

co·wonders



**earning feedback**

# earning feedback

Written by: **Jorge Aguado Sánchez (Co.Wonders)**

## What is it about:

- practicing creative pitching with clarity and confidence
- learning to give and receive feedback, both orally and written
- building safe spaces that foster trust, personal growth and storytelling

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**source:** Jorge Aguado Sánchez, Nancy Duarte,  
David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney.

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**domains:** interpersonal skills, public speaking, leadership  
and critical thinking

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## approach description:

### Pitching

“I got 99 problems but pitching ain't one” - seen in the wall of a pitching academy in the Netherlands.

Pitching is the art of communicating ideas clearly, concisely, and in a way that engages an audience and inspires action. At its deepest, pitching is about grabbing attention, delivering value, and leaving a moment to remember. It is used for many things, from presenting an idea, sharing a vision, or answering a question.

Pitching uses storytelling (check the canvas "story time!" for more info) while prioritising the ideas to frame the message. The idea of this tool is being able to explain complex communications with confidence and engaging the people who are listening to you.

This is not about selling, it is about connecting with people.

A master space on pitching is the TED Talks. This conference brings brilliant people to, in 20 minutes, explain something of their expertise in a very engaging way. Today, their videos are viewed by millions of people worldwide, and the conference takes place almost everywhere in the world.



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Nancy Duarte, a communication expert, helped in shaping the way TED talks are done. We include here five points to practice pitching:

- **start with a hook.** Begin with something that grabs attention, like a question or surprising fact.
- **focus on one big idea.** Keep your pitch centered on a single, memorable concept to avoid confusion.
- **build a story.** Structure your pitch like a story with a beginning, middle, and end to make it engaging.
- **highlight the why.** Explain the importance of your idea and the problem it solves.
- **inspire action.** End with a clear call to action.

## Feedback

We don't know anyone who, deep in their heart, does not have some “butterflies” or “thoughts” at the time of facing a feedback process. It is a challenging moment. Your ideas, dreams and visions are being shared and analysed by others.

To give us a bit of hope, we can read to Graça Machel, Mozambican politician and humanitarian:

*“I am not afraid of criticism, because I know that the path to success is paved with challenges and learning opportunities.”*

Cooperride and Whitney, researchers in organizational behaviour and development, found out that feedbacking is one of the most sensitive processes in communication. When the people give feedback, they tend to be problem-focused. Cooperride and Whitney aimed to shift from problem-focused to strengths-based feedback.

They found four types of feedback:

- **no - destructive feedback.** The idea is said to be bad, without explanation, and will not support the change of behaviour of the receiver.
- **no, because... - negative, constructive feedback.** The idea is said to be bad, to then proceed explaining the correct answer. The typical school process.
- **yes, but... - positive, destructive feedback.** The idea is said to be good, to then explain the issues or negative aspects of it. This is totally not effective.
- **yes, and... - positive, appreciative feedback.** Builds on the idea, emphasizing opportunities for growth and collaboration.



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As the writers M. Krogerus and R. Tschappeler say: Whenever you are about to give feedback, ask yourself: “How can I make this idea better?” rather than “Why is this idea bad?”

Feedback is a powerful tool to grow, but it needs to come at the right time and in the right way. Sharing it in a space of trust and respect can also benefit the outcome. At the end, it is about focusing on what someone did, not who they are (check the non-violent communication canvas for more information).

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## aim of use:

The earning feedback tool is designed to build a supportive environment where individuals can practice their communication and pitching skills while engaging in constructive feedback with others. This canvas empowers participants to build confidence in their ideas and fosters personal growth and critical thinking through open and constructive feedback.

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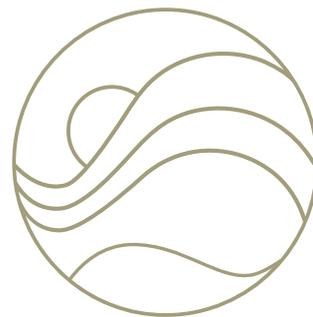
## educational method:

- **Step 1: Introduction to pitching and feedback**

Gather participants together and explain the purpose (aim and objectives) of the workshop: to practice communication, build confidence, learning and giving feedback, and to have a bit of fun!

Share with them some examples of pitches from youtube or a short TED Talk. Write Nancy Duarte's 5 pitching points in a flipchart or put it in a presentation that is visible.

Share also the four types of feedback from Cooperride and Whitney's research. For curiosity, ask participants how often and how comfortable it is for them to give feedback in their day to day.



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- **Step 2: The square of comfort\***

With a yellow tape or cord, create a square on the floor to represent a "comfort zone."

Stand in the middle of the square and gradually step outside, first with just a foot or small part of your body, then further, and finally far, far away. After each step, ask participants if the action looks easy to them.

Once you return to the square, explain that the square symbolizes their "comfort zone". Ask if stepping out now feels easy. Share that the goal of this activity is not to go into a "panic zone" but to step a bit outside their comfort zone, where learning and growth happens without overwhelming discomfort.

- **Step 3: Pitching / Question generation**

Give each participant 2-3 blank papers. Ask them to write down questions they would like to ask their best friend or someone in the street that are interesting or curious (e.g. "what coffee changed your life?" or "what is your biggest dream?").

- **Step 4: Time for pitching!**

Explain the process to the participant:

- each participant picks a random question. They can change it if they want.
- they have 3 minutes to pitch their answer to the group.
- follow step 5: feedback.
- once done they chose the next person. Give them 1-2 minutes to prepare while you collect the feedback.

Encourage them to focus on clarity, engagement, and storytelling.

- **Step 5: Earning feedback**

After each pitch, ask the participant if they are open to earn feedback.

If they agree, the group provides written feedback, ensuring it is constructive and supportive. Once done, collect the feedback and give it to the person.

If they decline feedback, the group will respect their choice.

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- **Step 6: Debriefing**

Invite participants for a reflection by asking:

- How are you feeling?
- How was the process?
- How were the questions for you?
- Did you feel something in you after speaking for 1 minute during the pitching?
- Would you have done something different? And if we would have given you 10 more minutes?
- Feedback givers, how is it to give feedback?
- Feedback takers, how did it feel to earn constructive feedback?
- Why is it important to create a positive feedback culture?
- How can we use this tool in our lives?

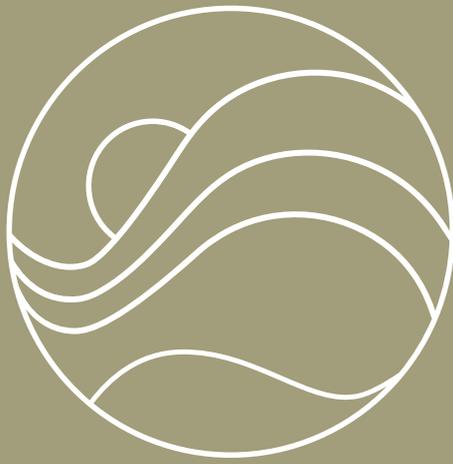
You can end with a reflection on the importance of practicing pitching and feedbacking.

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## read more:

- **Book:** "Pitch Anything: An Innovative Method for Presenting, Persuading, and Winning the Deal". Oren Klaff. McGraw-Hill Education (2011)
- **Book:** "Thanks for the Feedback: The Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well". Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen. Viking Penguin (2014)
- **Tool:** PechaKucha - a pitching tool to present 20 pictures for 20 seconds each.
- **Video:** The secret structure of great talks by Nancy Duarte. TED.





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