

MSME OWNER'S PLAYBOOK · BONUS 11

The B.E.S.T Method for Giving Feedback

Make feedback land, drive change.

WORTH ₹499 — YOURS FREE

For every founder who's given clear, honest feedback and watched absolutely nothing change the following week.



THE PROBLEM

"Understood," He Said. Then Changed Absolutely Nothing.

Vikram sat his ops manager down and calmly, clearly, told him everything he was doing wrong. The manager nodded along, said "understood," and the following week did exactly the same thing again.

You've felt this exact frustration with people you know — the friend whose "clear conversation" with an underperforming employee changed nothing, the cousin who's had the "same talk" three times about the same issue.

The feedback wasn't wrong. It just wasn't built to be acted on. There's a real difference between telling someone what they did wrong and giving them something they can actually do differently tomorrow.



WHY THIS HAPPENS — AND WHO'S REALLY RESPONSIBLE

Feedback Fails for How It's Given, Almost Never for Being Untrue.

This one's on whoever's giving the feedback — every time. Not because the content is wrong, but because the person delivering it controls almost all of whether it actually lands, regardless of how "right" they are.

Three reasons feedback quietly fails to change anything:

It's heard as criticism, not as a specific, actionable ask — the brain hears "you're bad at this" even when that's not what was said.

It's delivered in a way that triggers defensiveness — vague, delayed, or in front of others.

There's no clear picture of what "good" looks like instead — naming the problem without installing the fix.



ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

Let's Actually Get to the Root of It

Run the "5 Whys" on Vikram's feedback that didn't land — the same drill-down you should run on your own last repeated conversation:

THE SYMPTOM	"I give clear feedback, and nothing changes."
	! Why?
WHY #1	The feedback was heard as criticism, not as a specific, actionable ask.
	! Why?
WHY #2	It was delivered in a way that triggered defensiveness — vague, delayed, or public.
	! Why?
WHY #3	There was no clear picture of exactly what good looks like instead.
	! Why?
THE ROOT	Feedback without a concrete replacement behaviour just names the problem — it doesn't install the fix, so the old behaviour is the only one the person actually knows how to do.

Run this on your own repeated conversation. The root is rarely "they don't care." It's almost always that they were never shown the specific alternative.



LIKELY SOLUTIONS — AND WHAT EACH ONE ACTUALLY GETS YOU

Four Ways Owners Try to Fix This

A

Avoid Giving Negative Feedback, Hope It Improves

What you get: No awkward conversations to have.

What it costs you: The problem festers quietly and gets harder — and more expensive — to fix later.

B

Give Feedback Publicly, "To Set an Example"

What you get: Makes a point quickly, in front of everyone.

What it costs you: Humiliation breeds resentment, not change — and damages trust with the whole team watching.

C

Save It All for a Lengthy Annual Review

What you get: Feels thorough and comprehensive.

What it costs you: Too delayed to connect the feedback to the specific behaviour — unmemorable, and often unfair.

D

Use the B.E.S.T Method Within 48 Hours

What you get: Specific, timely feedback people can actually act on immediately.

What it costs you: The discipline to do it in the moment, not "when there's time."

THE RIGHT DEFAULT FOR FEEDBACK THAT ACTUALLY CHANGES BEHAVIOUR



THE RECOMMENDED PATH — STEP BY STEP

How to Run the Conversation Itself

- 01 Write down the Behaviour and Effect before the conversation**
Not during it. Clarity in advance keeps you specific instead of emotional in the room.
- 02 Ask permission first**
"Can I share something I noticed?" lowers defensiveness before you've said a single critical word.
- 03 Deliver it in under two minutes**
Brevity signals confidence in what you're saying. A long wind-up signals you're not sure it'll land.
- 04 Ask them to repeat back what they heard**
In their own words — this is the single fastest way to catch a misunderstanding before it repeats.
- 05 Set the follow-up date on the spot**
Feedback without a check-in date is a comment. With one, it's a commitment.



HOW TO AVOID THIS GOING FORWARD — 5 DON'TS

Make It a Habit, Not a Hope

Even good feedback can be undone by these five common habits. Watch for them in yourself first.

- **Don't sandwich criticism between compliments.** It dilutes the message and confuses what actually needs to change.
- **Don't give feedback in front of others.** Privacy isn't optional — it's what makes honesty possible.
- **Don't let more than 48 hours pass.** The moment fades, and so does the specificity of what actually happened.
- **Don't make it about character.** "You're careless" attacks identity. "The report was late" describes a fixable action.
- **Don't skip the follow-up.** Check back in a week to see if the new behaviour actually stuck.



THE SIMPLEWORKS FRAMEWORK

The B.E.S.T Method

Four moves, in order, for feedback that actually changes behaviour.

B

Behaviour

Describe the specific action, not the person's character. "You missed the deadline," not "you're careless."

E

Effect

Name the concrete impact it had — on the customer, the team, or the business.

S

Specific Ask

Say exactly what you want instead, next time — not a vague "do better."

T

Timing

Deliver it within 48 hours, privately, while it's still fresh for both of you.

Behaviour, Effect, Specific ask, Timing — in that order, every time. Feedback stops being an event people dread and becomes a habit that actually moves things.



ABOUT SIMPLEWORKS

One Consultant. Four Connected Disciplines.

Simpleworks Consulting is a boutique advisory practice built for Indian MSME owners — founded by **Prem Menon**, drawing on 39 years across Consumer Durables, Tyres, Telecom, and IT/SaaS. The philosophy is simple: strip away complexity, and give founders tools sophisticated enough to work — and simple enough to run without a large team.

Every Simpleworks engagement draws on four connected practice areas, because strategy, go-to-market, execution, and measurement are rarely separate problems in a real business.

01 Business Strategy

The smallest set of choices that makes every later decision easier — where to play, and how to win.

02 Go-to-Market

Turning the strategic choice into revenue — the right segment, message, channel, and price, working as one coherent system.

03 Execution Enablement

The operating rhythm — meetings, decisions, ownership — that converts intent into outcome.

04 OKRs

The feedback loop that tells you honestly whether the strategy is working, and holds the system accountable.

Four lenses on the same question: how does your business get from where it is, to where you've decided it should be?



LET'S TALK

You've Seen the Problem. Let's Make Feedback Actually Land.

If this booklet described your last "understood, but nothing changed" conversation, that's usually the first sign it's worth a real one — with us, not just your team.

Reach out. No pitch, no jargon — just a straight conversation about your team, your growth, or whatever's keeping you up tonight.

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