Feedback in the Moment

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Experience decays. While some experiences stay with us vividly for years, most fade in hours. Rapid feedback matters because it translates experience into learning while the experience is still alive for us. This translates into registering whatever value there might be in the feedback more deeply, and into internalizing the learning more fully.

Feedback in the moment works best if it's practiced as a discipline. One way to do this is to make a habit of a three-part rhythm. First, open up: ask what each person's quick reflections were on the meeting or event that just happened. Then, connect: relate those reflections to a broader theme, such as what different individuals were trying to practice, or a lesson about a particular kind of situation. Finally, resolve: what, if any, implications are there for what people should do. This last piece can be very light – in fact, it *needs* to be when feedback is sufficiently frequent. Often, the best feedback leads to small, simple actions such as "the next time I'm in a meeting with you, I'll watch for…" or "when I write the follow-up note, why don't I try to convey…" or "tonight, I'll spend a few minutes thinking about…"

Occasionally, the moment at hand provides an opportunity to give a broader, more holistic kind of feedback. When that happens, it is generally best to explicitly shift gears: to move into a dialogue that's different in intention and requires a longer commitment of time. Being explicit in this way helps keep the rhythm of brevity of feedback in the moment. Brevity enables regularity, and regularity is the essence of what makes the discipline matter.