

Fear causes employees to not speak up. Not always fear of firing, can be fear of relationship changing.

Futility — Even greater reason. 1.8x more powerful than fear.

To solve:

1. Ask: for feedback — in the right way
2. Act: on that feedback

Asking questions builds trust.

Asking questions can be fearful.

- Easier to jump to answer than asking good questions
- We value tasks over relationships

1. Ask for advice, not feedback

— Helps shift power dynamic

Admit vulnerability — "I'm struggling with..."

Figure out obstacles — "How is my behavior making things worse for you?"

2. Shoot the elephants

— Make it clear you are looking to learn, not judge

— Ask employers to be honest — "Sugar-coated answers don't help anyone"

3. Be Specific

— Ask about 1 thing — "What's the one thing..."

— Ask about specific event or milestone

— Timebox your question — "In the past two weeks..."

— Ask for concrete information

4. Look to the Future

— Don't ask about what we could do in the past. Make some questions about the future.

5. Do It Often

— Give people as many channels and opportunities as possible

— One-on-ones, social gatherings, company pulse surveys, meetings

— Don't just talk to managers, go to the source.

4 Questions to Ask Employees:

1. If someone asked you to describe the vision of the company, would an immediate answer come to mind?
2. Do you think the company is the right size?
3. Have you ever been afraid to suggest an idea because you think you would be shot down?
4. Do you feel like you're spread too thin right now?

In your next all company meeting, ask specific questions.

II. Act on Feedback

Action is critical for overcoming sense of futility.

Executives don't act on feedback because we're busy, biased

- Fundamental attribution error increases the busier we are

1. Listen Without Judgement

- Acknowledge your biases & assumptions
- Write down the feedback
 - o Gives you time to process information
 - o Employee sees you taking it seriously
- Ask "What does it feel like to work with me?"
- Being defensive kills an open culture
- Always assume employee has good intentions

2. Recognize the Messenger

- Gratitude is critical for keeping people engaged
- Sets an example for how to handle dissenting opinions in a company

3. Explain Strategy

- Explain why you are deciding not to implement an idea
- If you don't provide a why, employees fill it in themselves
- Ensure it's not personal. Don't say "I need", "I feel", Say "the company needs..."
- Ask afterwards "What do you think?"

4. Emphasize Points of Commonality / Agreement

5. Knock Out a Quick Win

- Do something immediately that is small, significant & tangible
- Delegate larger items immediately
- Communicate that the changes are because you listened to feedback

How to get started:

- Make time
- Start with one technique
- Don't be hard on yourself