MANAGING NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

Sommario

Starting point

"I know the technique of administering negative feedback, Seven Step, seems good, it worked on me, but with my people doesn't not work: already at the third Step it is very difficult to get an answer, at the fifth they remain there, dumb, and do not move.

I wait a bit, we never have much time, always under pressure, and so I go straight to the point and tell him what is best to do. "

Here is our first case: this is, with few adjustments, the narration that a department manager does to his boss, about the management of negative feedback, about the adoption of a specific technique, called Seven Step.

Nothing new, the mentioned technique has been in the public domain for several decades, perhaps under different names, essentially it is a protocol of managerial intervention that provides a sequence of actions, relatively specific, aimed at giving negative feedback to employees and to activate a concrete improvement plan.

The steps to which the narrator refers are finalized respectively, the first, to share a solid reason behind the negative feedback, which is all the more important as the more negative feedback relates to a specific behavior of the collaborator, for example the directly observed non-use of the prescribed personal protective equipment, the fifth to obtain from the collaborator a proposal, an action plan that generates the expected result.

The manager to whom the narration has been addressed has engaged in a considerable coaching work with his collaborator, so the department manager rightly feels authorized to turn to him to solve the problem, and his boss, after asking some clarifications, tells his conclusion:

"You know the technique, you have not completely focused the pauses, the silences and the listening: they are essential steps to get people to share and make proposals. On the third step you need to be very careful, the good reason that motivates and supports the negative feedback must be good and valid for them, not just for you."

The boss of the manager is a manager, frequently managers are practical and direct people, and ours does not seem to be different: the indications that it provides are entirely shareable, even if we do not have the details that our manager-coach has obtained from his manager-coachee.

Apparently here we have a double case, that of the manager who does not get the expected results from the Seven Step technique, and that of the Manager-Coach who did not get completely, from his Manager-Coachee, the expected learning and change of behavior: it has instead obtained a negative feedback on the use of the negative feedback management protocol.

We know the technique in question, let's start from the first case, in short our manager tells us: I do not waste time to share obvious reasons, I go to the point, I tell him what is NOT good and what is best to do.

Apparently we are quite far from Helping Leadership, although with a bit of goodwill we can consider "the good instructions" given by the leader as a form of help, if only to keep away from the reproach of the chief himself, basically just do as he says. Why else? Because if not he keeps on reproaching, and maybe, if you keep bothering him, try to throw you out… you do not want to jeopardize the job and salary, do you?!?

We do not know whether this exercise of command obtains, locally, the desired result, and to what extent, and certainly it would be interesting to have the data: we know two things, of some importance. The first is that this form of leadership ceases at the moment when the boss has no more sanctioning power: If its reproaches have no practical effect, listening falls to zero.

The second is that we intercept only a small part of what the other, the collaborator, needs, leaving the rest inactive, and even risking to feed on conflicting behaviors, more or less masked or hidden.

It is said, and generally there is unanimous consensus on this, that no one likes to be commanded, no one likes to obey: as systemics, we now mean this opposition as congruent effect of other, of the need to constantly find evidence of our good operating, which takes the form of the need to keep aligned our real environment and our virtual environment, of the need to use our neural codes, emotional and thought, our ones, not those of someone else.

Unless the other is a Helper that we have independently and freely acknowledged as such (and this is the fruit of our codes), what comes from the other is not ours, and does not help to meet our needs: so we obey to avoid sanctions, which is wise and prudent , but hardly the idea of the other becomes ours, hardly the commitment to realize it our moment of satisfaction, sought, wanted, hardly we will put into play our best solutions, hardly we will spontaneously propose, maybe too much, alternatives and projects.

What about the Boss? The leader? The one hearing his boss telling him he has not focused silence and listening, he has not payed attention to the quality of the reason of the reprimand, negative feedback? The one who has to do with people who don't do what they have to, or do what they mustn't?

Of course he too, same needs of all: technically, the collaborators are helpers of their leader, they are here, paid to help to realize the collimation of real and virtual of the boss, virtual which tallies (or should) with the virtual of its boss, on up to who is top of the hierarchical pyramid.

The negative feedback to the employee is a ring of a chain that does not start when the collaborator does what he must not or does not do what he must, begins, for our manager, with the emerging of evidence that, he, the boss, has failed: his codes have not been effective enough to prevent unsatisfactory results, not achieving the collimation between the objective (virtual environment configuration) and the result (real environment configuration).

The boss is struggling with negative feedback that concerns the effectiveness of his own codes, emotional, operational, of symbolic thought, and its nociceptive system indicates peremptorily that we are not there, that there is danger, there are threats to its survival.

It is necessary to find an adequate solution to this, this is the first problem to solve: our boss may consider different solutions, from denying that the event is significant (and well, for once he did not wear the PPE!, how hard can it be!), to move the focus on the collaborator (hammerhead, he does not understand, it's him that does not work, my codes are great!), to resume the matter from its real beginning.

Namely from the evidence that he, the boss, has NOT been acknowledged as a Helper by his collaborator, and see what can be done to change the situation.

Ratio, Plan, Support

The Seven Step technique can be considered a way to try to obtain from the collaborator the recognition of Helper: its use however requires that those who use it are authentically interested and able to constitute the other as a subject, aware of the complex systemic configuration of any of our similar.

To give a negative feedback is to open a crisis, no point beating about the bush.

Guiding, controlling, going with the crossing of the crisis is, for the boss, a valuable opportunity to get what he needs most, namely the acknowledgement of Helper by the collaborator: obtaining this

recognition is the strategic goal of every day , of any action involving the action or the thought of the collaborator.

Without forgetting that the boss himself is struggling with a negative feedback to solve: which of my codes, evidently, did not work? How come my collaborator derailed, despite my previous speeches? This is an extremely difficult point, and it is not by chance that very very often it is simply skipped, ignored: the lack is on the part of the collaborator, it is he, or she, to have to correct, I am fine.

But the two operations are distinct, and must be kept separate: one operation is the review of my conduct, of my codes, and I will have to find the appropriate way to put it in place, maybe with a coach, why not, or with an experienced colleague, a mentor, a sen-pai.

Another operation is to have to do with my collaborator at this turning point, where, technically, it is my collaborator to have done what he was not supposed to, he used his codes obtaining an unsatisfactory result.

Of course he knows, and like me he also has to do with the need to find a suitable solution, which turns off the alarm launched by its nociceptive system; solution that must take into account not only the micro-performance (wearing/not wearing the PPE), but also the evolution of the interaction with me, his boss, with colleagues, with his collaborators and more.

Three are the main things to do, according to the Seven Step technique, they also make sense for us systemics: 1) make explicit and shared the good reason that makes the obtained result unacceptable, 2) get from the collaborator the action plan, his/her proposals, 3) help to make them happen

What is a good reason, an armored reason, that neither I nor my collaborator can dispute? Better the boss that gives the negative feedback identifies it before taking the field, we need to prepare properly... in the case of unworn PPE is all too easy, the armored reason is that health, integrity, if not the life of the collaborator are at stake.

What proposals will our collaborator ever make? We don't know, it could just grumble, OK, from now on I always use it, also to help others do the same... But it could also propose lowering the temperature of the workplace by two degrees, so that the sweat under the helmet is not excessive, that it does not get on the eyes, clouding the sight and taking the risk of losing a hand. In any case, it is crucial that the collaborator put his codes into play.

What means Help for the realization? All we can do, accepting the possibility that this can prove extremely challenging, that we will encounter obstacles difficult to overcome (convince them, those of the budget, to spend more to better air the workplace), a battle that we will fight alongside the collaborator, while remaining loyal servants of the house.

But there, in the moment of the crossing, the help is to give support to the idea of the collaborator, and to provide positive feedback on the new codes to use, not so much and not only with the words, but with our contentment for having crossed honorably the difficulties of the "Negative feedback", and for the good ideas of the collaborator... Of course, it is the emotional system to say it, in the language and with the codes that are its own, better to remember that the emotions can not pretend, the mirror neurons do not fail in distinguishing which emotion is trying the other.

Did we abandon the willing manager-coach, the boss of the boss? Certainly not. His surveys on the technique are acceptable, even for him the point escaped concerns the recognition (authentic) of Helper by the Coachee: it tells you that the technique does not work with its collaborators, namely that your codes do not work, they are not helpful , although he recognizes that they have worked with him.

Repeating, re-specifying the steps of the procedure is not wrong in itself, to develop any skill often repetition is useful: in this case the evidence is more on the part of the emerging, by the Coachee, of the preference accorded to hasty and Interventionist codes, which put in check the steps of the technique.

The defense of our own codes is systemic physiology, they have worked so far, it takes good reasons and valid alternatives to change, integrate or replace them with others, more or less as for the employee dealing with the PPE: in this case, can we use the Seven Step Technique?

In part yes, at least as control checklist: more critical is to work on the defense of former codes, since we have no visibility on the analogue of the armored reason that motivates the coachee to change codes and the coach to help change.

Why should the Coachee modify his codes? And even when authentically it tries (in this case does not seem to have tried a lot), if it fails, what can help the success?

Positive Acknowledgement

That's it? 1) to explain and share the good reason that makes the obtained result not acceptable, 2) to obtain from the collaborator the action plan, his proposal for a solution, 3) help to achieve it.

Unfortunately no.

These three actions help, improve the chances of getting a proper solution to the problem on time, go in the direction of getting the Helper acknowledgement, but they are not enough, they do not necessarily get the acknowledgement we need.

What else, then? The negative feedback, for any collaborator, and for any boss, is framed in more than one story, even when the two have just met, in the history of the collaborator and in the history of the boss; and if it's been a while since they collaborate, of course also in the history of their interaction, in the stories that each of the two brings along the interaction with each other.

Let's take the simplest case, the two have just started to collaborate, and let's make it a little harder: the collaborator is not a foreman of a heavy industry manufacture department, is a millennial, valuable resource assigned by very little, new collaborator of your high-tech industry department, he has arrived late at the meeting and with his piece of work definitely slapdash, so delaying and complicating the work of the entire team.

Nothing to report in the previous few days, on the other hand it just arrived, the interactions were necessarily few: but we know that the constitution of the other is a process that activates immediately, and uses what each finds in one's own history, pieces and characters of one's own Ego system, similarities and resonances with other significant persons previously encountered, and, of course, "knowledge", dislikes and sympathies that can even come from the genetic code.

Our millennial, of course, from interaction with others, with new colleagues, has collected material about his new boss, tales, gossip, or even maybe just hints, nuances, micro-reactions, maybe even by others, before coming to us. And each collected item makes the Helper's budget, assets, liabilities, costs and revenues...

The same for our manager, who diligently prepares for administering the negative feedback, using the Seven Step technique.

In the technique is expected an extremely interesting step, and not easy to execute, just the first: positive acknowledgement. Which means that in the first moments of the interview the manager must commit himself to produce signals, signs and evidence that, unequivocally, make crystal clear to the collaborator that there is nothing personal, that there is esteem and trust, that the collaborator is not the problem to be addressed, but that there is a problem to deal with and solve together.

Ideally it is easy, it is the old and very useful separate-person-and-problem, people are never the problem, only some behaviours, observable and describable behaviours can be.

In practice it is another story, even for experienced and well trained managers. The most difficult point of this initial step is the contribution of our emotional system, from the primary emotional codes, simple and very effective: oh boy, arrived late, with a slapdash job, we risk being late with the delivery and all the team will have to put their hands again on their piece, like hell I reserve the "positive acknowledgement", this guy is a threat to me and the team.

The rip-off are the mirror neurons, they record mechanically, relentlessly, the emotion that is there, not the one we have in our mind, and so the collaborator knows whether the "positive acknowledgement" is true or fake.

To be precise, its mirror neurons know it: what the collaborator does about what it knows is another story. Therefore it is not said that it does not take for good a simulation, not even that it doesn't reject a genuine positive acknowledgement... during the exercises prepared to train on this step, there are many who immediately comment: here the gimmick, it begins with the caresses and ends up with the catch.

The history asks and gets its tribute, changing it is not a short or easy thing. The point remains: do we try to change or renounce? To exercise the Helping Leadership we must try, knowing what we are doing, at every step.

Is the emotional system a problem?

Yes, the emotional system, and its codes, is a problem, a problem to solve, a question to answer: we can not exclude it, no human can, and then it is considerably useful in many situations, even being able the damage would be greater than the gain.

As we have seen previously (see emotions and emotional codes) it is a system which integrates other systems outputs, sensorial, motorial, directing (proficeptive) and alarm (nociceptive): for our manager the alarm goes off when the collaborator did what he had not and did not do what he had to.

More precisely, our manager encounters a significant difference between what he finds, most likely, in his virtual environment (the collaborator arrives on time, the collaborator diligently makes its part) and what he finds in his real environment.

For our emotional system this is not good, a gap is a threat, until proven otherwise, so it triggers the alarm, prompting us to act immediately to align things: what we find in our virtual environment is too different from what we find in our real environment, alarm! There something threatening in the real environment, and it needs to be neutralized, or our systems (operational thinking, symbolic thinking) are not working properly, which is even worse.

The alarm is triggered, pushing us to act immediately to align things: if we function correctly, the alarm must be triggered. If it doesn't click we have another problem, we'll take care of it again.

Let's remember that when we say alarm, transmitted by the nociceptive system, we are dealing with a physical, personal suffering, and not with a siren that sounds somewhere: this type of alarm is immediately touching us, directly and very effectively.

The emotional system predisposes us to immediate action, immediately, every moment is a matter of life or death: the old code to manage the threat is fly or fight, simple and direct... and with this the positive acknowledgement goes out the window.

We can endure, temporarily, our pain, to have time to fix things, but not for long: ignore the alarm? Impossible, and moreover not advisable. Inhibit fly-fight code? Possible. In any case the emotional report remains, and just a trace of anxiety (variant of the primary emotion called fear), or of annoyance (variant of primary anger) can be enough to direct our collaborator's emotional system. Positive acknowledgement? Impossible.

So the Seven Step technique blows up, the Helping Leadership goes down to the ground, what are you talking about, "Helper"!

How do we get out? Any effective and technically viable solution requires that we know what we are dealing with, and now at least we know a little more: and then that we have some idea of how to deal with it. A viable way is called Postulate of the Best

The Silence

Having conquered the Postulate of the Best, (everyone can only do his best in every moment of his life) the road should now be downhill, the most is done.

The question now is: what can we do, and how, in order to be able to obtain that the other, a complex system like us, self-determined and autopoietic like us, does what is good for us too.

And while we do this, also obtaining the acknowledgement of Helper from the other, in order to power his/her "route stabilizer", we constituting for the other guide and reliable reference, at least in the limited area of the things we do together, also and above all when we are not physically in his/her company ...

We have conquered the most difficult and important thing, to set the emotional interaction base, now we are able to govern it: the other is doing its best, working hard, it is impossible to be angry at the other for this ... and then?

The Seven Step technique can work, once we have achieved the Postulate of the Best ... after the initial and immediate positive acknowledgement, then straight to the point: in a few words, simple and well chosen, indicate what is not acceptable, and then stop, say no more, think of nothing else, do nothing else, stand still, let's see what the other person does.

Because the other will do something, in its virtual environment its systems work at full capacity, in the real environment, shared with us, it can remain still and silent, overthrow the dozens of reasons, justifications for its actions: in general terms, the other is now tackling with the alarm that went off due to its failure to function properly, and can deal with it in many ways.

What part we have in what is happening to him now, is one of the things that the other person, whoever he/she is, must necessarily answer: he/she can be so agitated and worried that doesn't even notice the emotional base we are on, he/she can read every detail of the real environment as a threat, and react accordingly.

Time is needed, the other needs time, and it helps if we stay still, we do not put other things into play, we stand still and wait, aware of how disquieting and hitting our silence, our quiet can be perceived... and how much this quiet, this silence pushes the other to do something, even increasing the level of agitation.

It is a calculated risk, at least the first time we use this "technique", the other still does not know which way we will follow, and, unless they are expert on the subject, not even imagine that there may be more than one way to unravel this type of skein: the basic technical scheme is applicable to seven different classic "problems" of managing the interaction with collaborators, and after some executions, the other will know from the very beginning where this does take us, and how.

Not the first time, obviously, an occasion that requires particularly careful preparation on our part.

We remain in patient observation for as long as necessary, necessary to the other to complete the first elaboration, once this was called "listening", or "active listening", but patient observation is better.

Patient observation includes listening, of the other and of ourselves, of our voices , includes the observation of physical actions, postures, gestures: the key point is to stand still, to maintain the emotional position allowed by the postulate of the best, whatever comes from the other is the fruit of its best.

Before activating the next step, it is necessary to wait until the other has finished its first processing of what is happening.

How do we understand when the other has finished his first elaboration of what is happening?

Sometimes it's easy, the other immediately begins to comment, object, justify, rail, and after a while stops, is silent: not that the elaboration of the other necessarily ceases when he/she stops telling us how things have been and are, but his/her silence generally indicates that the counterattack is sufficient for the moment.

Our silence, immediately following the brief and simple indication of what is not acceptable (attention, only of what, not of why), is not a question, it is silence, we have not asked to give an explanation and an account, we simply stayed in silence.

But that silence is a question, mute, formulated in a not too precise way, and perhaps we are not even the ones who posed it, but life itself: the other is told that what he/she has done is unacceptable, behind the unacceptability lies a threat, in the real environment maybe, perhaps a malfunction of its systems, or inadequate neural codes ... it is necessary to respond to the threat.

And he/she will do his/her best to respond adequately, while we remain still, in patient observation.

Then he/she is silent. And even that silence is a question, mute, maybe not even addressed to us, we cannot know for sure, we have no direct and total access to their virtual environments ... here, we can try to move the third step, which concerns the armored reason that makes unacceptable what we declared unacceptable.

To put it in romantic terms, this is the heart of the technique: our intent is, authentically, to protect our interlocutor from threats to its survival, to its success, aiming to modify the code that the other has used to identify what action to take and that, although fruit of its best, has produced an unacceptable result.

Sometimes it is much less easy, the flow of the words of the other seems unstoppable, infinite, or worse, to our silence the other responds with an impenetrable silence, not a gesture, not a motion, not a reaction of the face.

The seemingly endless flow must be tolerated. And how do we get along with mutism?

I do not know. I wait a bit, even a minute (and it's very long, try it), before I move ... and then I try to ask: what do you think?It generally works. Sometimes not, the impenetrable silence continues. In that case, how can we manage?

Again, I don't know, I still wait, even a minute (in my opinion, prolonging the silence beyond a minute risks turning the action into a challenge, we don't need it), and then I try to say something about silence, about its silence, like, we have a problem and you remain very quiet, really quiet... how come?

Inside the silence of the other, in response to our silence, there can be anything.

It is impossible to indicate, here or elsewhere, all the configurations that can be produced, and the punctual way to deal with each of them: we need to be able to arrive together to identify and share the good armored reason that makes unacceptable what we declared unacceptable, and that necessarily must be something that threatens the survival and success of the other.

How we get there, the emotional set we maintain, what we identify and share with each other are the first important ingredients that can allow the other to acknowledge us as a Helpers, and willingly accept our guide.

How long does it take to do this? A few minutes, the first few times ... and then less and less.

Is it worth it?

What do you propose…

Identifying and sharing a good reason, armored, the best proof that we can find of our authentic intent to protect our interlocutor from threats to its survival, to its success: this is the heart of the technique, and notoriously without our heart we can't move a step.

And if we do not find it, or if it is not shared? Then we have another problem, definitely more serious and urgent than giving negative feedback: we are on the limit of our possibility to manage, at the limit of the termination of the employment relationship.

The collaborator may perhaps continue to do his part, more or less, not following our guide, but on his own, perhaps under the pressure of something else, of the temporary fear of being left without a salary: the centrality of the lack of sharing remains fundamental. Yes, the fundamentals on which work together is based.

The step concerning the identification and sharing of good reason, armored, which makes the result that we have declared unacceptable, is immediately a sort of review of the fundamentals, a crucial verification of the sharing of at least one of the fundamentals on which, so far, our work together is based.

And if we see that the verification has a negative outcome, then it is much better to deal with it, and immediately: perhaps something has recently changed in the framework of the collaborator, and we do not know it yet, better to update, get back in phase and see what can be done ... if something can be done.

In my long experience, managers do not deal with fundamentals, they take them for granted, it is obvious that we all share the fundamentals of work together: we work together, don't we? this is the concrete proof, that's all we need.

And when asked what are the fundamentals of each collaborator, how is the mix of motivations of each collaborator, that we know is certainly different and unique for each collaborator, distinctive of each collaborator, in the best of cases, we get the description of the mix of the manager's motivations.

That the manager assumes to be, of course, the only valid mix, and that everyone obviously shares, because everyone functions, or must function, like the manager: so, where is the problem?

The problem is that the reduction to a single mix, to a single type, only works sometimes, it is a statistical fact, and it goes in the opposite direction to generating value through diversity: inadequate management of diversity, which for us is more exactly the inadequate management of the interaction with the Other as a unique and unrepeatable subject, presents prohibitive accounts and costs.

Not that the theme of diversity is of today, there has always been the question of how to deal with it: gender, generation, ethnic diversity have always been present, globalization and the lengthening of human life have only accentuated and made more evident that it is necessary to offer better answers than all-as-me, on pain of a poor overall performance and the abandonment of the best resources.

The heart is fine, but the head is also needed to succeed: we have identified and shared the good, armored reason, now what do we do?

The unsatisfactory result remains, and there remains the need to obtain satisfactory results with the best possible continuity: in short, the task remains of activating or generating the neural code, the neurograms that can guide those behaviors, those actions that obtain satisfactory results.

The technique indicates to formulate the request for proposals, plans, carefully avoiding giving instructions and suggesting solutions, and it is an excellent indication, systemically founded and very valid.

Our task, as a manager, as a guide, as a leader, is to help the collaborator generating those codes that will produce the expected results, reversing dangers and threats, recognizing him as a autopoietic subject, demonstrating esteem and trust: the last thing to doing is giving instructions, valid only when we are absolutely sure that the collaborator will not know how to get by otherwise, and, above all, when there is not enough time to learn.

Which happens very rarely, since our employees know their job and know how to solve the issues that concern them, something that every manager knows perfectly well. We might ask why, then, in 90% of cases, managers, like the one in the first case examined, provide orders and instructions, are they all stupid?

Of course not, in the hundreds, thousands of cases that I have dealt with, the first factor is the drive to see what they have in mind in the way they would realize it, a thrust that supports the Sameness Principle, which we have already met, an archaic code that has generated excellent fruits in the past, and that still continues to produce them.

So instead of doing their job, supervisors, managers, directors, end up doing the job of the collaborator; and so, instead of guiding and supporting, in the virtual environment they are sharing with the collaborator, they share (or try to share) their codes, their neurograms with the collaborator, since for each of us the best code is ours.

So for good, no doubt ... the point is whether and how effective this is, and the field tests are indisputable: it is not effective, nor efficient in the vast majority of cases.

Next to the pressure aimed at satisfying the Principle of Similarity, we also find the difficulties to constitute the Other as a Subject, to use the resources of our Ego system with wisdom and balance.

What do you propose? What is your plan? How do you think we can ...

As I said, the technique has been known for a long time, and I don't know, honestly, who the real author is, I found it following a TTT, training the trainers, thirty years ago, I doubt that who presented it be the "inventor", but it was so obvious that it was the right thing to do (well before I dealt with emotions and systems) it has since become a pillar of my work.

Now we know quite well the reasons, and above all the obstacles to its rich and effective use: the first we saw it in the positive acknowledgement, the activation of the friend / enemy primary code, the second is the primary systemic protection code that triggers the drive to satisfy the Sameness Principle, the third is the primary code that intervenes in the constitution of the Other as a Subject.

All very useful codes, and that at the right time and in the right place continue to produce excellent results, but no longer in the advanced management of interaction with collaborators that is required today of supervisors, managers, managers, of the leaders of our time.

So, the step remains: what do you propose?

Support, follow-through follow-up

Helping takes substance in the positive acknowledgement, in identifying and sharing a good reason, in asking for proposals: even if everything happens in the real environment, it manifests itself in the real environment, identifying and sharing good reason and proposals call into play unseen processes that happen in the virtual environment.

Actions and words are deployed with the aim of tuning, sharing, guessing, understanding and knowing what each one finds and does in its virtual environment, inaccessible to others, all this constantly aimed at identifying the best action possible for our survival, for our success: the motivational foot of asking for proposals is in the need to harmonize virtual and real engaging as much as possible the codes, the neurograms of the collaborator.

Both those which immediately respond to the need for action, and those who generate or refit the codes that will then guide the action: nothing new, each one more easily supports own ideas and solutions than those of others, but knowing why (and now we know a little bit) and how this happens and can be sustained is of greater help.

It helps to understand and dose the meaning and impact of giving orders, instructions, of providing what we think are the solutions, the systemic difficulties of obedience: literally, no one can obey anyone else but oneself. When we watch someone obey (apparently) someone else, we now know that we are only looking at the effects of what this someone has found to deal, among other things, with that someone else, always and only of own's best.

He or she obeys oneself, uses own's codes: of course, what else can they do, to deal with their interlocutor, and executes the received order if and only if their own elaboration confirms that that is the best action possible.

The folds of motivation interest us and concern us: in appearance the observable punctual behavior can also be very similar, it is very useful for us to understand and know if the frame in which the timely behavior is inscribed is the one in which our collaborator acts according to codes shared with us, in which we are Helper, or the one in which we are not Helper, but a problem to be solved.

Why? I'd rather take the risk of boring you than of avoiding it making explicit the answer: because we know that this is a predictor of how our collaborator will act, while tackling with the complexity of the things he or she has and will have to do.

If we are Helper for them, their decisions and actions will be consistent with the success of a shared plan, of a shared project.

If we are not Helper, all the other possibilities are open, from sabotage of which evidence can NOT be produced in any human tribunal, to exploiting all the elements to get rid of the problem "boss", which in the organizations has many ways to be made.

Our chances of producing concrete evidence of being Helper do not end at the step of requesting proposals, there are a couple of other useful actions that we can do, the first, in succession, is to help the transition from virtual to real: the proposal, our collaborator's plan might (typically should) need our help in the real environment.

Opening corridors and organizational doors, access to data and information, to resources that we can procure: we help to realize, who governs, manages and implements the plan is and remains the collaborator.

Or help in the development of the plan, identifying flaws (and asking for solutions and proposals, again and again), signaling obstacles not visible to the collaborator (and asking for solutions and proposals, again and again).

And help to keep clear and firm the terms, the boundaries, old things but not expired: what, who, how, where and when. Trivial? Just no, as everyone can witness, our virtual environment is swirling and multifaceted, giving it stability and being able to use it to generate the action of success is neither easy nor trivial.

We are almost at the end, of this not short treatment of the case of negative feedback and the indication of the actions useful to constitute us as Helper, in short: follow through and follow up.

We prove that we are Helper when we follow of the implementation, and at each obstacle we solicit proposals and solutions, then helping in the progressive realization.

We prove that we are Helper by never failing to celebrate the conclusion, the complete execution of what was planned or proposed, explicitly complimenting the success.

And in case of failure?

Alright, of course, I could spare it: in case of failure, of an unsatisfactory result, let's start over, what else?

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I brought up the Seven Step technique, as any technique also this one resolves into what to do and what not to do. It is a technique, and like all techniques it helps to deal with case-type, requiring the performer to adapt the technique to each particular case... and here, over the years, I have seen the performers encountering difficulties.

The main source was the relative lack of a theory, thirty years ago consisting of little more than common sense, and each has its own common sense: now we have access to a theory, if not complete, certainly much more robust and coherent than individual common sense. And the knowledge of the theory allows us to generate the appropriate adaptations with greater ease.

Adaptations specifically of negative feedback management, and much more: the same operational "technical" guidance, which we have examined so far, applies to the management of all interactions with collaborators in which we have to

— Assign goals, even those that are not easy and tend to be unwelcome to the employee
— Say no to a request of our collaborators
— Manage the effects of our mistake
— Appraise and evaluate performances

Adaptations, necessary adjustments, do not require knowledge of the tens, hundreds, thousands of possible variants of the "technical", knowledge useful to address the considerable variability and variance of interaction configurations we deal with, variability and variance inevitably produced by the systemic complexity of the players at play.

Knowledge of the fundamentals of systemics simplifies everything, we have a safe and "simple" guideline to follow to find the variant we need.

Leadership? Just help.