individuals to identify appropriate strategies.







This section on **Feedback Giving Skills** looks at the extent to which you offer useful and constructive performance feedback that is accepted and acted upon. It asks the question: "How well do you make use of a range of guidance counseling, coaching, and instructional materials, methods and activities to help people perform at their best?"

### Recommendations for Overall Improvement

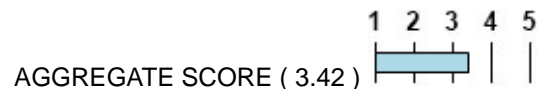
Low scorers need to take the time to carefully observe the individual before offering feedback and practical suggestions for improvement. They should praise others for their achievements and find opportunities and creative ways to inspire and share insights regarding improvements.

### Ways to Strengthen or Improve Feedback Giving Skills

- Develop logical, clear, and concise appraisals of people's performance after careful observation.
- Find suitable times and places to offer feedback genuinely, without unduly "softening" it.
- Use analogies, metaphors, and examples to illustrate what you mean, but be clear about how you want the individual to perform.
- Follow up to make sure the individual understands.
- Take people's feelings into account when offering feedback, and only offer it if the individual is ready and willing to listen properly.

# Capacity to Empower

This section on Capacity to Empower looks at the extent to which you give people the freedom or the "space" to determine how they will achieve personal goals or challenges. It asks the question: "To what extent do you create a climate of trust in which people feel that they can take risks and make mistakes in order to learn to do things in a better or different way?"



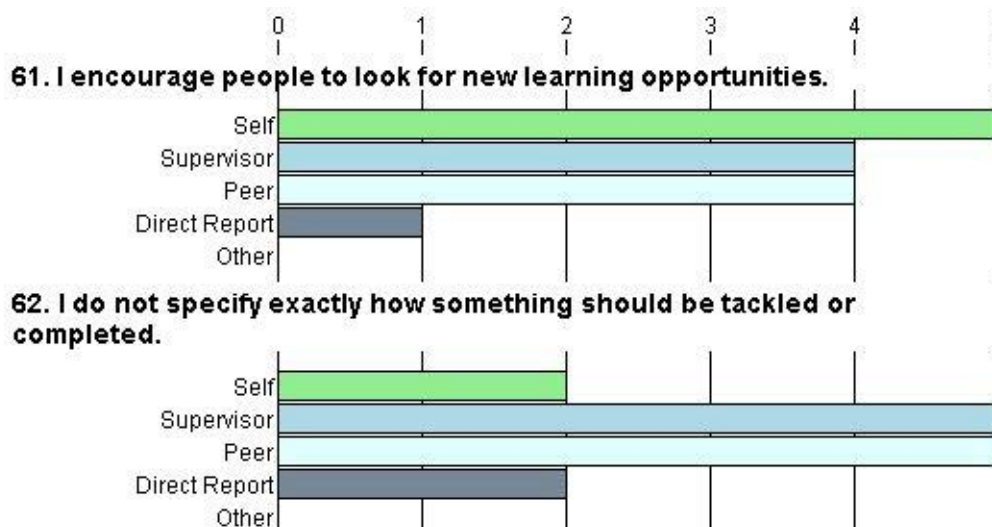
## Interpretation

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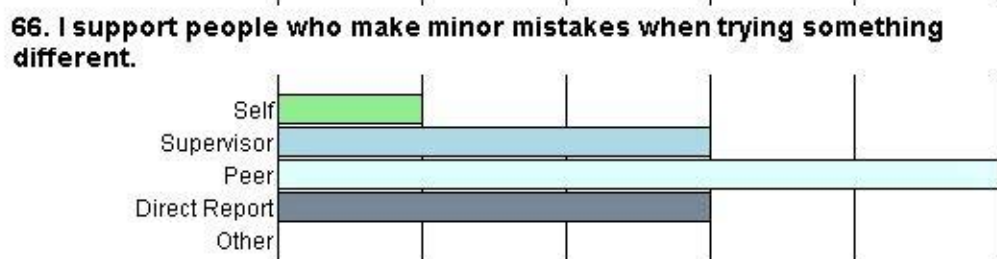
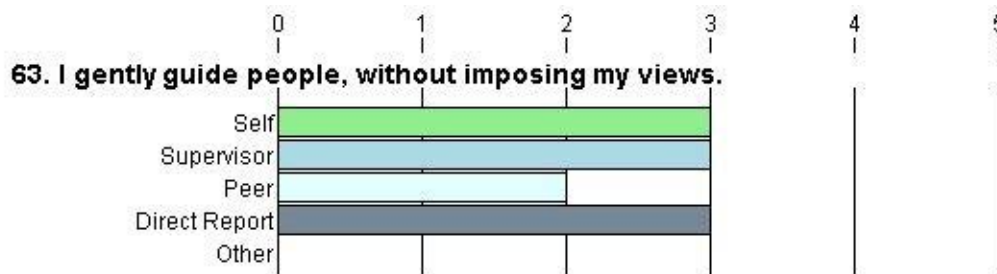
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you rarely give people enough "space" or authority to take on tasks or projects that are at the limits of their capability. You tend to over-specify how things are to be done and might even intervene personally when you feel that an individual has made a mistake or is going to fail. An individual who scores low in this area tends to take on too much by themselves or only offer low-level or "safe" tasks to others (that can be supervised) or delegate tasks that come with consequences if things go wrong. You tend to give your opinions too regularly, and even take tasks and projects back from people who are not performing to your exacting standards.

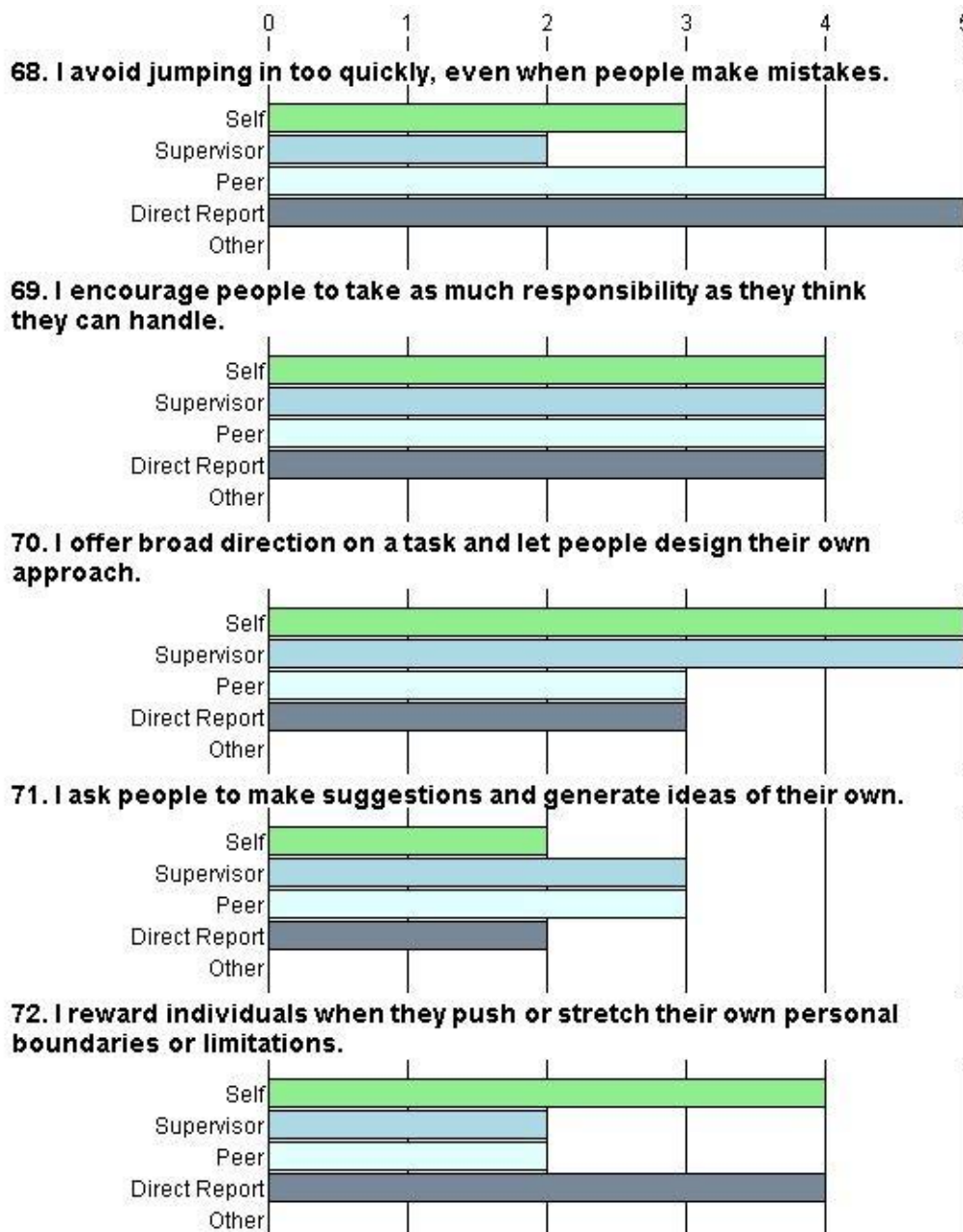
### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you enjoy seeing people take on new, challenging tasks and personally grow by being given the "space" to take reasonable risks and different approaches. You delegate a lot of responsibility to people whom you believe are capable, and you encourage people to take on personal challenges and goals. A high scorer is likely to actively look for ways to empower individuals to take on responsibility and move the limits of their "comfort zone" when performing new or different tasks. You will rarely feel uncomfortable about delegating your authority to others, and you give people as much support as they need, even when mistakes or less-than-optimal paths are chosen.









This section on Capacity to Empower looks at the extent to which you give people the freedom or the "space" to determine how they will go about achieving personal goals or challenges. It asks the question: "To what extent do you create a climate of trust in which people feel that they can take risks and make mistakes in order to learn to do things in a better or different way?"

## Recommendations for Overall Improvement

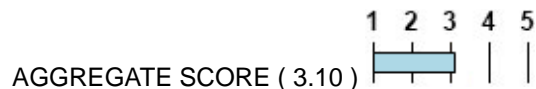
Low scorers need to become less prescriptive or structured and more trusting of those around them if they want people to achieve results at least as good as the standards they could achieve themselves. As such, they should offer only broad directional guidance when delegating or assigning a task, and should avoid intervening unless it is absolutely critical or the individual asks for help.

## Ways to Strengthen or Improve Capacity to Empower

- Look for a variety of new learning opportunities for people around you, and make them easily available.
- Describe possible courses of action, but do not specify the exact approach and outcomes that you expect the individual to take or achieve. Let him or her discover a path.
- Support people when they make minor or understandable mistakes, and encourage them to assess what they can do differently.
- Reward hard work, innovation, and efforts to stretch personal boundaries.

# Mentoring Skills

This section on **Mentoring Skills** looks at the extent to which you provide coaching and assistance to people who will benefit from long-term guidance, and whether or not you have the skills and experience to assist them. It asks the question: "How well do you identify people who would benefit from mentoring, and then select the right way or the right people to establish such a strong and mutually-beneficial relationship?"



## Interpretation

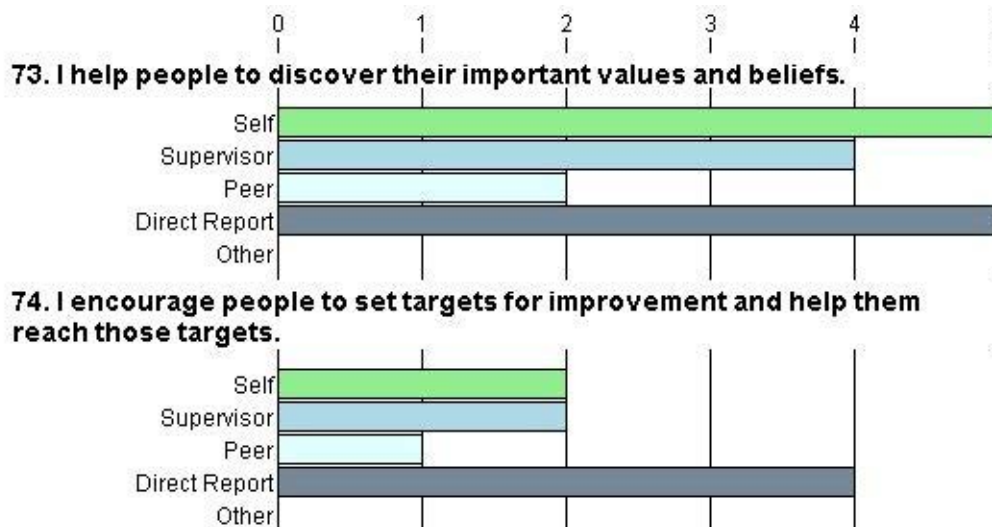
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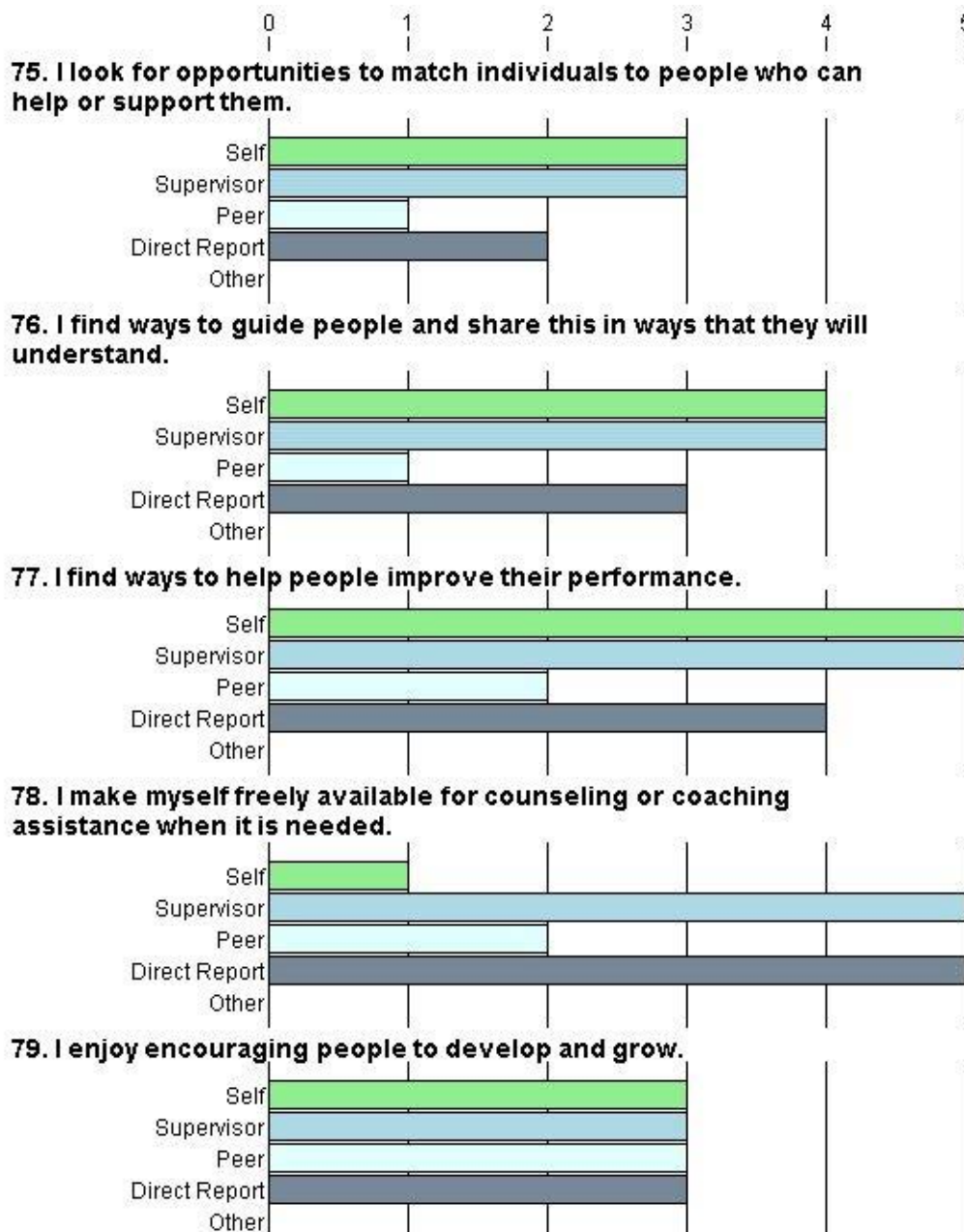
Response ratings predominantly in the ones and twos ("occasionally" and "almost never") suggest that you miss or fail to take advantage of opportunities to mentor others or find other suitable people to mentor individuals who can benefit from a long-term one-to-one relationship. At the most extreme end of the scale, you offer little or no counseling support to people, and leave them entirely to their own devices.

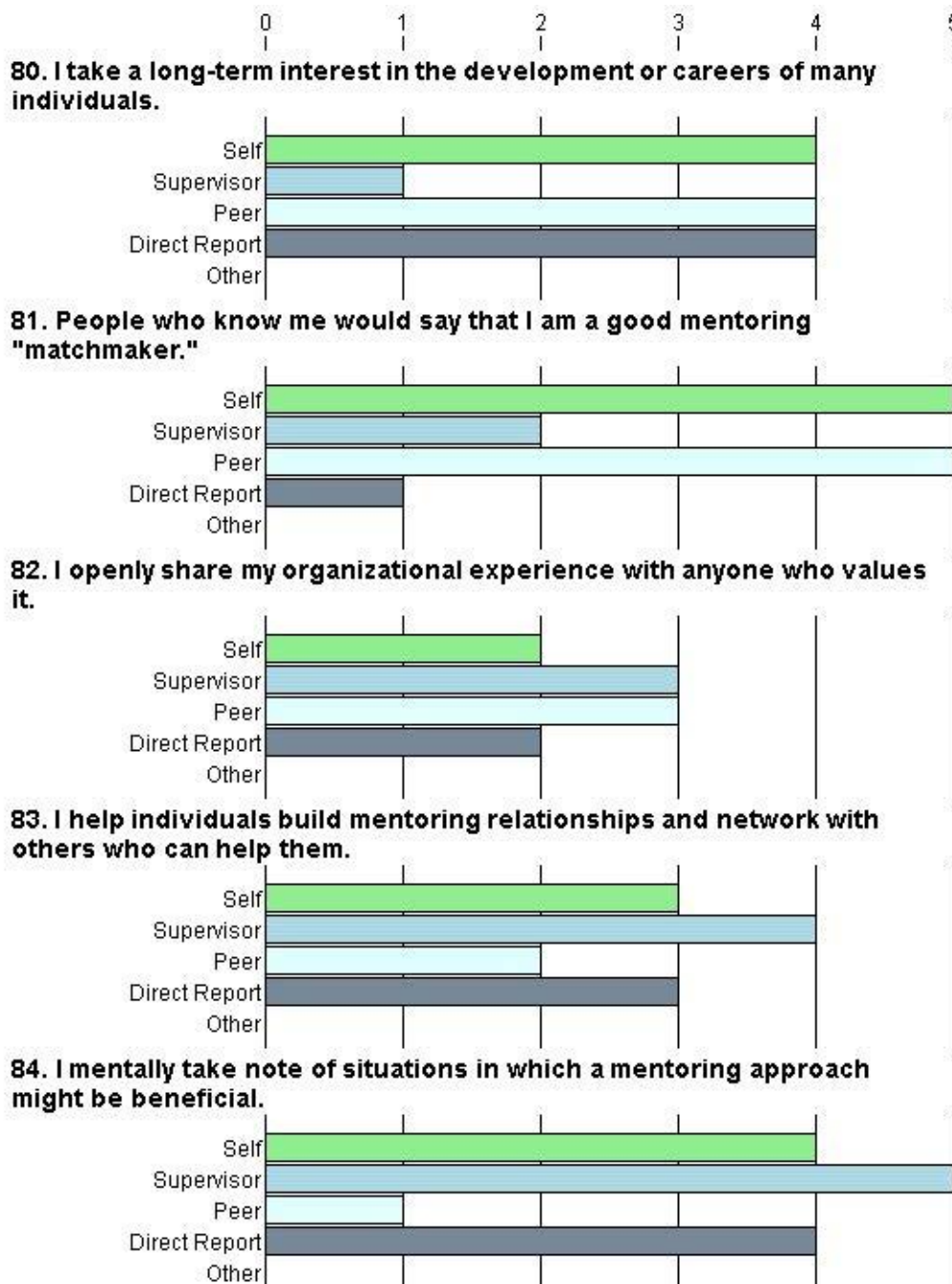
An individual who scores low in this area is likely to only offer or promote mentoring (if it is available) as part of a structured program. Low scorers tend not to identify people who would value a mentor, and do not look for opportunities to match up people with needs to people with the skills or experience to help.

### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

Response ratings predominantly in the fours and fives ("almost always" and "very frequently") suggest that you by nature are aware of those who would benefit from mentoring, and are able to identify individuals (including yourself) who are or would be highly effective mentors to others. You are adept at matching individuals to their most useful and helpful mentors, taking into account individual styles and personality. A high scorer seeks out inexperienced individuals or people who could benefit from some longer-term one-to-one coaching or guidance, and will even intervene directly in order to find the most appropriate match, even if it's them.







This section on **Mentoring Skills** looks at the extent to which you provide coaching and assistance to people who will benefit from long-term guidance, and assess whether or not you have the skills and experience to assist them. It asks the question: "How well do you identify people who would benefit from mentoring, and then select the right way or the right people to establish such a strong and mutually-beneficial relationship?"

## Recommendations for Overall Improvement

Low scorers need to take a serious interest in people who are new to a team or an organization; people in new jobs; and people who seem to be facing special or difficult challenges. They should actively try to learn what needs these people have and who in the organization can provide long-term assistance or guidance.

## Ways to Strengthen or Improve Mentoring Skills

- Learn as much as you can about individuals in the organization including their beliefs, prejudices, opinions, and values.
- Gently determine whether or not they would be open to mentoring.
- Try to create well-matched mentoring relationships by drawing on your own experience and the experience of others who are willing to provide good guidance and support for the individual in question.
- Follow up with the mentor and mentee on a regular basis to ensure that individual is being given quality personal time and appropriate guidance, and is stretching and growing.

# The 10/10 Report

## Top 10 Strengths

### Capacity to Empower

65. I do not feel threatened when I give my delegated authority to others. 4.50

### Listening Skills

15. I let people share their views and opinions before I offer my own. 4.50

### Empathizing Ability

1. I make myself available and accessible so people can talk to me. 4.50

### Feedback Skills

58. I help people focus and build on their successes. 4.25

### Empathizing Ability

5. I put myself in the other person's shoes. 4.25

### Mentoring Skills

77. I find ways to help people improve their performance. 4.00

73. I help people to discover their important values and beliefs. 4.00

### Capacity to Empower

70. I offer broad direction on a task and let people design their own approach. 4.00

69. I encourage people to take as much responsibility as they think they can handle. 4.00

64. I look for specific projects that can provide new challenges for people. 4.00

## Top 10 Development Needs

### Problem-Solving Ability

40. I continually demonstrate how to use a range of problem-solving methods and tools. 1.75

### Listening Skills

17. I avoid jumping into a conversation to take control. 2.00

### Feedback Skills

55. I use analogies and metaphors to explain what I mean. 2.00

59. I guide and encourage people to seek feedback from a wide variety of different sources. 2.00

### Mentoring Skills

74. I encourage people to set targets for improvement and help them reach those targets. 2.25

75. I look for opportunities to match individuals to people who can help or support them. 2.25

### Empathizing Ability

7. I carefully observe what people say and do. 2.50

### Capacity to Confront and Challenge

32. I encourage people to solicit feedback from their peers. 2.50

### Feedback Skills

54. I offer people new insights into old problems or issues. 2.50

### Capacity to Empower

71. I ask people to make suggestions and generate ideas of their own. 2.50



# Course and Reading Suggestions

Here is a link to a 12 page workbook that can help you further  
<http://assessments24x7.com/rsb/RSBco.pdf>

The following are general reading and course suggestions that may help you to better understand the two categories in which your scores were the lowest and to assist you in writing your development plan.

## Mentoring Skills

Mentoring Skills looks at the extent to which you provide coaching and assistance to people who will benefit from long-term guidance, and whether or not you have the skills and experience to assist them. It asks the question: "How well do you identify people who would benefit from mentoring, and then select the right way or the right people to establish such a strong and mutually-beneficial relationship?"

### Course Suggestion

- Mentoring Others
- Coaching Effectiveness
- Interviewing Skills

### Other Suggestion

- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

### Reading Suggestion

- The Art of Mentoring : Lead, Follow and Get Out of the Way. Shirley Peddy
- Coaching, Mentoring and Managing. William Hendricks (Editor), Sam Bartlett (Editor), and Joe Gilliam (Editor)
- Making Mentoring Happen : A Simple and Effective Guide to Implementing a Successful Mentoring Program. Kathy Lacey
- Coaching and Mentoring. Neil Maclennan
- Beyond the Myths and Magic of Mentoring : How to Facilitate an Effective Mentoring Program. Margo Murray
- Mentoring for Exceptional Performance. Harold E. Johnson
- Mentoring. Gordon F. Shea

## Feedback Skills

Feedback Skills looks at the extent to which you offer useful and constructive performance feedback that is accepted and acted upon. It asks the question: "How well do you make use of a range of guidance counseling, coaching, and instructional methods and activities to help people perform at their best?"

### Course Suggestion

- Feedback Giving and Receiving
- Appraising Performance
- Communications Skills
- Mentoring Others
- Coaching Skills

### Other Suggestion

- If you feel comfortable doing so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects, and other possible support they may be able to offer to improve your skills.

### Reading Suggestion

- Coaching for Performance (People Skills for Professionals). John Whitmore
- Coaching for Improved Work Performance. Ferdinand F. Fournies
- Leader As Coach: Strategies for Coaching and Developing Others. D.B Peterson and M.D Hicks
- The Management Mirror : How to Create a Behavioral Feedback System That Improves Performance. Robert S. Sobel, and Patricia M. McNally
- Effective Coaching (Orion Business Toolkit). Myles Downey
- Co-Active Coaching : New Skills for Coaching People Toward Success in Work and Life. Laura Whitworth, Henry House, Phil Sandahl, and Henry Kimsey-House
- The Agile Manager's Guide to Coaching to Maximize Performance (The Agile Manager Series). Jack Cullen, and Len D'Innocenzo
- The Dos and Don'ts of Work Team Coaching : A Comprehensive Study of the Worker/Coach Interpersonal Relationship: Steve Herbelin (Editor), Pat Guiney (Editor), and Randy Glasbergen

# Development Plan

Use the space below to write out your personal development plan for the next 12 months based on your results. Draw upon the general improvement actions in relevant areas of the report, and ideas that are suggested in the attached coaching tips.

**I continually demonstrate how to use a range of problem-solving methods and tools.** Score: 1.75  
**Action to Take:**

**I avoid jumping into a conversation to take control.** Score: 2.00  
**Action to Take:**

**I use analogies and metaphors to explain what I mean.** Score: 2.00  
**Action to Take:**

**I guide and encourage people to seek feedback from a wide variety of different sources.** Score: 2.00  
**Action to Take:**

**I encourage people to set targets for improvement and help them reach those targets.** Score: 2.25  
**Action to Take:**

## PSA-4

### Problem-Solving Ability

#### **Demonstrate how to use a wide range of problem-solving methods and tools.**

Effective problem-solvers, including coaches, are able to select the best tool for the specific problem at hand. However, if you are only familiar with a small number of problem-solving tools and methods, your approach will obviously be quite limited. The results will reflect those limitations.

Complicated problems will require more than one tool for different stages of the problem-solving process. Ideas will have to be generated, data will have to be sorted and prioritized, various kinds of analysis will have to be done, and decisions will have to be made. To operate effectively in this context, problem-solvers should be able to switch from analytical to more-creative approaches and back again. They can do this if they are familiar with a range of tools. Knowing about these methods and being able to offer them to others who are seeking solutions will help you be more effective as a coach.

Consider trying some of the following suggestions to help improve your overall effectiveness:

1. Ask your colleagues what problem-solving and decision-making processes they use. Find appropriate situations where these processes can be best applied.
2. Commit to mastering at least three new specific problem-solving tools over the next 12 months, and make sure that you practice using them.
3. Search the Internet, and download problem-solving processes or techniques that look interesting. Many sites offer free examples and case studies of how the techniques can be applied.
4. Make it a habit to periodically visit the management section of a large bookstore to check out new works on problem-solving methods and techniques. They usually offer useful examples and practical case studies.
5. Sign up for a skills- or competency-development workshop or course in which problem-solving and decision-making are key components.
6. Subscribe to Internet discussion groups and stay on top of new problem-solving or decision-making tools or new applications.

## LS-5

# Listening Skills

### Avoid jumping into a conversation to take control.

As the saying goes, fools rush in where angels fear to tread. We are all guilty of rushing to judgment when it comes to other people, but it does make sense to give someone enough time to at least finish what they were going to say before we try to make a balanced judgment about their views. Patience doesn't come so easily when we have strong reactions to what others are saying, so this might take some work on your part.

Here's how to suspend judgment about what is being said for as long as necessary:

1. Be aware of your own “hot buttons.” Are there issues, concepts, or words you feel strongly about that set you off? Most of us have them, and it's not necessarily a bad thing. Just be honest with yourself about your own sensitivities and try to understand how they can provoke you into responding prematurely.
2. Give the other person a fair hearing. If you listen right through to the end and you *like* what you hear, you know you won't be making a premature and ill-founded choice or decision that you will later regret. If you listen to the end and *dislike* what you hear, then you cannot be accused of being biased or of having rudely and arbitrarily excluded critical parts of the story being told.
3. Separate the message from the messenger. Don't get hung up on the personal appearance and behavior of the person talking or the associations that person might have with other people.
4. *Today is the first day of the rest of your life* is a helpful motto for many people, but do consider this variation: “The next piece of information you hear might be the most important thing you will ever hear.” The emphasis is on *might be*: Most of the information we hear is boring, useless, wrong, out-of-date, so-what? or routine, so it is not all that probable that the next piece of information you hear will be the most important thing you will ever hear. Improbable, *but not impossible*. Give the person who is speaking the benefit of the doubt—maybe they do have something to offer.
5. Resist the temptation to jump in or interrupt. More often than not, this will make the person you are coaching feel that you have taken control of the discussion. Your goal should be to steer the conversation and let *them* feel in control.

## FS-7

# Feedback Skills

### Use analogies and metaphors to explain what you mean.

As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. Analogies and metaphors help to create these pictures mentally, and can be extremely useful when we communicate with other people in a coaching situation. These additions to the coaching repertoire expand and deepen our insight, and bring the following benefits:

- They can be a symbolic but very precise way to get to the essence of a particular situation.
- They are a useful way to fire up imagination, intuition, and emotions about a particular problem or issue.
- They are an excellent way to get around the more controlling and often limiting logical mind.

Effective coaches use a broad range of approaches and methods to understand and work with the people they are coaching, including analogies or metaphors such as symbols, mythical characters, natural phenomena, common objects, animals, or anything else that creates a useful comparative picture. Expressions such as “stars in your eyes” or “drowning in data” are good examples of metaphors.

Metaphors are worth a thousand words, because the word picture stays with us long after our word descriptions have faded from our memory.

Consider doing the following to improve your ability to coach people in this area:

1. Recognize that using an analogy or a metaphor helps shed new light on a situation and creates a new way for someone to look at a situation or issue.
2. When you picture the person you are coaching, do some free-association and note what comes quickly to mind. Try using this as your analogy.
3. Sometimes it helps to talk through your metaphors or analogies with people you are coaching; this deepens understanding and even enriches it as the conversation unfolds.
4. A metaphor or analogy does not have to work completely in order to be useful. The idea is to give the individual something to compare the situation or problem with or a way to look at the issue unconventionally. If they come up with their own take on this, so much the better.
5. Be cautious about using or sharing analogies and metaphors that are too real for the person whom you are coaching. Some people will take things too literally.

## FS-11

### Feedback Skills

#### **Encourage and guide people to seek feedback from a wide variety of different sources.**

It will take some time, but the individual and his or her coach will become more and more familiar with one another. This is a positive thing: it helps to break down barriers, build trust, and establish a climate of safety and support where risks can be taken to achieve major performance leaps, rather than just small or incremental improvement. However, over-familiarity can lead to the mistaken idea on the part of the person being coached that the only advice they need is from their coach. Not so!

An effective coach encourages an individual to get feedback on their overall performance from many people; they should reflect on all suggestions and input, and be open to other ideas, even when they conflict with the ideas put forward by the coach.

Here are some ways to improve your overall effectiveness in this area:

1. Encourage individuals to welcome feedback from others, whatever the source. Feedback can be accepted or rejected after reflection, but if someone takes the time to comment, carefully listening to their input is the least we can do.
2. Guide people to actively solicit a second or even third opinion from other team members or colleagues so they do not become over-reliant on the coach's advice and guidance.
3. Where possible, help individuals solicit feedback from people outside their direct circle of contacts, or people who might not give them a completely unbiased view: suppliers, customers, or people whom they deal with only occasionally can provide useful or valid feedback.
4. Encourage people to carefully listen to the information and avoid feeling negatively judged. Get them to understand that their overall competence is not in question; they should look for the feedback that is common, and then look for feedback that is different, as well as reasons why this might be the case.
5. Help people truly understand what other people are saying and learn to ask for concrete details regarding the behavior or actions that might be changed or improved.

## MS-2

### Mentoring Skills

#### Encourage people to set improvement targets, and assist them in reaching those targets.

If we are to develop ourselves and our teammates, we need to set targets or goals that stretch us—targets that are a little higher than we have previously achieved. We also need to help others do the same. Once the stretch targets are set, we are ready to take advantage of support and coaching opportunities so that we improve our chances of attaining what we all set out to achieve.

The GROW model is an investigative approach to providing such coaching. Stretch performance targets are set by the individual after careful reflection. Then questions are asked along the way so that progress can be assessed.

The model acts as a coaching guide, asking would-be colleagues or learners questions such as these:

**Goals** Are they clear about what they want to achieve?

Have they set any sub-goals along the way?

Are the goals realistic and measurable?

**Reality** Where are they right now with the project?

What is helping or hindering the process?

Is there anyone they can learn from?

**Options** What are the options available?

Are there any other possibilities?

Which is the most appropriate option?

**Will** What is their level of commitment?

If commitment is low, would they be better off focusing their energy elsewhere?

What would the consequences of this be?

Source: Coaching for Performance: John Whitmore, Nicholas Brealey (1996).