

# Designing feedback: How to coach UX staff effectively

**Joyce Wong**

TorCHI  
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Do you wonder how you can better coach your team?

Do you have to be a leader to coach?

How satisfied are you with the coaching & feedback you receive?

**Hi!**

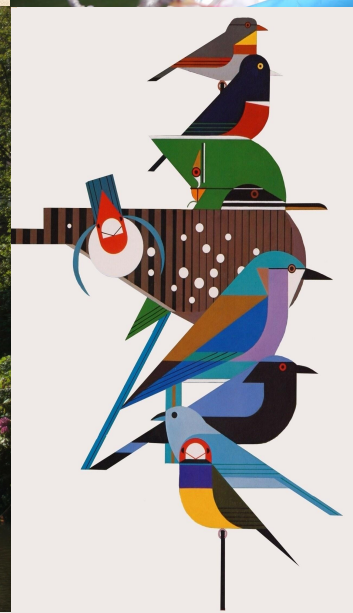
I'm **Joyce**

**Pronouns:**  
she/her

**Currently:**  
Principal designer / senior  
manager at TD

**Inspirations:**  
David Weidman & Charley  
Harper

**Find me at:**  
[linkedin.com/in/joyceylwong/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/joyceylwong/)



## Let's talk about...

### Coaching & feedback

- Myth busting
- What's the difference?

### Mentoring

- What's the difference?

## Let's talk about this!

### Design reviews

- Be specific
- Try / Consider / Do

### Retros & team meetings

- Understand emotions

## Let's talk about this!

Today

1)

2)

3)

4)

# Coaching, Feedback & Mentoring



# Coaching & feedback myths

## Myth #1:

- I have to be a “leader” to coach or give feedback.

## Myth #2:

- I only give feedback during design reviews or 1:1s.

## Myth #3:

- Coaching & feedback take a lot of time.



# Feedback

## Timeframe

- Look back

## Goals

- Identify past action or behaviour
- Focus on teaching

## Communication

- Retroactive
- One-way, explanatory

## When does this happen?

- Any time
- Most effective when given close to the event



# Coaching

## Timeframe

- Look forward

## Goals

- Identify potential challenges
- Focus on growth & learning

## Communication

- Proactive
- Two-way, exploratory

## When does this happen?

- Any time



Slow down on the advice giving. Stay curious just a bit longer.

~ Michael Bungay Stanier





## Coaching Approach

### Coach

- Listen actively
- Invest fully in the other person
- Assume positive intent
- Ask open-ended questions
- Challenge assumptions
- Paraphrase & summarize

### Coachee

- Reflect
- Assume positive intent
- Be accountable

# Open-Ended Questions

- “What’s on your mind?”
- “Tell me about...”
- “What is / is not working?”
- “What resonates with you?”
- “What might you do differently?”
- “What is a first step you can take?”
- More [here](#) and [here](#)





## Let's try this! Coaching or Feedback?

Hey Yoshi, great jump  
there! ~Mario

A Super Mario Bros. game scene. Yoshi is on a brick platform, and a Koopa is flying in the sky. The background is blue with white clouds and a checkered flag on the right.

## Let's try this! Coaching or Feedback?

Thanks! I think I need  
to work more on my  
stomps. ~Yoshi

Why do you say that?  
~Mario



## Let's try this! Coaching or Feedback?

Well, if I accidentally  
hit the koopa, you fall  
off. ~Yoshi

I see. What might you do  
differently? ~Mario



## Let's try this! Coaching or Feedback?

I'm going to aim for the wings. ~Yoshi

Sounds good! You got this! ~Mario

**"A coach talks *to* you, a mentor talks *with* you, and a sponsor talks *about* you."**\*

\* Roles may sometimes overlap

# Mentoring

- More [here](#)



**COACH**



**MENTOR**



**SPONSOR**

A coach provides guidance for your development, often focused on soft skills (e.g., active listening) rather than technical skills (e.g., financial acumen).

A mentor informally or formally helps you navigate your career, providing guidance for career choices and decisions.

A sponsor is a senior leader or other person who uses strong influence to help you obtain high-visibility assignments, promotions, or jobs.

**Who Drives the Relationship?**

You and your coach are responsible for driving the relationship—you can reach out to your coach when you need help, but your coach can also reach out to you.

**Who Drives the Relationship?**

You drive the relationship. Your mentor is reactive and responsive to your needs.

**Who Drives the Relationship?**

The sponsor drives the relationship, advocating for you in many settings, including behind closed doors.

**Actions**

Provide development feedback outside the formal performance evaluation process.

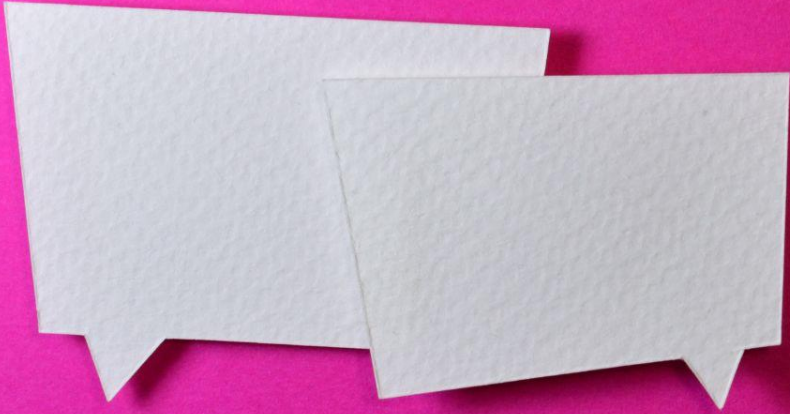
**Actions**

Help you determine possible career paths to meet specific career goals.

**Actions**

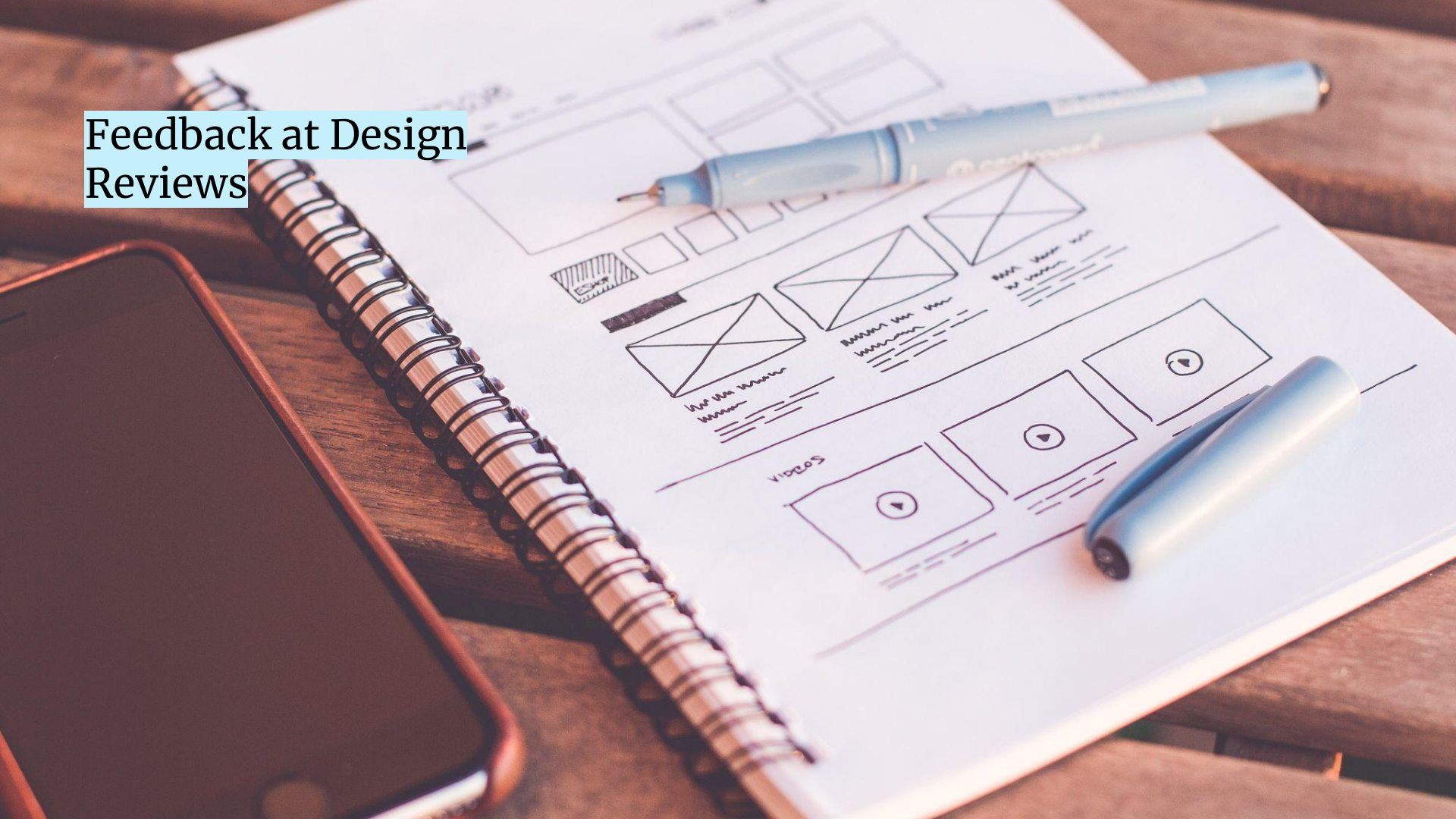
Advocate for your advancement and champion your work and potential with other senior leaders.

Let's talk about this!





# Feedback at Design Reviews





## “Make it pop” 🤔

### Be specific

- Know your terminology
- “More *white space* is needed.”

### Give a reason

- “The white space will bring *focus* to the image.”

### Tie it back to goals

- “We’re testing shopping by style. Focusing on images will help the customer assess whether that product *fits with their decor.*”

If you're not sure  
what the feedback  
means...

**You can ask!**

- "Are you referring to...?"
- "Tell me more about that."



# Consider / Try / Do

## Consider:

- Think about my suggestion
- It's your call whether you want to move forward with it
- You do not have to inform me of your decision

*Example: Leaving comments in Figma*

## Try:

- Give my suggestion a try
- It's your call whether you want to move forward with it
- I'd like to know your reasons

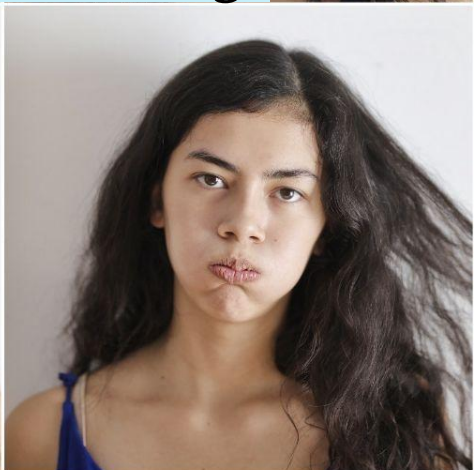
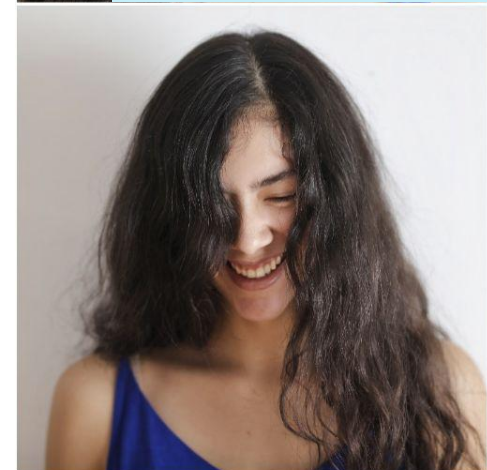
*Example: Critical decisions on project approach*

## Do:

- I expect you to implement my suggestion
- Let me know when you've done it

*Not often used if feedback is give regularly!*

**Level Up!**  
**Understand Emotions at  
Retros & Team Meetings**



# Sprint Retrospective Model

What worked well?

Example feedback:  
Feedback from the marketing team was helpful  
Smaller teams are more agile  
Customers to test loved it



What didn't go well or as expected?

Example feedback:

- Unexpected bug after release
- Some issues took longer to complete than expected



What should we be doing next? (learning)

Example feedback:

- Invite marketing to sprint review
- Test releases before launching on new domains



# Acknowledge Emotions and Effort



+



+





Blue	Green	Yellow	Red
 <p><b>Low</b></p>	 <p><b>Happy</b></p>	 <p><b>Wobbly</b></p>	 <p><b>Angry</b></p>
<p><i>unhappy</i> <i>tired</i> <i>withdrawn</i> <i>tearful</i> <i>sad</i> <i>sick</i> <i>slow</i></p>	<p><i>positive</i> <i>proud</i> <i>calm</i> <i>focused</i> <i>happy</i> <i>ready to learn</i> <i>feeling ok</i></p>	<p><i>excited</i> <i>nervous</i> <i>frustrated</i> <i>annoyed</i> <i>worried</i> <i>silly/wiggly</i></p>	<p><i>mad</i> <i>furious</i> <i>yelling / hitting</i> <i>aggressive</i> <i>angry</i> <i>terrified</i> <i>out of control</i></p>

# Understanding Emotions

- Shows that you are trying to empathize
- Can identify root causes
- Helps you focus your feedback and coaching

## Board 1: Career & Skills Development

For this theme, please role as many white sticks as you need and share your sentiments in the form of "I feel ... because ..."

### Career & Skills Development

I feel ...  
because  
...

I feel that I have to follow a path that I don't want to follow in order to be successful in my career.

I feel that it's hard to follow a path that I don't want to follow in order to be successful in my career.

I feel that I have to be recognized for my work.

I feel good that my family has given me the opportunity to grow & learn new skills.

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I feel ...  
because  
...

I feel discouraged because the requirements to be promoted keep changing.

I feel that promotion is more for those who get promoted to do a job.

I feel that I have to follow a path that I don't want to follow in order to be successful in my career.

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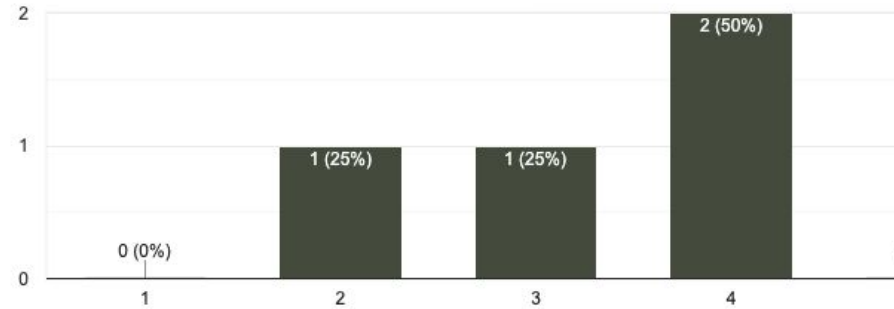
I feel that I have to follow a path that I don't want to follow in order to be successful in my career.

# Understanding Emotions

- Helps you track progress over time

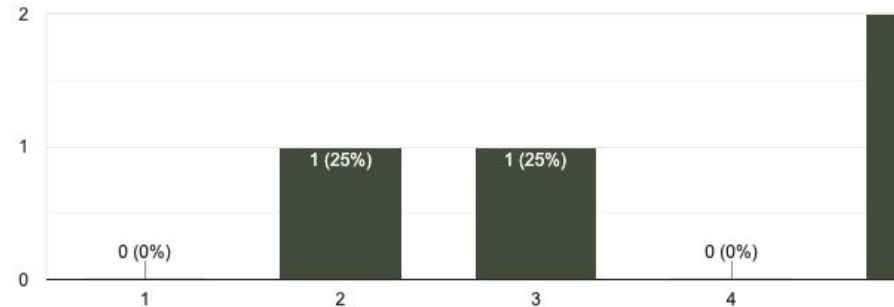
How much fun did you have in the last sprint?

4 responses



How overwhelmed did you feel in the last sprint?

4 responses





Do you wonder how you can better coach your team?

Do you have to be a leader to coach?

How satisfied are you with the coaching & feedback you receive?



## Summary

### Feedback

- Looks back, retroactive, one-way

### Coaching

- Looks forward, proactive, two-way

### Mentoring

- You drive agenda, career focused

### When giving feedback or coaching

- Be specific
- Consider / Try / Do
- Acknowledge & understand emotions

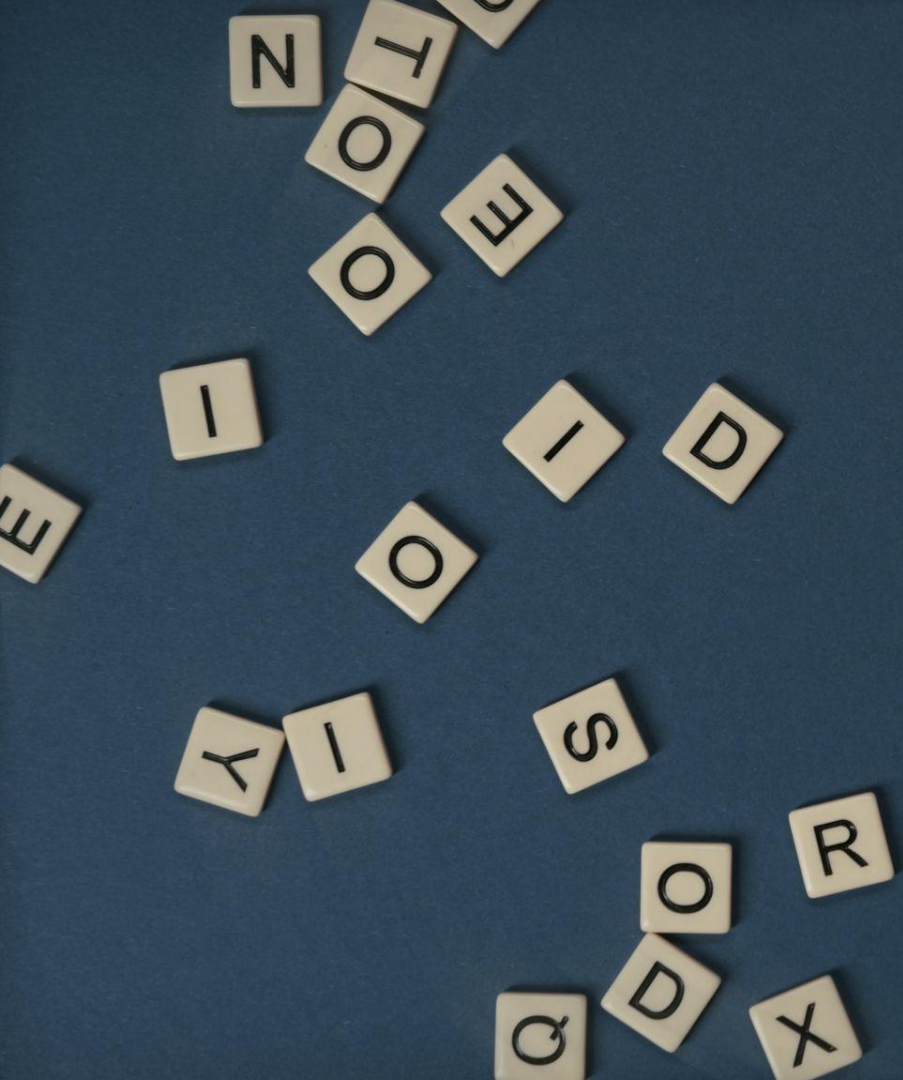


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THANK

YOU