Feedback and its importance in delivering high quality software.

CAST 2015
Ken De Souza
V4.2
**Boss**: “You’re not finding as many bugs as your colleagues, and this is a problem.”
EVP: “Your team lacks basic engineering skills.”
• Introduction
  – Why is this important to you?
  – Giving and taking feedback well

• Tools
  – Two Mindsets
  – Learning Room vs. Testing Room
  – Johari Window
  – “Sort towards coaching”
  – Critical Thinking
  – Situational Awareness
  – Systems thinking

• Examples of Giving and Taking Feedback
  – Using the tools in real life examples
• Take any feedback
  – Turning negative feedback into positive constructive feedback
• Giving better feedback
• Why is this important to you?
  – Feedback is part of everyone’s life
  – Getting feedback from co-workers
  – Lean Software Development values
Goals of Lean Software Development

1. Communication
2. Simplicity
3. Feedback
4. Courage
5. Respect
• Why is this important to you?
  – QA is feedback
    • Developers – heart and soul into the project
    • Testers – reviewing their test cases, result, metrics
    • Management – providing metrics and the state of the product
“For some, feedback is like water off a duck’s back, while for others, it penetrates deep into their soul. We each metabolize feedback in our own way.”

Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila (2014-03-04). Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
hey, if you could not suck at your job,

that would be great.
What is feedback?

- Appreciation
- Coaching
- Evaluation
• Appreciation
  – Motivates and encourages

Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila (2014-03-04). Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
• Coaching
  – “…to help increase knowledge, skill, capability, growth or raise feelings in the relationship.”

Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila (2014-03-04). Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
• Two kinds of coaching
  – Need for knowledge and skills in order to build capabilities
  – Prompting to change something in a relationship
    • The giver wants the situation to change
    • ... in fact, they want **YOU** to change

Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila (2014-03-04). Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
• Evaluation
  – Tells you where you stand
  – Aligns expectations
  – Informs decision making

Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila (2014-03-04). Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
• I have given feedback where
  – Coaching was given but..
  – The receiver heard it as an evaluation
• Tools to help you turn that around
  – Make everyone hear it as coaching

What is feedback?
Two Mindsets

Learning Vs. Testing

Johari Window

“Sort towards coaching”

Situational Awareness

Critical Thinking

Systems Thinking

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Tools

TWO MINDSETS
Two mindsets

*Fixed Mindset*
Intelligence is static
Leads to a desire to look smart and therefore a tendency to...

*Growth Mindset*
Intelligence can be developed
Leads to a desire to learn and therefore a tendency to...

*Mindset: The New Psychology of Success by Carol Dweck (Author)*
• In a fixed mindset, failures define you.
• In a growth mindset, failures are temporary setbacks.

http://sivers.org/mindset
• In a fixed mindset, it’s all about the outcome. If you fail, you think all effort was wasted.

• In a growth mindset, it’s all about the process, so the outcome hardly matters.

http://sivers.org/mindset
In a fixed mindset, you want to hide your flaws so you’re not judged or labeled a failure.

In a growth mindset, your flaws are just a TO-DO list of things to improve.

http://sivers.org/mindset
Mindsets can be changed

http://sivers.org/mindset
Tools

**LEARNING VS. TESTING**
Introduction
Examples
Tools
Learning vs. Testing

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Learning vs. Testing

Introduction
Tools
Examples

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Stress

Stress

Ken
“Testing Room”:

• Not getting trapped in the "room"
• Change your mindset

Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila (2014-03-04). Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
“Learning Room”:

“It’s as if the growth-mindset kids were doing the puzzles in a room called the “Learning Room,” and the fixed-mindset kids were doing the puzzles in a room called the “Testing Room.” Which room would you rather live your life in?”

Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila (2014-03-04). Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
The key is to be in the Learning Room

• Easier to have tough conversations
• Fail fast, learn from failure
Tools

JOHARI WINDOW
• Tools for uncovering knowledge gaps between people
  – Uncover gaps in communication
Introduction

Known By Self

1. Shared

2. Blind

3. Hidden

Unknown By Self

4. Unknown

Feedback

Known By Others

Unknown By Others

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• Feedback Taken
  – I went from blind to shared
  – This was feedback given by the whole team

• Good for QA
  – Uncover gaps in communication
Tools

CRITICAL THINKING
• **Goal of critical thinking**
  – Truth
  – Context
  – Assumptions
  – Alternatives

• **Eliminate Biases**

• Take any feedback
  – Facts only
  – Eliminate biases, easier to take feedback
• Giving better feedback
  – Understanding your own biases
• Why is it important to QA
  – Checking your biases at the door
    • Use facts
  – Personal opinion eliminated
• Example
  – Customer A
  – Customer B
Tools

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS
There's this new thing.

It's called situational awareness.
Tools

SORT TOWARDS COACHING
• Sort towards coaching
  – Think of feedback you’ve received in the past several months, big or small.
  – Was it an evaluation?
  – If so, was it negative feedback?
    • Try to hear feedback as coaching (not as evaluation)
• Take any feedback
  – Unpack into actionable items
  – Make sure in the right mindset
• Giving better feedback
  – Are they in the right room? Are you?
  – Can you help them hear the coaching as coaching?
• Why is it important to QA
  – negative feedback into positive constructive feedback
Tools

SYSTEMS THINKING
• “A ‘system’ is a set of interacting or interdependent components that forms a complex whole ... “

• *Each of us sees only part of the problem*

• *Each of us is part of the problem*

Stone, Douglas; Heen, Sheila (2014-03-04). Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well
To understand the feedback you get, take three steps back
One Step Back: You + Me intersections.

- Are differences between us creating the friction?
Two Steps Back: Role clashes.

- Is this partly a result of the roles we play in the organization?
Three Steps Back: Big picture.
• Are processes, policies, physical environment, or other players reinforcing the problem?
Take any feedback - Looking at systems:
Reduces judgment

• You can reduce the judgment you might have on other people
Take any feedback - Looking at systems:
Enhances accountability

• Owning the fact that you are part of the problem
Take any feedback - Looking at systems:
Uncover root cause
• You might be able to see it from other perspectives
• Empathy
• Why important to QA:
  – Looking at the system you work in. Are there specific people causing you friction?
  – How do the players around you affect the way to get and receive feedback
  – Are there role clashes with executives, developers or other testers?
Taking and Giving Feedback

EXAMPLES
• Examples of taking any feedback
• Examples of giving better feedback
Example

STORY 1
**Boss**: “You’re not finding as many bugs as your colleagues.”

**Ken**: “What?”

**Boss**: “I don’t know how to help you.”

**Ken**: </head spin>
Sort through coaching

• I unpacked the feedback into actionable items
• I decided not to take it as an evaluation, but as a coaching opportunity
Example

STORY 2
**EVP:** “This team lacks basic engineering skills.”

**Ken:** “What?”

**EVP:** “I don’t know how to help you.”

**Ken:** </head spin>
• One Step Back: You + Me intersections.
• Two Steps Back: Role clashes.
• Three Steps Back: Big picture.

**Tools**

Systems thinking
Sort through coaching
• Unpacked the feedback into actionable items

Tools

Systems thinking

Sort through coaching
Example

TALKING WITH DEVELOPERS
NOT SURE IF IT’S A BUG

OR A FEATURE?
Giving feedback

• Creating effective bug reports
• Taking feedback
• Recognizing labels

Tools
Sort through coaching
Rooms/Mindset
Example

TALKING WITH MANAGEMENT
Areas that have been tested
excludes effort, testing coverage and areas that have 0 testing
Giving feedback to executives
• Important to recognize blind spots
• Metrics are biased, need to learn to communicate that
• Discussions should be using the “growth” mindset

**Tools:** Rooms, Growth Mindset, Johari
Example

TALKING WITH TESTERS
As a User, I want to be logged out when my session has timed out

#LTTD_AREA: Restore preview CMS functionality

#AREAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BROWSER</th>
<th>Firefox 28</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OS</td>
<td>Win 7 Pro SP1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVER</td>
<td>Demo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Management</td>
<td>Session Timeout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Claims Testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session reviews / test case review

• Use this as a coaching opportunity
• Try to be in the same room

Tools
Sort through coaching
Systems thinking
Critical thinking
Example

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR QUALITY?

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Introduction

Examples

Tools

Project Environment

Test Techniques

Quality Criteria

Product Elements

Perceived Quality


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• Tools and techniques can be used anywhere
  – Reduce blind spots
  – Reduce biases
  – Having the right mindset
  – Make sure you are in the right room
• Again, why does this matter for QA
  – You are part of a team that is trying to release software
  – If you are like me, you don’t want to release bad software
WARNINGS!
• Not all feedback is credible
• Feedback might feel unfair
• Feedback is a two way street
  – Think of the state of mind of the person who is getting the feedback
Safe environment

– Stating the types of feedback at a time when you're not planning on giving any feedback.
  • Find an opening.
Safe environment

— Explain the concepts here, what does that mean.
  • Start with rooms/mindset. Go from there.

— Depends on your culture.
  • Change your culture.
ONE MORE EXAMPLE & WRAP-UP
• In front of the smartest people I have ever worked with

**Tools**

- Two Mindsets
- Two Rooms
- Sort through coaching
- Johari Window
- Systems thinking
- Critical thinking
- Situational Awareness
• Why is this important to you?
  – Feedback is part of everyone’s life
  – Getting feedback from co-workers

• Given you some tools to help you through this
  – Take any feedback well
  – Give better feedback
Introduc*on

Examples

Tools

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Ken

De

Souza

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@kgdesouz

Sort
towards
coaching

Systems
Thinking

THANKS FOR THE FEEDBACK
THE SCIENCE AND ART OF RECEIVING FEEDBACK WELL

EVEN WHEN IT IS OFF-BASE, UNFAIR, POORLY DELIVERED, AND FRANKLY, YOU`RE NOT IN THE MOOD

Douglas Stone & Sheila Heen

of the Harvard Negotiation Project

co-authors of DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS
That’s all..

THANKS!
REFERENCES / BACKUP
• Other feedback systems (not discussed)
  – Navigate the conversation
  – Push vs. Pull

• Resources on Systems Thinking
  – http://www.thwink.org/sustain/glossary/SystemsThinking.htm