

FRICTION

INTERPERSONAL

Credit in Public, Correct in Private

The Experiment: Practice the CORE Model

Duration: Two weeks

Time required: 10 minutes of preparation, one real feedback conversation (time will fluctuate)

Goal: Get more comfortable with feedback so you can give and get it more consistently. The CORE feedback model offers a four-part framework for structuring feedback conversations, so they are specific, observable, and forward-facing rather than personal, vague, or punitive. CORE stands for Context, Observation, Result, Expectations.

CORE Feedback

C	CONTEXT
O	OBSERVATION
R	RESULTS / REACTION
E	ESTABLISH EXPECTATIONS

- **Context** sets the stage: it ensures everyone is focused on the same issue or event and provides the opportunity to be as specific as possible—when did this happen, where, who was involved.
- **Observation** describes what you saw or heard, anchored to behavior rather than interpretation.
- **Result** explains the direct impact; what you thought, what you observed in others, what the effect on the work was.
- **Expectations** clarify what you need going forward, whether that is a behavior change or more of the same effective behavior.

The model works equally well for praise and correction. The discipline it requires, specificity, observation over inference, impact over intent, is the same in both directions.

Step One: Choose Your Feedback

Identify one piece of feedback you have been holding, either praise you have not yet delivered specifically enough, or a correction you have been avoiding or have delivered poorly. Write it down in its current form, as you have been carrying it in your head. Be honest about what it sounds like before you shape it.

Step Two: Run It Through CORE

Rewrite the feedback using each of the four elements:

Context: What is the specific situation you are referring to? When did it happen? Who was there? What was the setting?

Observation: What did you see or hear? Strip out interpretation and inference. Describe only what a camera would have captured.

Result: What was the impact? On you, on others, on the work, on the team? Be concrete. Avoid generalizations.

Expectations: What do you need going forward? For praise: What would you like to see more of, and why does it matter? For correction: What specific change are you asking for, and what does success look like?

Step Three: Check the Conditions

Before you deliver the feedback, ask yourself three questions:

- Is this person in a state where they can receive this?
- Have I chosen a private setting for correction, or a visible one for praise?
- Am I walking in as a partner in this person's growth, or as the keeper of a grievance?

If the answer to any of these gives you pause, address the condition before delivering the feedback. The best-structured feedback in the world does not survive poor conditions.

Step Four: Deliver and Debrief

Have the conversation. Afterward, reflect briefly:

- Did the CORE structure help me stay specific and behavioral rather than personal?
- How did the other person respond?
- What did I notice about how it landed?
- What would I adjust next time?

We commonly hear from leaders that most feedback (positive and corrective alike) has been living in their heads in a form that is too vague, too interpretive, or too emotionally loaded to be genuinely useful to the person receiving it. The CORE structure does not remove the difficulty of feedback; it doesn't get easier, but it gets better.