When the Words Don't Don't Land

The Power and Peril of Feedback in Unsafe Learning Learning Environments

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What If We Have the Concept of Feedback All Wrong?

People Don't Change Behavior Just Because We Tell Them To Change

Telling someone how to fix the problem is often the wrong approach.

Session Objectives

Define psychological safety

Understand how it influences learner engagement in clinical and classroom settings

Differentiate feedback types

Effective feedback vs. miscommunication vs. miscommunication vs. perceived mistreatment

Identify hindering practices

Recognize how feedback assumptions may may unintentionally impact performance performance

Practice safe feedback

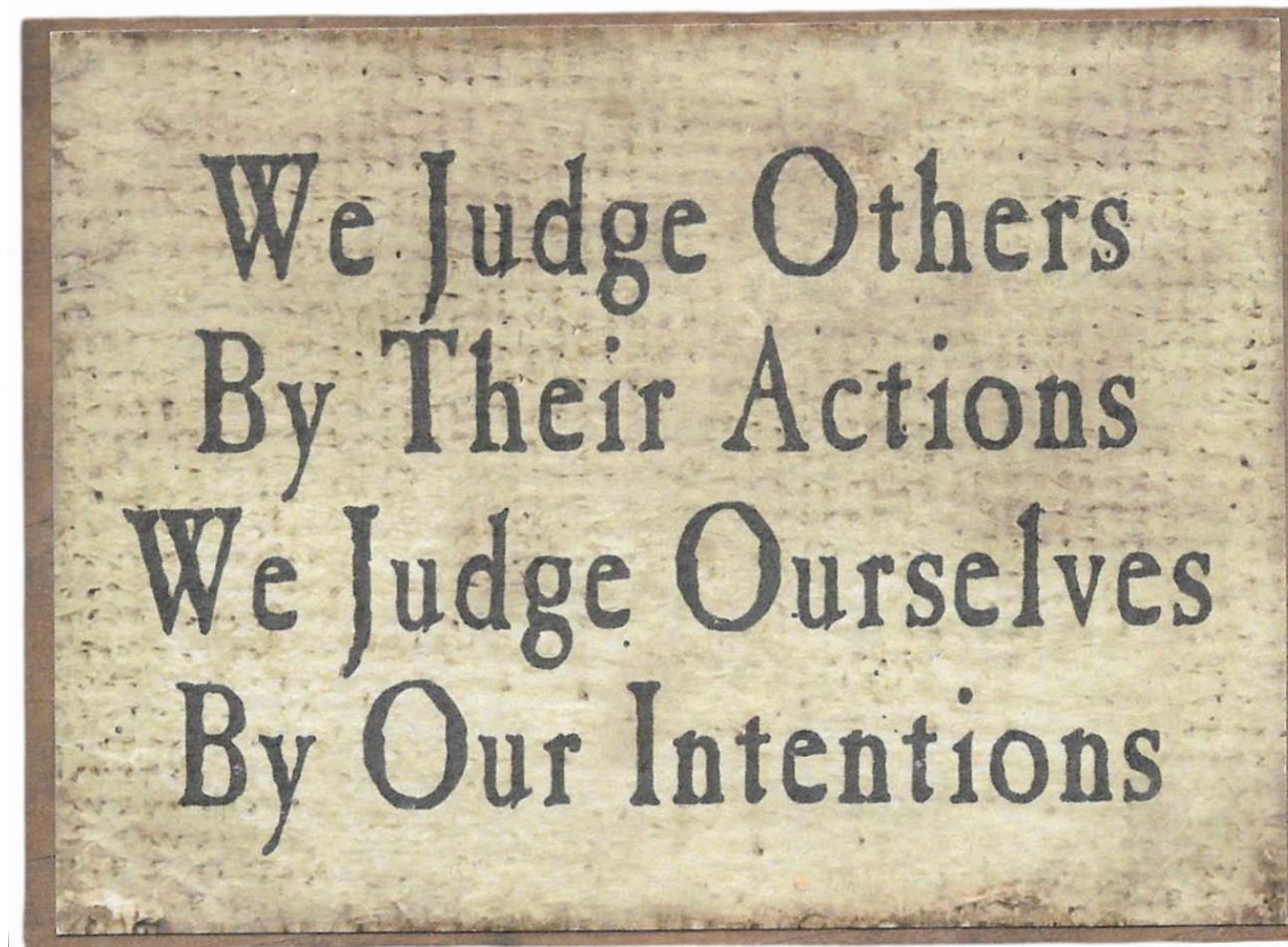Apply techniques using clinical and classroom scenarios

Commit to change

Identify actionable steps to support safe, inclusive learning environments

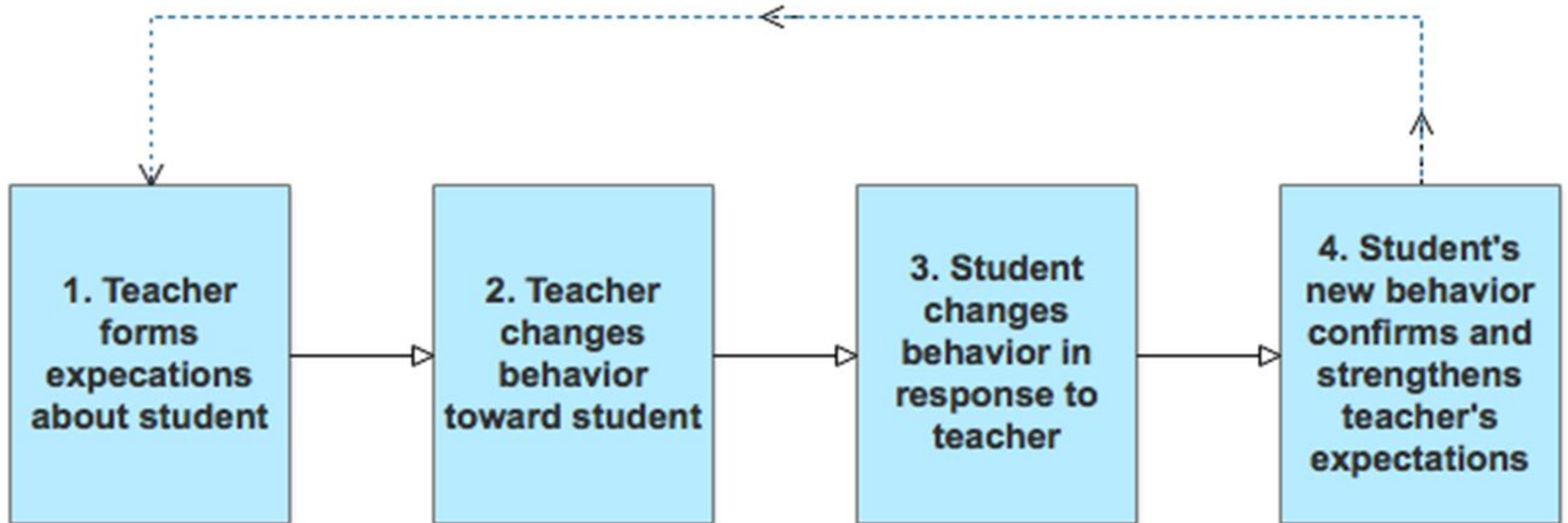# What makes feedback land – or fall flat?

Intent vs. Impact

We Judge Others By Their Actions We Judge Ourselves By Our Intentions

Pygmalion Effect

1. Teacher forms expecations about student
2. Teacher changes behavior toward student
3. Student changes behavior in response to teacher
4. Student's new behavior confirms and strengthens teacher's expectations

1. Robson D. The Expectation Effect: How Your Mindset Can Change Your World. 2022
2. Dweck D. Mindset: The New Psychology of Success. 2006
3. Rosenthal and Jacobson. Pygmalion in the classroom: Teacher expectation and pupils intellectual development. 1968
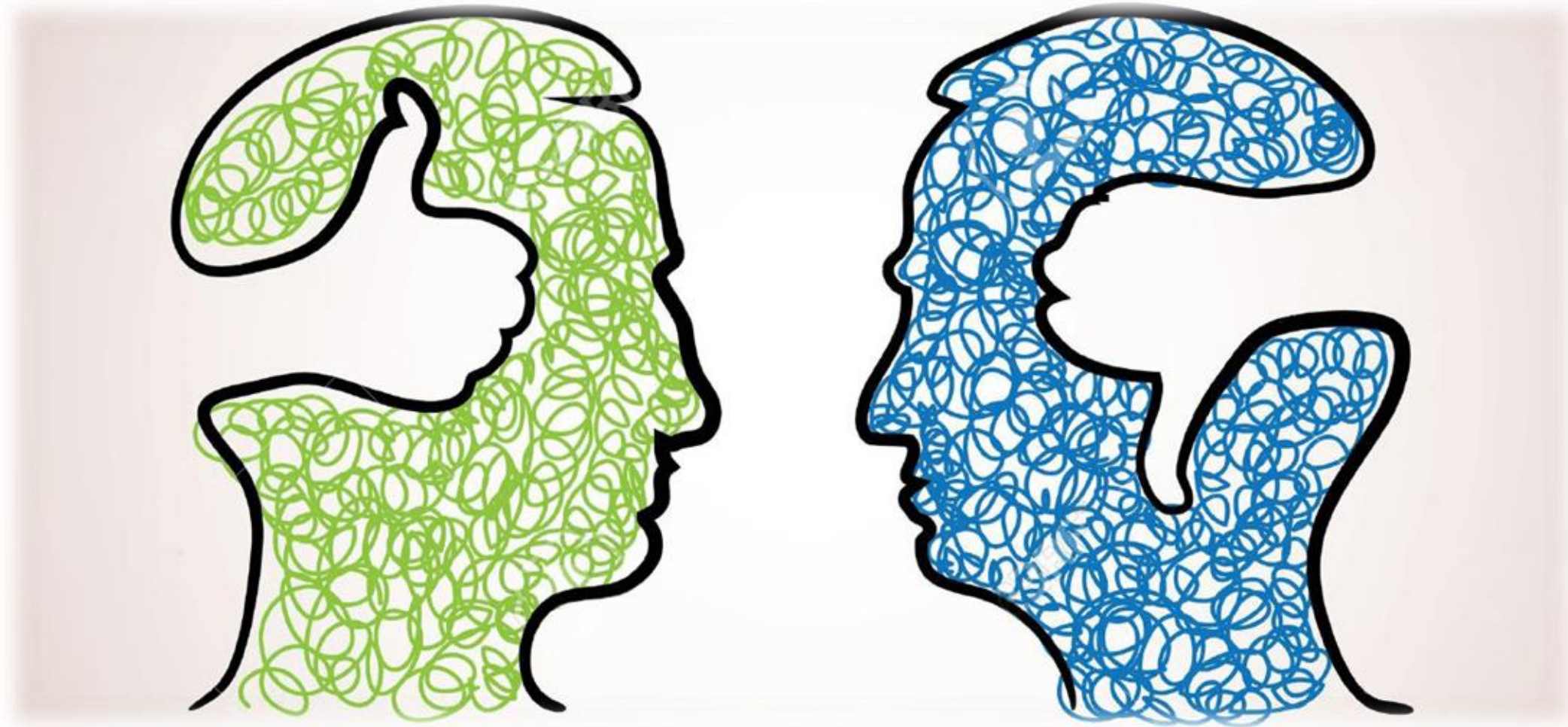4. Manzoni JF, Barsoux JL. The set-up-to-fail syndrome. Harvard Business Review. 1998.
5. Muenks K, et al. Does my professor think my ability can change? Students' perceptions of their STEM professors' mindset beliefs predict their psychological vulnerability, engagement, and performance in class. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General. 2020.
6. Canning EA, et al. STEM faculty who believe ability is fixed have larger racial achievement gaps and inspire less student motivation in their classes. Science advances. 2019.

Silent Messages

1. Manzoni JF, Barsoux JL. The set-up-to-fail syndrome. Harvard Business Review. 1998.
2. Muenks K, et al. Does my professor think my ability can change? Students' perceptions of their STEM professors' mindset beliefs predict their psychological vulnerability, engagement, and performance in class. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General. 2020.
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Growth Mindset

The Power of Growth Mindset
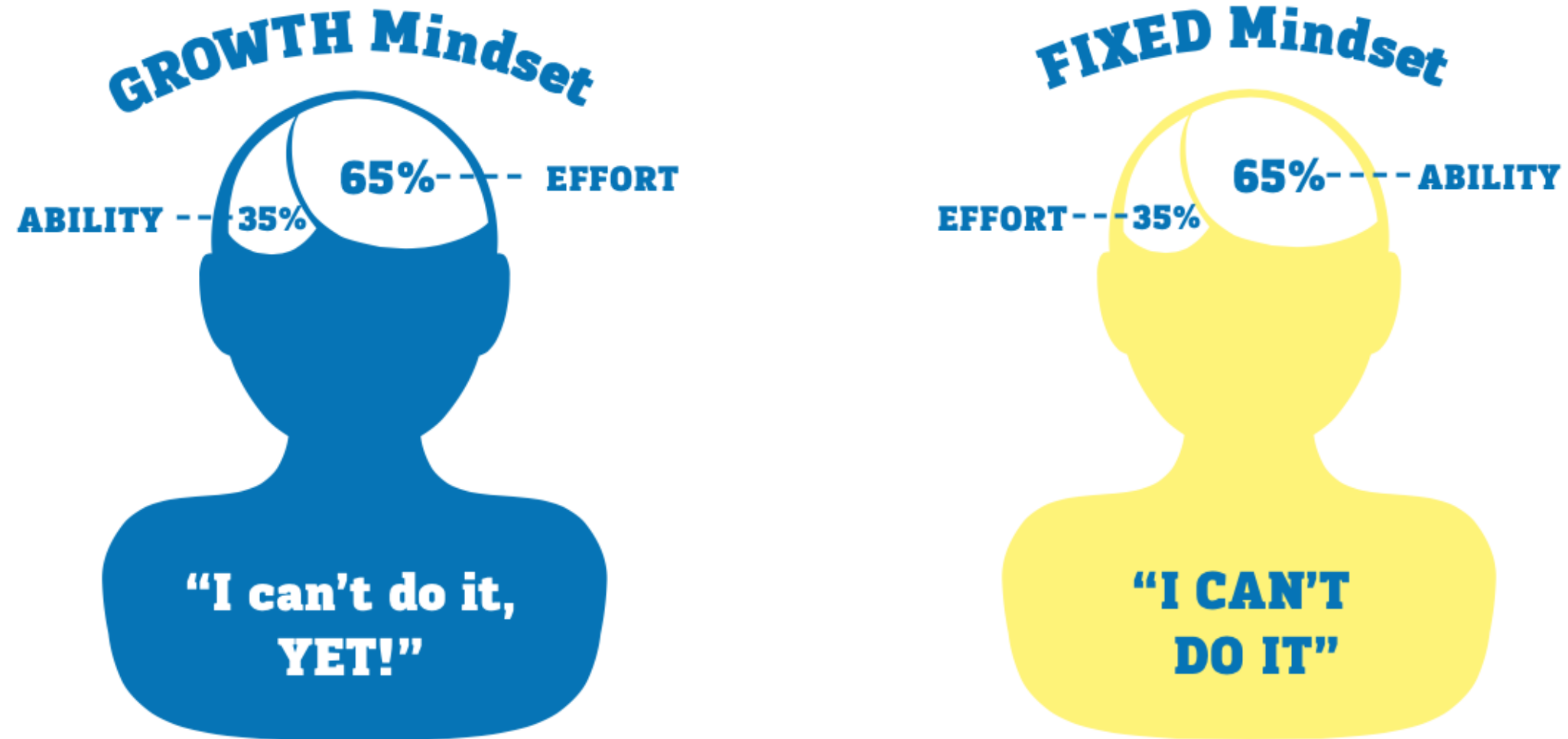
Mindset Distributions

- 50-50 growth and fixed mindsets[1-2]

- No statistical differences by level of training[2]

- Clinical Supervisors[3]

  ➢ 88% have a GROWTH mindset about clinical reasoning

  ➢ 43% have a GROWTH mindset about intelligence

  ➢ 55% have a GROWTH mindset about empathy
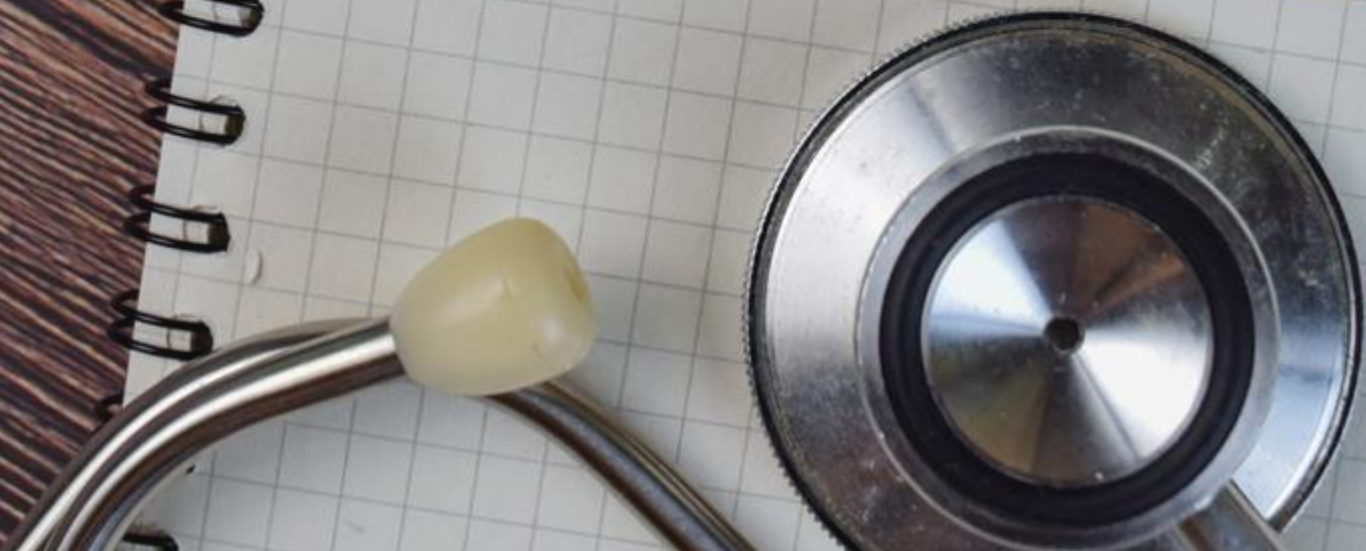
  ➢ 47% have a GROWTH mindset about moral character

1. Jegathesan M et al. *BMC medical education*. 2016 Dec;16(1):1-6.
2. Naifeh and Thompson. The Effect of Mindset on Performance and Burnout in Graduate Medical Education. Presented at PAS 2018.
3. Pal NE et al. *Medical Teacher*. 2020 Mar 3;42(3):291-8.

Psychological Safety

THINK.PAIR.SHARE.

Via Zoom: Think. Share. Chat.

Creating Safe Learning Environments

- Build relationships first

- Flatten the hierarchy within the team

- Reflect on and minimize implicit biases

- Share personal stories to promote belonging

- Get to know your trainees (and let them know you)

- Empower the trainee

- Share gratitude and words of affirmation

A Learner's Perspective

"Stand up in front of peers and staff and present. You are
You are then asked probing questions to identify gaps in
gaps in your knowledge. You get feedback on your
performance (usually only when you are doing it poorly or
poorly or wrong). You feel like you are under a constant
constant microscope."

- A medical trainee

Catch Learners Doing Things Well

I respond well
to positive
reinforcement

Hierck, Tom. Seven Keys to a Positive Learning Environment in Your Classroom. 2017.

Micro Feedback

Brief (<60 sec) statement on what was done well or could improve. Ideal for quick, real-time reflection.

Appreciative: *"What I appreciate is…"*

Constructive: *"You could be even more effective if…"*

Micro Feedback Exercise

Think about a recent learner

Write 2-3 sentences of specific, positive feedback describing what they did well

Be specific about:

- What behaviors you observed
- The positive impact of those behaviors
- Why those actions matter

The Human Need for Validation

"Next to physical survival, the greatest need of a
of a human being is psychological survival, to be
to be understood, to be affirmed, to be validated
validated and to be appreciated."
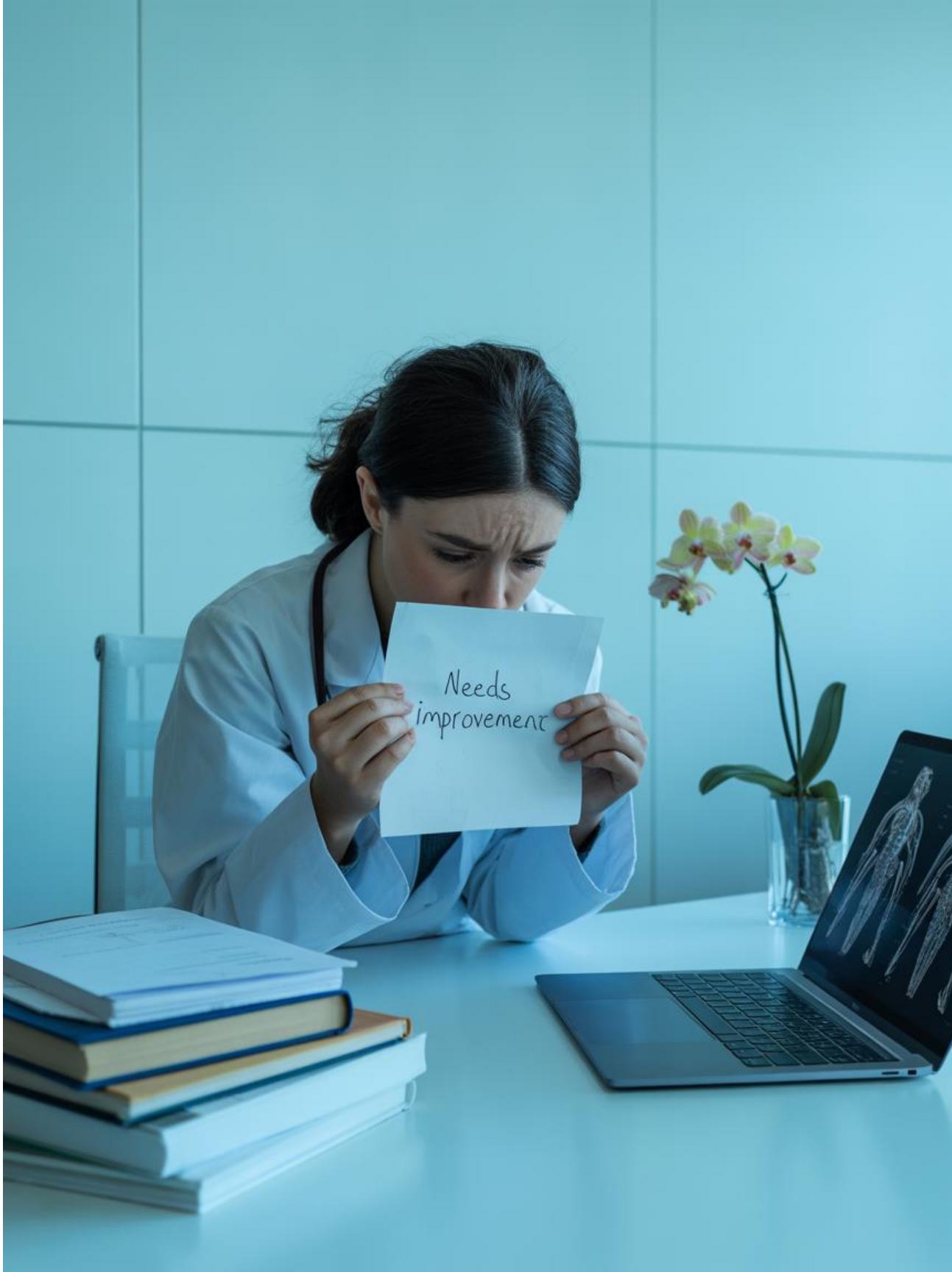
- Steven Covey

How to Show You Value Your Team

- *"Waiting to ask me questions about the case I am presenting until I finish the whole presentation"*

- *"Asking me what I want to do with the patient"*

- *"Being okay with "I don't know."*

- *"Telling me to not hesitate to call for any reason."*

- *"Asking me what I want to learn."*

Draw a vehicle

Set Clear Expectations

"Please set expectations at the beginning...instead of waiting for us to do something wrong before saying how you want it done."

- Student feedback

"We are learning and we make mistakes. We are always 10 times more frustrated and embarrassed for our faults than you are."

Provide Time for Growth

Share Your Evaluations of the Learner And Give the Learner Time to Improve

Model the Way

Think Aloud
Reflect openly about your clinical reasoning and decisions decisions

Ask for Feedback
Request input on your own teaching practices

Show Patient-Centered Centered Care
Demonstrate asking patients patients what you could do better

Share Failures
Discuss mistakes and how you recovered from them

Acknowledge Gaps
Model taking responsibility for what you don't know

Ramani S, et al. Twelve tips to promote a feedback culture with a growth mind-set: Swinging the feedback pendulum from recipes to relationships. Medical teacher. 2018.
Schön DA. *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. 1987

The ABCs of Psychological Safety

Adjust frames
Reframe situations to understand different perspectives

Be curious
Approach situations with genuine inquiry, not judgment

Collaborate and Coach
Work together to find solutions rather than imposing them

Understanding Safety

- Safety is perception-based
- Built on trust, credibility and respect
- Not equal to comfort
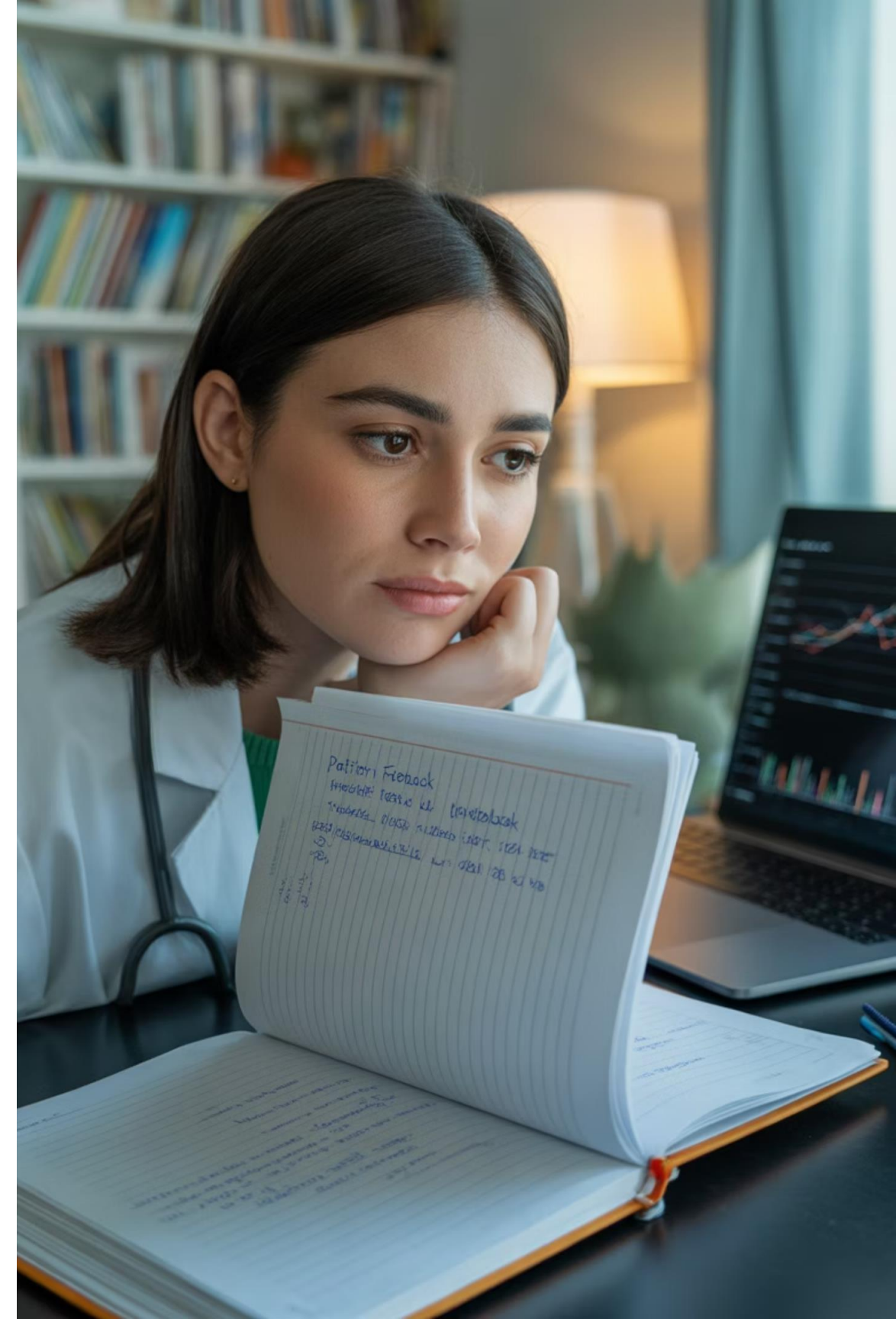
Ability to take risks without fear of humiliation

How do you view feedback?

The Emotional Impact of Feedback

The exact feedback message may fade...

But the **emotional response** and how it made made the recipient **feel** tends to be more memorable

What is feedback

"Process whereby learners obtain information about their work in order to appreciate the similarities and differences between the appropriate standards for any given work and the qualities of the work itself, in order to generate improved work."

Boud D and Molloy E. *What is the Problem with Feedback? Feedback in Higher and Professional Education: Understanding it and Doing it Well.* London: Routledge: 2013:1-10

Throw Away the Feedback Sandwich
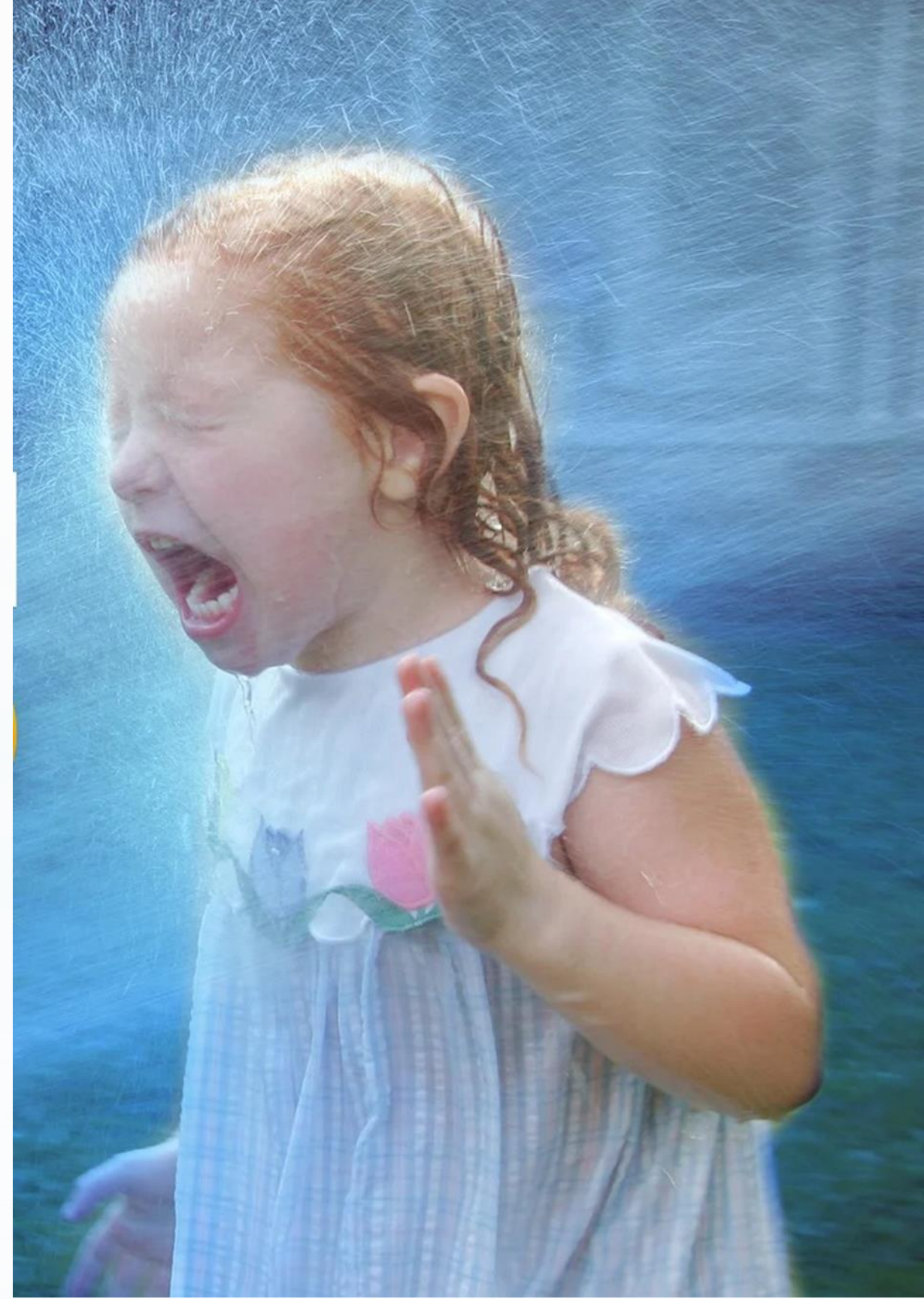
Secret of Feedback

Ask how they think it went

Focus on Priority Points

Not a laundry list

⚠ Too many corrections can feel like an attack

Choose 1-2 high-yield improvement opportunities

Professionalism

Feedback Fog Phrases

Separate Coaching from Evaluation

Coaching

Evaluation

And so they judged everything.

Start With Curiosity, Not Not Assumptions

Ask for context and intent before making judgments

> ""I noticed you didn't answer the attending's question question earlier. I'm curious about what was happening happening for you in that moment."

BE CURIOUS
NOT JUDGMENTAL

Understanding the Why Before You Get to the How

Basic Assumptions

Everyone is here because they are intelligent, caring, and motivated adult learners who want to learn and become even better

Everyone comes to work with the best intentions

Even mistakes are "intentionally rational"

Debriefing through Good Judgment

Shares observations, opinions, and judgments based on expertise

Does not assume a stance of certainty or righteousness

Does use curiosity, respect, and one's own unique style to explore the basis of performance

Advocacy Inquiry

THE ADVOCACY-INQUIRY APPROACH

3 statements to uncover why a learner may be struggling

1

I SAW...

Advocacy – first person observation

2

I THINK...

Insert good judgment

3

I'M CURIOUS...

Inquiry into rationale driving learner's actions

ALiEM Academic Life in Emergency Medicine

https://youtu.be/Z9C0yVgTcbs

What if Learner 'Stumbling' Was the Norm?
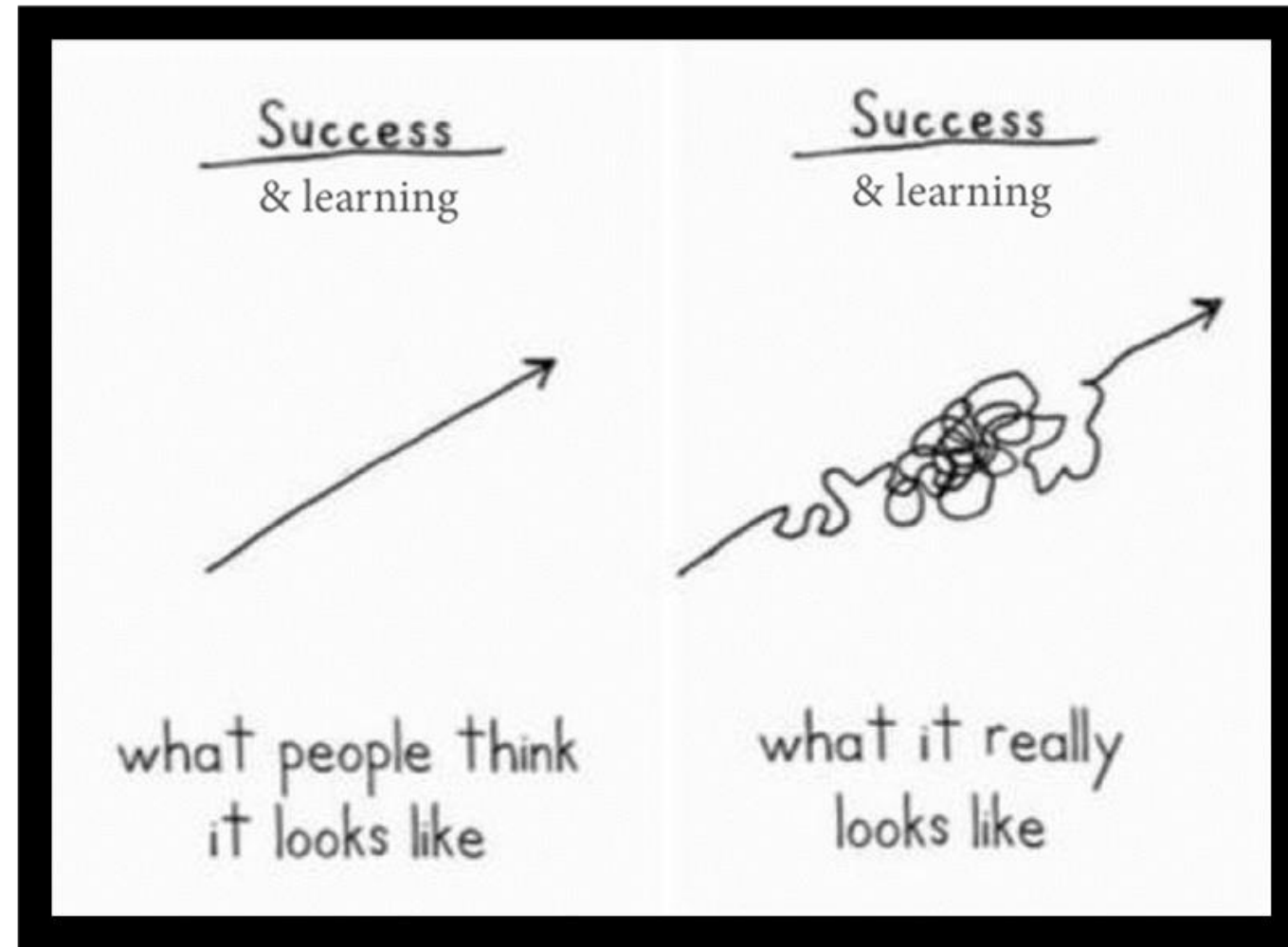
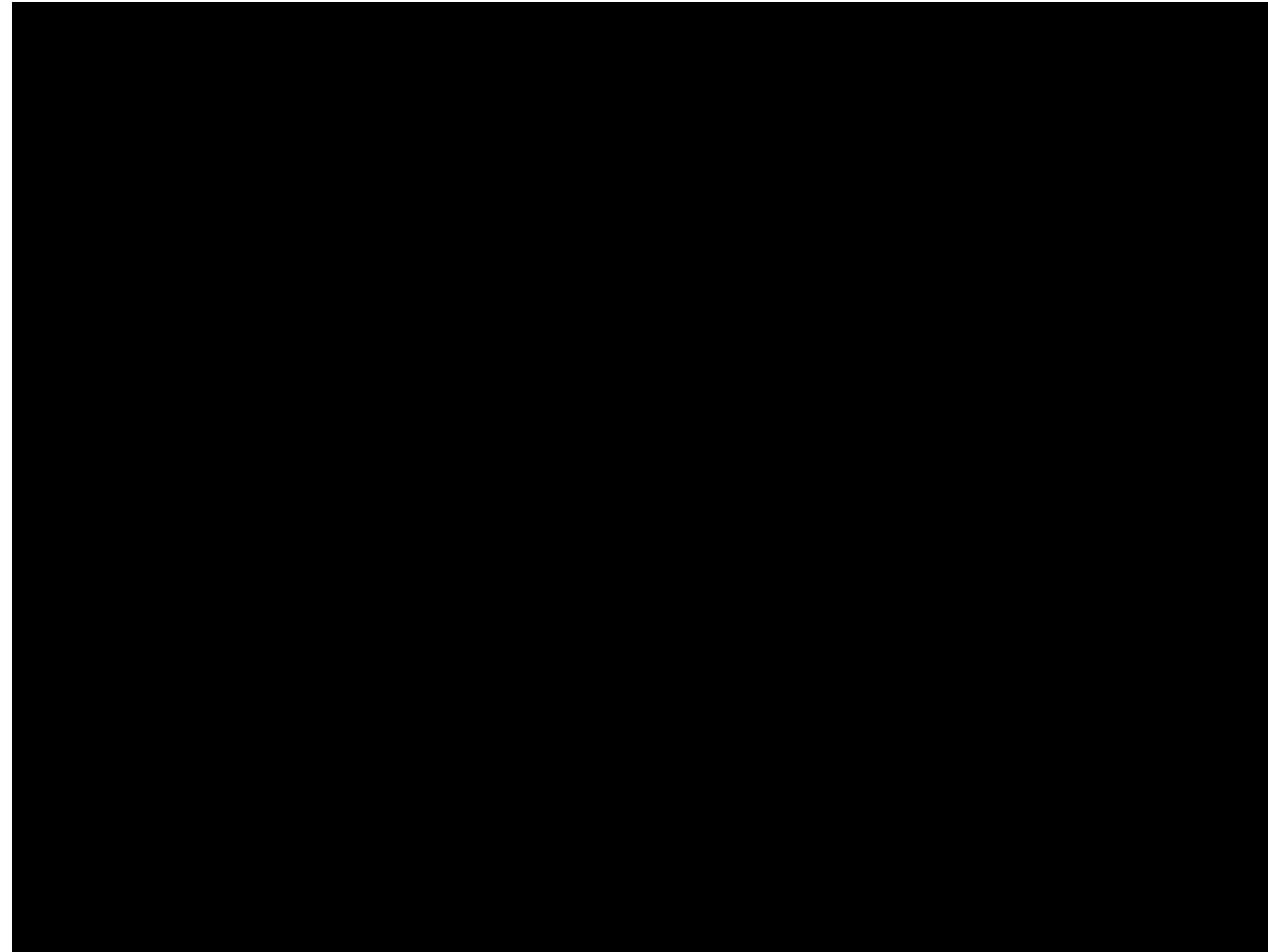# Remember Their Humanity

"Please recognize that I am doing my absolute best and striving to become better every day."
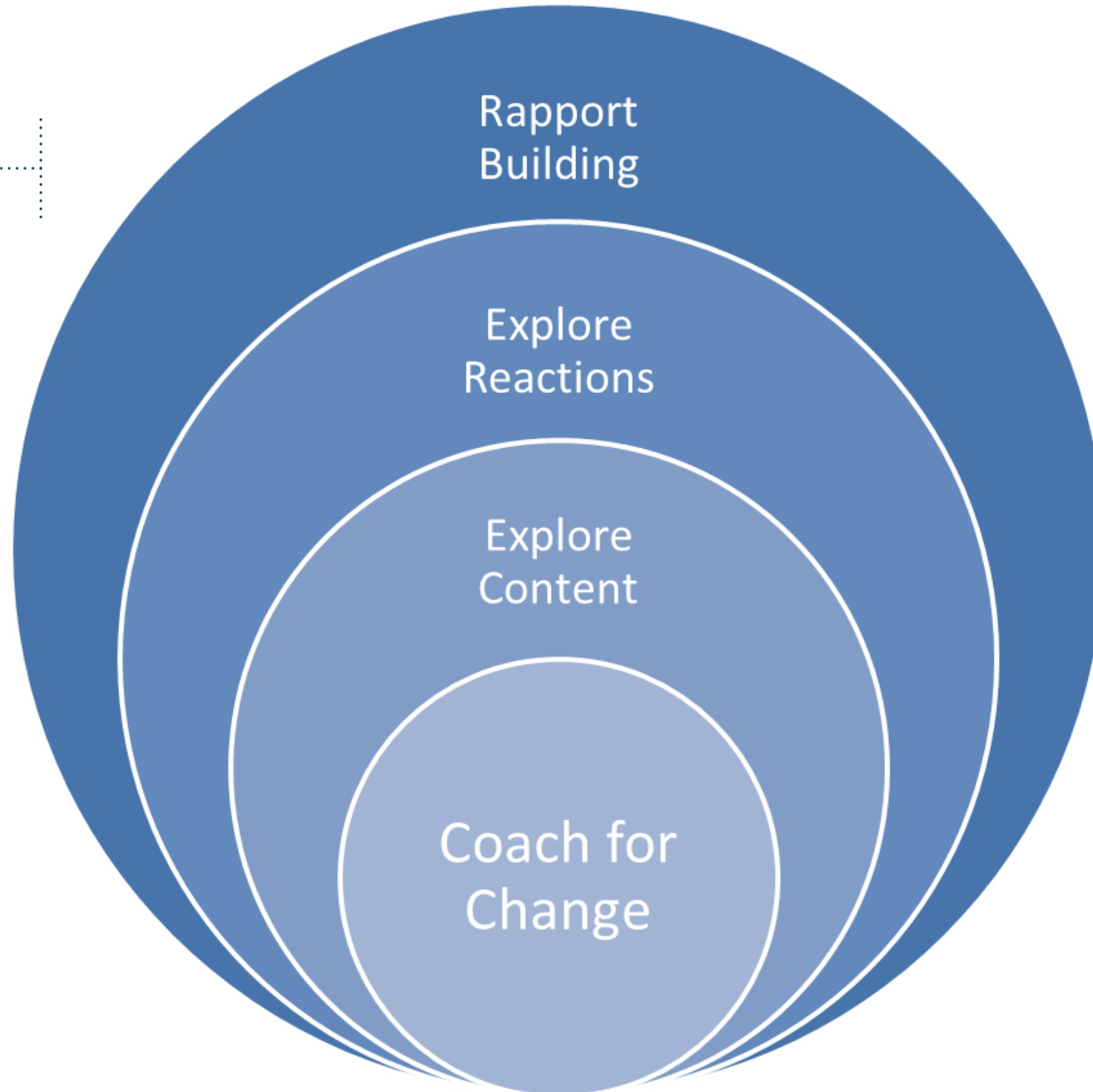
- A learner

When the Situation is Emotionally Charged

Am I ready to listen, ask questions, and accept that I may not fully understand the issue?

Can I hold you accountable without shaming or blaming you?

Can I model the vulnerability and openness that I expect to see from you?

R2C2 Model: Facilitated Reflective Feedback

Sargeant J. et al. https://www.mededportal.org/publication/10387/

A — ASK FOR SELF-ASSESSMENT

Seek self-assessment:

Ask questions like:
- *How do you think that went? What went well?*
- *What didn't go well?*
- *What might you do differently the next time?*
- *What are you trying to work on?*
- *What feedback would be helpful?*

D — DISCUSS

Continue the discussion:
- Reflect on self-assessment.
- Describe what you observed.
- Provide positive and constructive feedback.
- Be specific.
- Prioritize 2-3 points.

A — ASK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Explore the individual's understanding:
- *Thoughts on what was discussed?*
- *Anything we discussed that doesn't make sense to you?*
- *What remains unclear?*
- *Anything that struck you as something to focus on?*

PT — PLAN TOGETHER

Make a plan:
- Coach for change.
- Create an action plan together.

Ask questions like:
- *If there was one thing you would work on immediately, what would it be?*
- *What might you do to work on this?*
- *Here are my ideas for how you can work on this…*

FEEDBACK

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Summary

- **Mistreatment Cues Are Often Subtle:** Poor word choice, public exposure, or assumptions of intent can harm safety even without overt hostility.

- **Psychological Safety Requires Partnership:** Invite the learner's voice, acknowledge their perspective, and build feedback into a two-way conversation.

- **ADAPT Can Be Flexible:** Signposting, asking first, and co-developing an action plan work in both private and group settings.

- **Impact > Intent:** Even feedback meant to help can harm if the environment, tone, or delivery isn't carefully considered.

Summary

- Approach training and your trainees with a growth mindset
- Telling someone how to fix the problem (advice) is often the wrong approach
- Catch the learner doing things well more times than correcting them (4:1)
- Traditional feedback models may not work well in isolation
  - > Instead, couple these techniques with communication intended to enhance trust such as advocacy inquiry (I saw, I think, I'm curious)
- Establishing rapport and creating a feedback conversation supports and guides progressive learner competence
- Be the change you want to see – role model feedback seeking

Wiki on Feedback at
https://feedback.pbworks.com