



## Role Play ‘Lack of Communication’

### *Giving feedback in mentoring*

#### ***Goals***

Tool to exercise with giving feedback in mentoring conversations. Getting acquainted with the technique of the I message.

Tool to experience the influence of the mentor on the process of a feedback conversation by managing the emotional temperature of the mentee.

#### ***Conditions***

The role play demands of the participants the condition of being able to make the difference between listening and confronting. Also is assumed that participants master the two listening skills: open questioning and summarizing. The role play fits best in the end of a mentoring course.

#### ***Process***

##### **First exercise: Composing an effective I message.** [30 minutes]

Trainer introduces sheets that explain the art of feedback giving and the role of the I message.

Trainer distributes the role of the mentor and reads out loud the information in it. Participants try to make individually an effective I message for this mentee. They exchange first in pairs and then in the plenary. Trainer discusses the strong and the weaker points in the I messages and at last puts a effective I message on a flipchart.

This I message can be used at the start of the role play.

##### **Second exercise: Role playing a feedback conversation.** [60 minutes]

Information:

Trainer gives information [sheets] about leading the feedback conversation after the first introduction of the I message: alternating confronting and listening and managing the emotional temperature of the mentee.

Trainer introduces the rules of the role play. [10 minutes]

- Mentee instruction: The mentee role is meant to deliver material to exercise on. There is no right or wrong in the interpretation of the role. Beware of exaggerating and try to be responsive and if possible, authentic in your reactions on the mentor.
- Mentor instruction: The mentor is the one who does the exercise. The mentor can ask for a ‘time out’ any time and ask advice from the observer. Also the mentor can decide to start the role play again.

- Observer: The observer takes care of the time and a good procedure. The observer can also stop the role play. For example: if the mentor forgets to listen to the mentee and is confronting and confronting again and the emotional temperature rises, the observer can interfere and give feedback directly.

For other information: look at the role description of the observer.

Trainer can read out loud the role of the observer and give the role to the participants.

Role play preparation [10 minutes]

In groups of three participants make the decision ‘who is who’ in this exercise. Trainer comes after this decision and gives the role to the mentee and to the observer. In this way the observer can have the whole view on the dynamics of the role play. All parties already have the role of the mentor and the observer.

Role play exercise [20/30 minutes]

Trainers are stand-by for help. If groups want to change roles after the first round this must be encouraged. Trainers walk around and listen, encourage and assist if necessary.

After 10 minutes or more the trainer gives the sign to stop and start with the feedback conversation about the role play. Observers take the lead. Trainers join groups where the work is difficult and not quite floating easily.

Plenary discussion. [20 minutes]

Each group gets its turn to talk about the process of the role play and ask questions.

Trainer emphasizes the energy and good work that has been done. Making mistakes and being not so effective is a good experience to learn from. [In the Netherlands we say: ‘Every time you bump into the lamp you take some light with you’]

Conclude the plenary session with the invitation for the observer and the mentee to name some strong points of the mentor in their group. He or she had the courage to practise and provide the others with learning experiences!

Also the trainer can invite the groups of three to write a compliment for each other in the I message way on coloured cards. And give it to each other and enjoy!

The technique of receiving a compliment consists of saying: “Thank you” [and nothing more!]

### ***Material***

1. Information on sheets or power point on feedback conversations.
2. Back ground literature on feedback.
3. Role descriptions (as many as there are participants)
4. Coloured cards with the I message model (twice as many as there are participants in the group)

## 2. Information sheets

### ***Feedback***

***Feedback is***

***Information for a person***

***given by you***

***about elements of his/her behaviour.***

- What you see and hear
- The effects that you experience in yourself, in the behaviour of other people
- What you feel about this

***Feedback is***

- descriptive and clear
- specific and useful
- given at the right moment
- with a balance between positive and negative

*Feedback is a way to confront*

- with an honest and open attitude
- aiming at results
- bringing change
- with respect for the other
- It does not damage the relationship
- It does not impose solutions

## Feedback is Giving the I Message

- *I saw, heard, experienced [description of behaviour]*
- *I see what happens then [effects]*
- *I feel about this [feelings]*

### Example

#### **Behaviour:**

You asked the group who were living in the castles in the middle ages and Johan said: “soldiers!” And you said: “no that is not what I meant”. Then Laila put up her hand and said: “women with pointed hats and long dresses!” And you said: “no, think better!” And then Chris said: “knights!” And you said: “that is what I meant!”

#### **Effects:**

I saw that Johan looked puzzled and raised his eyebrows and looked around to see the reaction of other children. Laila looked down and did not raise her hand anymore during the rest of your lesson.

#### **Feelings:**

I myself felt: It is such a pity to say ‘no, you are wrong’ to children.

Coloured card:

**A compliment:  
[I message ]**

**For:**

**From:**

<b>behaviour that I appreciate</b>	<b>effects on me</b>	<b>the feeling that it gives me</b>
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## **Feedback dialogue**

### **First Phase:**

**The ‘I message’ is given by the mentor.**

### **Second Phase:**

**Handling resistance of the mentee.**

#### **Mentee resists: defends him or herself:**

“I did it because...”

“These children are so....”

“I did not mean to...”

#### **Mentee resists: denies what happened:**

“I was not really saying...”

“I never do things like that...”

“No, you misunderstood...”

#### **Mentee resists: fights back:**

“If you had not been so early...”

“You yourself are also...”

“You make me always so nervous...”

**Resistance is normal.**

**The mentor has to listen:**

**asking questions, summarizing, mirroring feelings.**

**Listening is influencing the ‘emotional temperature’ of the mentee.**

**Phase 1:**

Confronting moment with I message: temperature goes up!

**Phase 2:**

Listening moments: questioning, summarizing, mirroring: temperature goes down.

*If ‘confronting’ and ‘listening’ are alternating: the process of painful reflecting takes place and gives time to the mentee to ‘digest, adjust, restore or heal’: Mentee takes him or herself ‘together’ again.*

**Phase 3**

Positive reflection period:

Looking for solutions, exchanging ideas, alternative behaviour.

Making plans and agreements on experiments with behaviour

*Giving advice is more ‘mentoring’.*

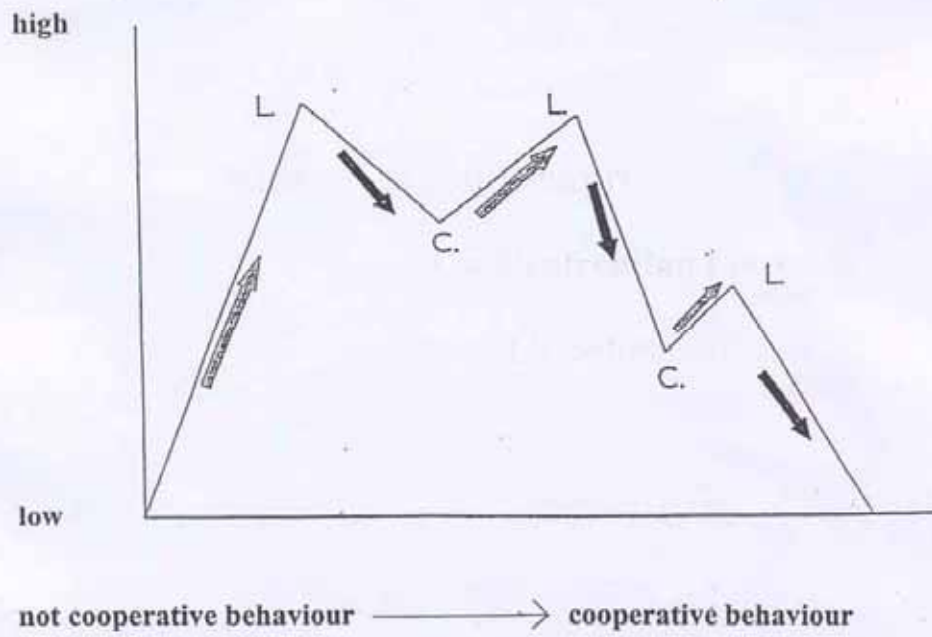
*Guiding the mentee to find his/her own advice is more ‘coaching’*

**$E = Q \times A.$**

## Emotional temperature

C = Confronting I message

L =. Listening



### **3. Role Play ‘Lack of Communication’ – Material**

#### **Role description of the mentee**

##### **Before:**

You are working in a special school for slightly handicapped children with intellectual and concentration problems. You are going to have a mentoring conversation with your mentor.

You have been visited in the classroom by your mentor for the second time. You have returned from sick leave and you are just starting to work again since 3 weeks. You have had an operation but you are well again. You were at home for 10 months also suffering from a slight depression.

The initiative of these mentoring activities comes from the school leader of your school. Before you had your operation you have had some problems with children’s behaviour.

There has been an intake conversation with your school leader and your mentor before the mentoring started. This was about aims and activities of the mentoring and you agreed with the action plan for the mentoring

Your mentor has been in your classroom two weeks before and gave you some feedback. The feedback was about that too much children were not concentrated and you did not succeed in making them interested in your lesson. Your mentor gave you some tips like: giving more initiative to children themselves so they would be more involved during the lesson.

Your mentor was visiting you this second time during your so called ‘morning circle’ after the weekend on Monday.

##### **In this lesson:**

Personal circumstances and feelings:

It is early in the morning and you have not slept well. You must admit you were nervous for this second visit of your mentor. You are also nervous because you have to return to the hospital in two days to have a check up and some testing. You have problems concentrating on teaching and enjoying it these days. You are tired and you miss having pleasure in children’s reactions like you used to.

##### **The lesson:**

The mentor saw your ‘morning circle’ after the weekend. You gave the children all their ‘turn’ to tell about what they did in the weekend. Children were quiet and you think most of them listened to each other. As they were talking you

tried not to interfere in their stories because of the initiative that should be with the children [the tip of your mentor!].

You noticed the gap between the stories from the boys and the girls 'world', but you think there is nothing to do about this. In the end you asked some girls if they still could remember what the boys said and they did remember rather well and you gave them a compliment! You did not ask the same from the boys because that's no use. They surely would not remember the girl's stories at all!

***When you get the I message from your mentor you first show some resistance [defending yourself, denying or even some acting out] but after that when your mentor treats you well and listens to you, you could step by step open up and tell about your concerns.***

## **Role description of the mentor**

You want to give feedback to your mentee, just returned from sick leave. He has been at home for 10 months after an operation and has returned to teaching practice 3 weeks ago. He has recovered totally as far as you know.

The school leader of this school for slightly handicapped children with intellectual and concentration problems, asked you to give critical support to this teacher after his return. Before his sickness he was never such a motivated teacher and there has been several problems with children's behaviour before.

In your mentoring conversation after your first classroom visit two weeks ago, you tried to give some tips to your mentee to increase the involvement of the children. One tip was to give more initiative to children during their learning activities.

You have visited this teacher in the classroom this morning for the second time and you are worried about his communication.

### **Observations**

You saw the teacher giving turns to each child to tell something about the weekend. A morning circle is meant to make children interested in each other and to make a bridge between home and school. You always like it when teachers take time for this.

During this morning circle these children and especially the boys did not show much interest in the stories of their companions. Two boys in the front were talking and doing other things with each other and did not listen to other children. The teacher made some remarks on this and you thought this was a good action. But the teacher himself did not give a good example as he did not react with any questions from himself to the stories of the children at all.

Also he did not motivate other children to ask questions and show some interest!

In the end the teacher asked some girls if they still knew what the boys had told and they remembered the boy's stories rather well. He gave the girls a compliment and just as you thought that now he would turn to the boys to ask them the same, he ended the morning circle.

***Start your mentoring conversation with some positive feedback. You yourself could invent more events. Then you give your I message and after that you try to find the balance in listening and confronting during your mentoring conversation.***

***Success!***

## **Observer instructions**

*Notice: Your subject for observation is the mentor! The mentee is in this case only delivering the 'material' for the exercise!*

Observe the interventions of the mentor and write down as much as possible. What you have written can serve as concrete feedback that you can give after the role play.

Example: a good open question that opened the door to the feelings of the mentee or a summary that the mentee did [not] recognize etc.

### **1. Observe the I message of the mentor:**

Was it about 1. concrete behaviour 2. effects 3. feelings of the mentor?

Your observations are:

### **2. Observe the balance between confronting [I message] and listening to the mentee.**

Was the mentor managing the emotional temperature of the mentee in an effective way?

Your observations are:

### **3. Prepare in any case positive feedback for your mentor: what effective interventions did you observe? What good attitude did you experience?**

Your observations are:

***After the role play:***

*When the role play has ended, you give the first turn to the mentor to say something about the process.*

*After that you give the turn to the mentee and his or her experiences with this mentor.*

*What was effective?*

*Then you give your feedback as concrete as possible. Be positive and give in any case also compliments to the mentor about effective moments. Give the mentor time to 'flounder' and listen: you are giving feedback yourself now!*