

Video Feedback[©] Training

Video Feedback[©] is a training method, that strengthens your presentation.

After Video Feedback[©] training, you no longer worry about yourself. Your mind is free to concentrate on the subject matter at hand and on the people to whom you are presenting.

You no longer worry about yourself, if you know how you sound and look as you talk and move.

Currently, you do not. You just know how your face looks with your beauty mark on your right cheek in the mirror, as you are brushing your teeth. If you are looking at a photo with your beauty mark on your left cheek, you feel irritated. You know your voice as you hear it through your head while you are talking. But if you hear it played back on an answering machine, it seems awkward, foreign. That is how little you know of your own voice and face.

However, you do know your own hand. Hold your right hand up stretching out three fingers as if to swear to God, and then cross the fingers of your left hand behind your back, as if you were lying. Your hands know how to do that. You do not need to watch them perform this action nor to count your fingers. A perfect image of your hands is represented in your mind, because you grew up watching them play, write or repair your bike.

After playing around with Video Feedback[©] for long enough, you will develop a representation of your voice and face in your mind, so you will always feel sure you know how you sound and look as you are talking and moving.

Video Feedback[©] has different patterns, themes and control modes.

In the first pattern, the group is standing in line next to the camera. Person A steps in front of the camera, talks for 30 seconds and stands back in line. Person B repeats what A said, and goes back in line. C talks. D repeats C. E talks. A repeats E. B talks. So having gone in circle twice, everyone will have talked and repeated once.

In the first control mode, ask everyone: Who do you remember? Whose message do you remember? Only a few will be remembered. Many will be forgotten. People will remember funny lines, emotional expressions, accompanied by supporting gestures. Complex formulas of thorough wisdom get lost and it's a pity. Although the participants all like each other and try to pay attention.

In a second control mode, you watch the video, listen and laugh. The easiest messages will be misunderstood, twisted, misinterpreted or forgotten within the 30 seconds between the speech and the repetition. People repeat half of the message correctly and then they make something up to make it sound more logic and coherent. This way everyone learns, how difficult it is to understand and repeat properly, what someone says. This should encourage everyone to come up with clear and simple messages.

In a second pattern, Person A talks to Person B for a minute or two. B asks A questions to show friendly interest and to better understand. Then B talks to C. C asks questions. Go in a circle. Have everyone talk. First control: Ask what they remember. Second control: Watch the video and talk about who is most convincing.

In a third pattern, A defends a difficult position while being grilled. B asks the toughest questions to destabilize A. Then C interviews B. D interviews C. Go in a circle.

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In a third control mode, every one writes his or their name on a sheet of paper and lays their paper in a line on the table. Everyone receives a set of cards of one colour from a 2 to an Ace. Everyone gives everyone else points by giving them cards face down. Cards 2 through 10 count for 2 through 10 points. Jacks to Aces count for 11 to 14 points. Everyone is asked to give as many points as they want to those speakers, whose messages they remember best. It is secret; the cards are covered. It is up to everyone to judge as fairly or unfairly as the like. There is no general rule. It is as unfair as real life. After everyone has distributed their cards, everyone counts another person's pile of cards and writes the number on the paper. Then count a second pile of cards. So every pile is counted twice. Some results will range by a factor of three. Someone will have received three times as many points as someone else. So the general opinion will appear like someone's presentation were three times as efficient as someone else's.

To spice up torture, they line up according to their points. They step in front of the camera one after another and comment on the points they received. There is no need to do this with professional clients; however, young students may be convinced in this way that a strong presentation makes a difference to others and to them.

Those are patterns and control modes. Now, the themes:

First, your elevator pitch – what do you tell a stranger, colleague or client in 30 seconds about who you are and what you do? We do that in an elevator, at a party or on a plane, talking to the passenger next to us. Reviewing elevator pitches is often awkward and seldom funny. The importance of the situation may bury some in social pressure. You do not learn so much from watching people's mistakes.

This is more to see how self-assured someone has become. So repeating this theme helps to observe progress.

Corporate professionals may talk about the company's key messages, products, services, research, development, accident or crisis. They may give an interview to an aggressive journalist about critical matters involving health, safety and security of employees, customers, consumers or citizens.

A compliment: Say something nice to the next person. "Nice shirt." "Well done." Something, they would believe and enjoy. Do not giggle.

Critical Advice: Tell them something they should change. "Ugly tie." "Dirty shoes." "Bad manners." "Sad face." "Work not well done." Say it in a way, in which they would accept and possibly follow your advice.

An innocent theme: "What do you like to cook?" "What movie did you enjoy lately?" "What fascinates you so much about surfing, running, travelling, eating?" or anything else.

Appraisal: Tell your neighbour, what you like about them. This innocent exercise allows everyone to feel comfortable. So, usually many people are as good as they can be. They are not inhibited. They are free and natural as their imagination develops something they enjoy.

An absurd theme: "Pretend, that only you should be the best to train the national football team." Or – "Run for President. Why are you the one to lead the nation?" Or – "Pretend you have developed this pill you are holding in your hand that can cure something so many people in the world suffer from." Or – "Take this pen in your hand and explain, that this were a wand that could do magic. Then, sell me your wand."

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Or – “Jump! Try to convince your neighbour to sacrifice him or herself for another's benefit. Like: Jump out of this balloon. It's too heavy. Otherwise, we will sink and crash. Jump to save the kids in the balloon.”

This nonsense is precious. As you are developing some absurd reasoning, your language, voice and gestures come along most naturally. You just do not spare the time to pay attention to yourself and how you appear. You are busy making up the story. When you are watching yourself in the video you will learn how good you can sound and look when you are talking, as long as you are so concentrated on the content, and the content is fun. You are looking as good as you possibly can. This implements a very strong and positive image of yourself in your memory. Whenever you present later on, in some different context, you will always remember how you sound and look.

A critical theme: “You are the headmaster of a school. This morning, two boys, Peter and Paul, age 10 and 12 were found dead on the floor in the toilet with needles in their arms and heroine in their blood.

A news camera team surprises you. You only have one first chance to leave a tactful impression. Whatever sounds awkward or nasty will be on air in the evening news. What do you say?”

Or – “You are the mayor of your town. You are driving your official car yourself this morning at ten, through some major street of your town, going with the traffic at 70

km/h, although a speed of only 50 km/h is permitted. Suddenly you see a shadow, hear a crunching noise, step on the brakes, stop the car, open the door, rush out of your car to discover you have just hit a 12-year-old boy running to school. You call the police and ambulance. A TV-team arrives. What do you say?”

This exercise is hilarious. Students make the most awkward mistakes that make them look stupid, helpless, arrogant, irresponsible or whatever. The tricky way out of this situation is to quickly set up a line of short and clear positive messages asserting that a strong and responsible personality acknowledges a mistake and is doing what it takes, to ease the pain, limit the damage, help everyone concerned, and keep it from happening again. Showing leadership in an accident may even support the position of a mayor.

Play all these games, learn from good examples, forget the awkward situations, never dwell on criticism, enjoy trial and error.

Conduct it in such a way that you want to play it over and over again, with or without a trainer.

Then Video Feedback© will lead you to know how you sound and look when you are talking and moving, just like you know who you are.