

Jim's Profit Accelerator 122: Afraid to Let Your People Coach You to Success?

Is your drive to improve yourself public or private?

- How is it that you want to hire folks who want to improve, but you won't discuss your own effort to do better?
- Are you afraid to let them see you sweat?
- Do you need to appear competent at all times? Or do you just never let your people help you do better?
- As middle schoolers say, "That's just so five minutes ago."

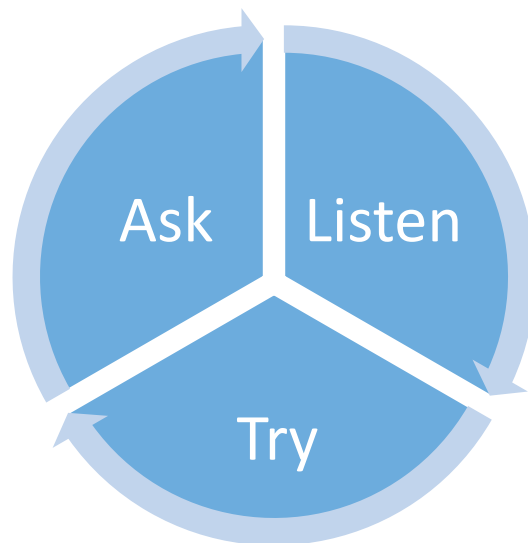
SPEED BUMP: People who improve their skills talk about it. With other people.

Tragic thought: You really believe that you pretty much know what to do, at least at work. If you do, your career days are numbered, and it's a small number. Or you never visit the personal competence tracker, to really see how you're doing.

SPEED BUMP: Track your progress. You'll love what you see!

PERSONAL COMPETENCE TRACKER: An amazing device, powered by willingness:

1. Ask, "How am I doing?" when you think you're stumbling.
2. Listen to the answer as though your job depends on it.
3. Say, "I'll try that," and do it.



SPEED BUMP: Big payoffs are often deeply uncomfortable at first. Keep going.

Hold on—this is mostly about WHO you ask. Pick the person most likely to see reality and share it pungently—who wants you to do better.

What questions could you ask?

Effectiveness questions:

- On a scale of 1–10 how effective am I in my job?
- What should I stop doing?
- What should I start doing?

Helpful questions:

- What can I do to help you do your job better?
- What is in the way of doing your job?

Leadership questions:

- What's one thing I should do better?
- Where could I focus my leadership more effectively?

Listening questions:

- What's one thing I should do better?
- When does my listening fall short?

What do I do next?

- Listen carefully for one idea that has impact, and that you're willing to try to do.
- Avoid trying to please. Look for impact instead.
- Listen, but don't promise to change everything.
- Talk about what you'll DO, not the outcome you hope for.
- Check back in about two weeks: "How am I doing on ...?"
- Measure your progress some simple way: a tally works fine.

ZERO SUM: If you live in a zero sum world, it means that if you fail or, worse, ask for help and still fail, the person with the answer wins. Instead, grab the fact that most people most of the time want to help. Most of the zero sum folks will relax their grip on it when they see that they helped someone else.

When I was president of a manufacturing company, the production manager thought it was his job to help me. He figured this out all by himself; I didn't enable it (at least in my mind). It made me enormously uncomfortable at first, because it meant showing what I wasn't doing well enough. Thankfully he drove right past my feelings and regularly stuck his head in my office door (or stopped me on the production floor) to say things like, "Our people don't get what you just said. It sailed over their heads." It was a small step (after the shock) to ask what I could do next. And yes, morale and results exploded.

ACCELERATOR: What will you ask your people about today?

For more information on how you can accelerate revenues and profits in your business, please call or email me.

For more information, visit www.grewco.com.

Jim Grew, the Business Defogger and Accelerator, helps leaders discover hidden opportunities within their businesses and exploit them for dramatic results. Jim has led 9 businesses, worked in 31 companies at C-level, and is an expert in strategy and executive leadership. He presents regularly to industry groups, mentors business leaders, and shares insights in his Executive Letter (above). Jim holds BA and MBA degrees from Stanford University. In his new book, *The Other Side of Succession*, he shares how to plan for the future by growing your business now.

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