

SPARK 021

(Matrix Code: **SPARK021.00** for StartOver.xyz game.)

DISTINCTION: Feedback is gold.

NOTES: When using a map you generally know where you want to go. But no matter how interesting your goal is, and no matter how accurate the map is, before you can use the map you need one more piece of information. Where are you on the map? You cannot use the map until you have an accurate little “x” that says, “YOU ARE HERE.” Without that “x” the map is useless. Where do you get that “x”? From feedback. Without feedback you cannot find your way to the treasures marked on the map. That is why we say *feedback is gold*.

Where do you get feedback? The world is a giant feedback generator. For example: If you said that you would call someone at nine o'clock and you do not call them until five minutes after nine, and then they are in a meeting for the rest of the day and someone else gets the contract with them, that is feedback. Or, if a client calls you and refers a new client to you, that is also feedback.

Each move you make or do not make, every thought you think or avoid thinking, every word you speak or hold silent, every place you put your attention or fail to place your attention has an effect on your environment. Your environment is constantly responding back to you with clear feedback about your every action. You can see the content of that feedback through the state of your health, the quality of your relationships, the condition of your belongings and possessions, the balance in your bank accounts, and the way people interact with you. What you are creating is completely obvious to the world. It is secret only to you if you fail to read the signs.

You can receive the benefit of the world's feedback as soon as you shift your relationship to feedback. The standard understanding is that feedback is negative, critical, judgmental, and destructive. Your new understanding could be that feedback is simply a report of what has happened. The feedback tells you exactly what worked and exactly what did not work. This is extremely useful information if your intention is to improve results and reach your goal. Suddenly feedback is gold because without the “x” on the map you cannot get to the treasure.

If you shift your relationship to feedback so that you recognize its value no matter how unexpected its content, then there is no place you cannot go. The more refined and reliable your feedback system, the more effectively you can function in unknown territories. One of your first jobs as a Possibility Manager is to create an ongoing flood of honest, accurate feedback for yourself. That is the purpose of your Possibility Team.

EXPERIMENTS:

SPARK021.01 Be warned. This is an intense experiment, requiring all of your courage. It is highly recommended to repeat this experiment once a year.

Spend about fifteen minutes making a list of everyone who you have ever been in any kind of conflict with. Add to your list the people who your friends or relatives would consider you to be in conflict with now. Your list may be from ten to thirty people long. (As a side note, if you are not at odds with at least ten people you are probably not taking enough risks in your personal or professional life. Yes, this is feedback.)

Then, during the next week, contact your top ten living enemies either in person, by telephone call, or by hand-written letter (not by email!!!) and ask them to give you direct, honest, confrontive feedback. You may need to provide them with a convincing reason why they should do this for you, why you are suddenly open to hearing from them. Tell them that you recently had a shocking experience. You looked in the mirror and did not recognize the person you saw there. Tell them you want to get a better idea of who you really have been and that you trust them to have some useful ideas for you. Tell them you have been feeling stuck and want to make a deep shift somehow. Tell them that you think they could help you if they are willing. Tell them whatever it takes to get them to give you their feedback in writing or in conversation. Be creative and persistent.

When they start to give you feedback it is crucial that you DO NOT INTERRUPT THEM! Do not ask questions, make comments, or seek explanations. Do not say anything. Just listen. Only listen. Wait and listen. Keep listening. And let what they say to you go way deeper than your Box. If what is said is understood and analyzed by the Box, then you lose, because the Box forgets anything it does not want to hear.

The reason to not ask questions is because often the best feedback you can get is the feedback you do not at first understand. Let the feedback sit in you like a brick. Do not digest the feedback. Instead let the feedback digest you. The digestion process can take months, years sometimes.

The reason to not make comments or give explanations is because, if you are ruthlessly honest with yourself you would admit that anything you say by way of explanation is simply a sly way of justifying and defending yourself. Better to say absolutely nothing or your feedback source will immediately shut up and go away again.

After some time when the speaker is finished with their first thoughts, say, "Thank you." Say nothing else. Pause for quite awhile to let things sink in and reorder. Then say, "Anything else?" Pause some more and listen. When they see that you are not defending yourself or collapsing into self-pity, that you are genuinely open and interested in what they have to say, then the real gold comes out.

Write down what they said to you so that your Box does not "accidentally" forget. Hand write "*thanks for the feedback*" notes to everyone who helps you. Also, observe any changes that occur in your relationship with these people over the following weeks.