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How Coachable Are you?

Shannon Waller: Here is a question for you, how open are you to feedback? The answer to the question can really determine the course of your career, your happiness and your growth. Stay tuned.

Shannon Waller: Hi! Shannon Waller here, and welcome to Team Success. Today we're going to talk about a really important topic, which is How Open Are You To Receiving Feedback? This is a really interesting why as a team member, as a team leader, as a business owner, how open are we to actually getting input on how we're doing. Now, I don't know about you but I'm usually pretty happy to receive praise or something, when someone says something great about me or something that I better get done, impact I've had, most people are not allergic to that. But what I've noticed with a number of different people in all walks of life, to be honest, is that some people are really open to feedback and they cultivate it and they ask for feedback, what do I do well, what can I do better next time, how can I support you differently, better? And other people are unwilling to have those conversations, and I think there's a real cost. So, just to be clear when I'm talking about feedback, it's really that exchange when you do something, how well did it work for someone, how well did it not work for someone? And if you do get what is usually negative feedback, how do you respond when someone says, "hey, that didn't really work for me". Or, "could you say that differently?" Or, "I'm really upset by what you said" and they have some emotional weight or heat on that. How do you respond? Are you able to actually go, "hmm, you're really upset." What I said really, I use the word triggered, really triggered you. I need you to tell me more about that and, are you open to that or, are you like, nope, you're wrong and it gets into a fight.

Certainly, when I was younger it's pretty much how that went. I felt very defensive, very attacked, didn't understand how they didn't know where I was coming from. Maybe I felt badly 'cause maybe I did have something not great about how I communicated with them or with what I did, so I immediately again got more defensive and I needed to protect myself, but it also boxed me in. So, if you're ever feeling stuck, this is something to take a look at with yourself. Ask yourself, how open am I too feedback? What happened the last time someone tried to tell me that something I was doing didn't work, wasn't working? How do I respond to that? Because we can react emotionally, usually negatively, or we can respond creatively and, you've probably heard me say this before, reactive and creative have the same letters only



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rearranged. Ha. Ha. Which I find is such a fun, cool thing about the English Language. So, if we can rearrange our response from a reactive one to a creative one, the benefits are pretty powerful. And if we don't have a creative way of responding, there are some major, major costs. And I've listed out a few because I think we can just sort of blow it off in the moment or tell ourselves it was okay if we snapped at someone, we can justify that. But, this builds up over time, and the effect is, if we're not open, if we are not curious about how we could be better, there are some really major consequences. First of all, people stop telling you things.

They'll try once, maybe twice, not a third time because, if they do, they're just going to get snapped back at. And sometimes, I've seen the reactions where it's actually quite volatile, you know it's pretty much they got torched. And no one in their right mind really goes into that situation again. They kind of write you off as someone they can have an equal exchange with. They don't see you as someone trustworthy with whom they can share their thoughts, their feelings, unless they're, you know, making you look like a rock star. So, you lose a lot of trust, you lose support. As I said, people give up on you and that means that you lose opportunities. No one is going to share their new fragile idea with you 'cause, if you don't like it, it's gone, you've torched it. They're not going to bring any concerns or considerations or things are not a 100% certain of to you. Brand new ideas are going to a more receptive audience or just stuff them. So, you lose opportunities or connections for relationship, for innovation, for greater connection, for really being able to have a deep meaningful connection with someone else. That just goes by the wayside if you are not open. If you're not being a little bit transparent and saying, "okay, this is me, I know it works for me but, is it working for you?" And being open to that feedback is so, so critical, otherwise, people stop talking to you. They just stop telling you things because, it's not worth it. And even if you do have good contributions to make, because they feel such a lack of relationship, they stop taking you seriously. You know, I think all of us step into this realm at different points in our life, when I have been, what's the word, much more antagonistic, defensive, not necessarily a good space and just have no capacity to take in what I would perceive as being negative feedback. It's been one of the most constrained, boxed in, unhappy, lack of progress parts of my life. Not fun.



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Now I'm really fortunate, I have some very long-term loving people around me who will say, "Shannon, we love you and this is not working," and they were just persistent and brave and they had courage and I was able to make some course corrections. But it took a bit, someone had to kind of get into my face and that kind of a person before I'm willing to, you know, take the feedback. Let me share one, ha. ha. let me share one example. This was a long time ago, I was less than 20, I was probably 19 and I was away at a summer kind of event course, and I was working long hours, five days a week in this beautiful kind of resort type area near Poughkeepsie in New York, it's gorgeous, green mountains. But I worked in the office and, if you know me at all, you know that's not where I should have been, ha. ha. doing administrative work. Anyway, what was happening is, this woman that I was working for whose job it was to train me, I was like a summer intern, I was new. And she would try to tell me things and I would be like, I know, I know, I know. I had that sort of cocky teenager thing going, and she'd go, I know, I know and then she sat me down one day and she goes, "Shannon, I need to tell you something. Every time I try to train you or tell you something about your job, what you tell me is, I know. Every time you do that, I feel like you're spitting on me." And I was taken aback, appalled and I stopped immediately. It was so powerful. I didn't really know I was being quite so obnoxious but I could completely see how I was. But that one moment where she cared enough to sit me down, she didn't write me off, she didn't just go, oh she's a pain in the butt she'll be gone in two months. No, she sat me down and gave me one of the most important life lessons I've ever had. And she had the love and the care and she did it in such, I would say, a compassionate way. She wasn't harsh with me, she was just so absolutely clear, and I got it in that moment and I don't think I said, I know since, and that was many, many, many years ago.

So that's what the effect of really great feedback be and, I was willing to listen. But she did it in such a way that I couldn't ignore it and she was so clear, she told me specifically what wasn't working, what was working. But before that, I had not been open to input. She had to sit me down and make it super direct and super clear. Now, I don't know if anyone has done that with you or if you need to have it done with them, maybe you didn't but, that was one of my most powerful situations where okay, I got the feedback. And it was so well delivered and I was open to it that I took action immediately and completely stopped that very obnoxious behaviour. So, feedback can really make a difference to how we show up. How we can grow



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and that's why it's so important. Now, is it easy to get feedback? No. In fact, it's not easy to get it from people you love, it's not easy to get it from people you don't, that don't know you as well, it can be really challenging. We have to really look out for our egos in this one. And we can get hijacked by our ego. Our ego can get all defensive. This is one of the reasons why I love our concept of Unique Ability so much. Because when you're really confident about the very, very, very few things at which you excel at and you create enormous value—and it gives you energy and it always lights you up again, always makes a big contribution, it can be very easy to be humble about everything else. There's a ton of things at which I just should not do.

I was not put on the planet to do a whole bunch of things. There're very few things that I was put on the planet to do and so, I'm pretty open about those other things and I want to encourage you, you know, to really take that word as you should. Be very confident in areas where you're super strong and making a contribution and be very humble about everything else. And don't try to be good at everything, that's just a fool's game. You're not going to satisfy everyone. If you're familiar with Patrick Lencioni's book *The Ideal Team Player*, I think team members include everybody by the way, it's humble, hungry and smart. I really like how it starts with humble. That means open. That means that you don't know everything and you know you don't know everything. You can actually be open to getting better. One of the other things you can do is cultivate a growth mindset. If you haven't read the book *Mindset* by Carol Dweck, please do. People who tend to be boxed in by their egos and get very defensive, could even call it sometimes narcissistic if it goes too far, those are the people who tend to be fixed mindset where, they have to be perfect and they can't handle any criticism and if they don't think they can be perfect they don't even start. You know, those are some of the characteristics of a fixed mindset. A growth mindset said, oh, I didn't do it right this time, what can I learn? I have to tell you, working with people with a growth mindset, which I can do every single day with both our clients and our amazing team is magical, it is so fun.

I'm always looking for how to get better. My team is always looking at how to get better. We have a phenomenal tool in Strategic Coach called, *The Experience Transformer*. Did one today with my colleague and that is so useful. It's like okay, what's working, what's not, knowing what we know now, what would we do differently next time and then, what's our new course of action? That's essentially the *Experience Transformer*. You can do it over time, you can do it



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over relationships, you can do it over projects. My husband and I have done them on vacations, that did not go as well as we wanted and it's such a great reflective learning tool and it means you have to be open to feedback. Obviously not everything is wrong so you have to track what is working and then, you can analyze what didn't. Also, I would suggest, don't take everything personally. You know, people have their preferences about how you show up and they also have their preferences about how you don't. We have to know ourselves and other people have to know themselves and we have to try to bridge those gaps. So, the Four Agreements by Don Miguel Ruiz, one of the key points is, don't take anything personally. It's a great read if you want to institute that one for yourself. Now, as I was thinking about talking about today, I went to my bookshelf and what did I find, but a book called Thanks For The Feedback. I'm like, how perfect is that, ha. ha. I love when that happens when books just fall off my own bookshelf into my hands.

It's by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen who are actually co-authors of Difficult Conversations which you may well have read. It's a great book to have in your bookshelf.

So, Thanks For The Feedback: the Science And Art Of Receiving Feedback Well. And one of the things that they talk about is really being growth minded. So, we're totally aligned on that one. There's a whole book on that if you're interested in that. So, just to wrap up, my final point about this is to really know yourself. At Strategic Coach, we love using tools like the Kolbe Profile, go to KOLBE.com. CliftonStrengths is fabulous. And we've also been using a newer profile to us called, The Print Profile, it's called The Why Of You. And what it measures is your internal motivators, your unconscious motivators. Kinda deep, deep down why you do things. And one of the things that's really powerful about this profile is, it tells you your anticipated best self, your shadow self and it the triggers that take you from one to the other. And I have to tell you, getting feedback that you don't like or weren't expecting is a really fast way to get triggered. And you can get triggered about those things that are very motivating for you. Now, I know, someone gives me a particular type, I was going to say insult, but negative feedback, some of it just bounces right off me but, if they hit one of my triggers for an internal motivator, unconscious motivator, ooh, it happens almost before I can blink and I have to really be conscious and take a deep breath. And try to find that little bit of space between stimulus and response.



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So, learning how to manage yourself, all of our strengths needs to be managed. Any strength taken to an extreme becomes a weakness. And that's true for CliftonStrengths as well. So, really knowing yourself, really maturing on purpose and going, how can I use my strengths to best effect? How can I not let them get too out of control? If I have these strengths, other people have complementary strengths. How can I be a phenomenal team member? How can I be a great partner in making sure we best show up as our best selves? That's really powerful. And we don't learn, we won't be able to do that well unless we're open to feedback. So, if you want a long, growing career, I'm going to suggest you really work on your openness to feedback even if it's not what you wanted. You know, get curious, be interested, keep your attention out on the other person. Don't slip it back to how you're feeling. Go, oh wow, I had no idea I showed up like that, tell me more about that I'm really curious. Now, it takes some body parts to be able to do that well but, I have to say, you will learn so much. You'll learn what really was of value for people. You'll learn what triggered them. You will learn how to be a better version of you. And that's kind of what we're here for and you'll learn more about yourself. And after all, you're pretty interesting so why wouldn't you want to do that? But when we aren't open to feedback, we shut that down and when we're open, new opportunities and new horizons become possible that weren't if we stay closed.

So this was your little reminder, ask yourself how open are you to feedback. Obviously you want to be constructive not critical but really use this as a growth tool to make yourself better, to keep growing, to keep making progress and again, keeping being the best version of you.

Thank you so much for listening, I hope this conversation inspires some really interesting internal reflection and hopefully you get super curious and ask for some great feedback 'cause I know a lot of it would be great and that you're also inspired to keep growing and keeping the best version of yourself. So, thank you so much for listening. If you have any questions or comments, please let us know at questions@strategiccoach.com and as always, here's to your team success.