

Episode:	25
Guest:	Dr. Adam Sumner
Title:	Career Conversation: The Gift of Feedback
Dr. Shari Dade	You are now listening to The Audacity to Fail podcast, a podcast about myths stepping into success. Get ready to dive into conversations and real stories from leaders as they share. How failure activates a growth mindset is an important part of learning and motivation for improvement. I'm your host, Dr. Shari Dade, psychologist with the National Center for Organizational Development.
Dr. Shari Dade	Thank you for tuning in. Let's get started.
Announcer	Support for this leadership podcast comes from the National Center for Organization Development. ENCODE aims to increase the long term growth and performance of the Department of Veterans Affairs by collaboratively working with the leaders throughout the VA to improve organizational outcomes by supporting the development of an engaged workforce. For additional information on our services, click the link in the show notes.
Dr. Shari Dade	Communicating feedback is a mainstay in career conversations, and while it's clear that effective feedback has advantages on workplace relations and engagement, for many leaders, juggling how to give, receive and seek feedback can be like walking a communication tightrope. Leaders who work to master the art of giving and seeking feedback conversations may find that they have uncovered the key to empowering their teens on this episode.
Dr. Shari Dade	I am pleased to be joined by Dr. Adam Sumner, a staff psychologist for the Vivian 23 Clinical Resource Hub, focusing on outpatient mental health in a rural setting. Adam's path to becoming a psychologist led through a variety of settings, including community mental health, higher education, and now the VA. For almost seven years, all of that was made possible by the support of his inspiring partner and the two great kids who joined them along the way.
Dr. Shari Dade	Professionally, Adam enjoys working in rural communities, health psychology and the opportunity to serve veterans. He also loves getting up way too early to go running, trying to stay upright on a gravel bike. Watching the never ending soap opera of English soccer and coaching youth sports. Get ready to join us as we explore the journey of myth Stepping into Success.
Dr. Shari Dade	This is The Audacity to Fail Podcast Episode 25 Career Conversations The Gift of Feedback. Adam, How are you?
Dr. Adam Sumner	I'm doing well. I'm so grateful to be here. Thank you, Dr. Dade.

Dr. Shari Dade	Yes, thank you. Thank you for joining today's episode. It is great to connect like this. As we were talking right before the recording, we haven't seen each other in years.
Dr. Adam Sumner	I know. And one of the missing pieces from my biography is the semester we spent in the back row research methods in 2009. It's a critical juncture for both of us, I'm sure. Absolutely.
Dr. Shari Dade	So Adam and I went to graduate school together at the University of Minnesota. Back, back, back in the day. He reminded me of how many years we've known each other. We won't say that here because we don't want to date ourselves. But it's great to connect like this over this podcast. Even though we've had some connections over the years.
Dr. Shari Dade	It's good to finally have you here to chat and showcase you as the leader that you are.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Well, when you said that you needed a favor, I said yes before I knew what it was. And you really did. Yeah.
Dr. Shari Dade	It's definitely something I wasn't expecting. So I think it's going to be a great episode because I have a feedback story that you may or may not remember from our years in graduate school together. I can see your face. You're like, Oh goodness. So I was in the second semester of my master's program and you were the TA for group theory, and you gave me a bit of feedback about how I was performing at the time, and I don't remember exactly what you said, but I do remember that you gave some pretty direct feedback about a score that I had on an assessment that we took over time.
Dr. Shari Dade	But what really stood out to me is that you followed that up by asking a question that really surpassed my specific, like perform it at that time and into my experience my experience as a black woman from the South in Minnesota, in graduate school at distance from home, from everything familiar to me. And in that moment, I really felt seen and I experienced that feedback as a tool for you to let me know that you saw me.
Dr. Shari Dade	And I think in that moment, it really did allow for me to start to think about the importance of feedback, right, and what that actually looked like. And of course, you know, over time we think about feedback and we think about how we can give it to other people and what am I going to say about this specific behavior that they did or didn't do.
Dr. Shari Dade	But really, in that moment, the fact that you talked about the experience that I was having as opposed to just the behavior that was something that even is still here with me today, some odd years. Again, we won't say the number, but, you know, a few years, a lot of years later. And so I know you probably don't remember that.
Dr. Adam Sumner	I remember a tiny, windowless room in the Minnesota winter.

Dr. Shari Dade	It was.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And what's amazing to me is that miracle section of your experience as a master's student as you were basically perfect. So I don't have any idea what you would be that could have given you the other piece that's important to me as we start this conversation that that experience helps me reflect on. Is there a times in our life where we can try to get feedback as an expert?
Dr. Adam Sumner	And one of my fears is, is that at that time in my life, based on trying to justify my presence in the program, trying to show that I knew things that I might have given feedback based on the idea that I was an expert. And what my hope today is not to come at this from a place of I know or let me tell you how or expertise is, but to come at it from a place of being a person who is fully in this.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah, yeah. Who is connected, engaged with the experience of learning about myself, learning about others, and learning how those two interplay. And so I'm not sure I pulled that off X number of years ago when we had that conversation, but I really want to work on that today. So that's my commitment for this conversation. Let's be in this.
Dr. Adam Sumner	I'm going to come at this as a person who is learning to and open up the conversation and see what happens.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, and it's so important to hit that point of being in this together, right? Because I think oftentimes when we do give feedback, it is this space of I am coming to you and I am giving you this, and then there is no dialog among the two, It's I'm going to give you this feedback. You're going to receive it, you're going to thank me, and then we move forward.
Dr. Shari Dade	And so I think the importance of even saying things like feedback, conversations, because it is a dialog, it is a space to be in the time together. And so being able to be very intentional about having the conversation of feedback as opposed to I'm just going to give somebody feedback that in itself allows for us to take a step back and say, How do we join in this process?
Dr. Shari Dade	How do we join in that experience? When you think about feedback, Adam, how did having feedback conversations become a part of who you are and how you facilitate growth for those who you may be leaning on or even those who may be leading you?
Dr. Adam Sumner	Well, I think that there kind of this conversation could happen on two different levels, which is the pragmatic piece that we know that in any system, whether that's workplace, whether that's a team, whether that's a family, that the ability to give voice to our concerns have those things be heard and then in turn hear other people's experience. We know that that mechanism, that process helps improve performance, improve satisfaction, improve sense of connection.

Dr. Adam Sumner	And so that's it's maybe too simplistic to call that the surface level, but in some ways that is the surface.
Dr. Shari Dade	Level for sure.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah. And then we can have that conversation on what I would consider to be a deeper level, which is how are we as human beings engaged in the pursuit of truth and connection, seeing our own experience as being reciprocal and fully invested in the experiences of those people around us and so from a deeper level, seeking feedback for me personally and I think in an organization, in a family, on a team, is about truth and about being fully engaged with other people.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And so in some sense, being invested in feedback follows a pragmatic pattern because it works, right? Right. On the other hand, it follows a deeper values based matter, which is how can I be fully with fully connected to and fully engaged in the people in my organization? Yeah, the people in my life. And so it's bringing our total selves to that.
Dr. Adam Sumner	I'm not going to lie to you. I'm not sure I pull that off all the time, but when I'm when I'm really feeling like I'm firing on all cylinders, when I'm feeling fully engaged and connected is when it comes from that sense of curiosity, truth, connection and a desire to really be with the people in my life, whether those are the people that I work with, whether those are the people I share the dinner table with, or whether those are the nine year olds that watch them run around on the soccer field.
Dr. Shari Dade	Right, Right. The word that stands out to me is truth. And being able to be truthful in these spaces, all of our spaces that we occupy and being able to share that truth with others. And I think oftentimes we get into these spaces where we have these conversations and we say, Well, I want to be nice and I want the person to like me, and I don't want the person to be upset with me and I don't want to offend the person and not saying that truth that needs to be mean or offensive or anything like that.
Dr. Shari Dade	But I do think that when we allow for those things to guide our truth, it can take us off the path of truthfulness. It can take us off the path of connection, and it allows for there to be gaps in how we communicate and connect with other people. And so that's one of the things that really stood out to me is this challenge or this charge for us to bring some truthfulness into our interactions and especially into these feedback conversations.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah, I think one of the metaphors that has been really powerful for me in these conversations is the idea of kind of turning into the sharp edges.
Dr. Shari Dade	Say more about that.

Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah, we so we may have the experience with our interpersonal relationships, with our professional relationships in our lives, with our own emotions in which we experience something that's sharp, like fear, like shame, like embarrassment, like the fear that any of those other emotions might come up.
Dr. Shari Dade	In.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Our natural reaction. It just as biological organisms is to turn away from that. And part of the process of seeking and receiving feedback is to teach ourselves to turn into those sharp edges, to see those opportunities where things feel scary, where they feel vulnerable, where they feel like they might hurt, and to lean into that experience rather than to pull away.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And you can't live your life entirely bumping into sharp edges all the time. You've got to take some risk. But but at the same time, when those things really matter, when we're fully committed to truth, to connection to engagement, to take that breath and teach ourselves to turn in rather than to turn away. And I think, you know, with that people pleasing component, which, hey, I got that in spades, right?
Dr. Adam Sumner	But yeah, and hey, it's, it's a part of what makes people successful to be conscientious. That's if you look at the big five, right. That's the thing you want to hire as coaches conscientiousness and at the same time, sometimes we have to train ourselves to notice that and to turn away from what's comfortable being people pleasing and conscientious and turn toward something that feels more authentic, but it's also more vulnerable and a little riskier.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, for sure. And you're tapping into this, but when you think about these feedback conversations, what are some things that we can do or how can we mess up those conversations? How can we make some mistakes and missteps? What are some thoughts on that?
Dr. Adam Sumner	Oh, I have stories. And, you know, one of the things I appreciate about your podcast as a big picture is this idea of growth mentality and that idea that fail faster and fail forward.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, Yeah.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And so one of the things that I was reflecting on is about expectations. And so where I think I personally and many of us run afoul in seeking feedback is it's not that we're seeking that full and authentic experience. We want to hear the answers we want to hear.
Dr. Shari Dade	Right.

Dr. Adam Sumner	And and so an idea that I have heard about relatively recently that sticks with me a lot is this idea of surprise mind, which is an a full openness towards being surprised.
Dr. Shari Dade	That.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Our own experience like ooh, that thought was that that was a little odd start. Yeah, right. That feedback loop. That's not what I expected. And to sit with and hold that sense of surprise or even shock, but when we won't do that and when we ground back in to our expectations, this is how this is supposed to go.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah, this is the experience I wanted to have. This is the answer. I want to hear about my feedback, like, Hey, how am I doing? You're doing great, right? And when we don't hear that, we close off surprise mind and we get rigid in our expectations. And any time we start doing that in any context, whether that's as a leader, whether that's a coworker, whether that's a parent, whether that's as a partner.
Dr. Shari Dade	Right? Yeah, Yeah.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Any time we ground back into our rigid expectations and away from that opportunity to be surprised or even a little shocked, right then we're we're run the risk of turning this what could be a positive and graceful experience into a trash fire.
Dr. Shari Dade	Right into defensiveness or. Yeah, to this combative. No. Let me show you how great I am.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Oh, no. And let me tell you right, I have in every context, run myself into the ground digging holes, trying to defend what I meant to do, what I wanted to do, and trying to just hold on as tight as I can to that expectation of how this conversation was going to go. And any time that I call myself right, one of my life mottos is like, as soon as you realize you're making a mistake, just stop digging.
Dr. Adam Sumner	As soon as you can stop digging and ground in to what is and to open yourself up to being surprised. Not always, but most of the time, that's where good things happen.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, that's the growth that that ability to, again, like you said, bring in some truthfulness because we get these lessons around feedback, especially when you receive feedback. A great way to receive it is to just automatically thank you for your feedback, Thank you for your feedback. Great.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah, I appreciate that. I learned that on internship.

Dr. Shari Dade	I appreciate it. Thank you.
Dr. Adam Sumner	I'm going to spend some time with that.
Dr. Shari Dade	Right. And oftentimes it doesn't allow for the opportunity to sit in that surprise and to voice and say, Oh, wow, I wasn't expecting that. And so being able to be honest in that conversation of, wow, that took me by surprise. I thought I was going to come in here and receive something differently and opening that space for there to be a dialog, for there to be some some true conversation and growth in that area.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah, I think you bring up something that really was resonant to me as I was reflecting on this conversation we were going to have, which is the puzzle or the paradox of how can we be self-reliant? So, you know, Ralph Waldo Emerson, you have to you learn how to trust yourself, to listen to your emotions, to listen to your heart, to listen your experience, and to fully trust you, and at the same time be fully present in the experience of another person that might totally contradict what we know in our heart to be true.
Dr. Shari Dade	Exactly.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And and, you know, any time that there's a paradox like that, there's a puzzle. There is a seeming presence of opposites that we can't resolve. Well, I think that's pretty interesting. And hey, like, it takes a little it takes some distress tolerance. It does serve that edge in our own personal lives. And I suspect there are a lot of leaders on the call where, like I do this great at work, but I don't do this very well with my partner or with my kids or with my parents.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah, right. And and so is we up the scale of vulnerability, that edge where surfing becomes a little more harrowing at the same time. That's a fascinating experience to fully invest in ourselves and be fully present and open to being surprised by others experience of us.
Dr. Shari Dade	It creates the tricky nature of the feedback conversation, right? It's tricky. It's difficult, It's sharp. Like you were saying, it can be very sharp, especially when we think about it in our heads and we are thinking about it the night before, the week before, the month before. We've got to give it or we've got to receive it. It can really present that sharp edge in that trickiness of how do we go in this and how do we stay true, how do we stay authentic, How do we stay open to surprises, Right?

Dr. Shari Dade	How do we allow for some of these things that you talked about today to be a part of that dialog? And when we work ourselves into a tizzy about it, it often shuts down our desire to even have those conversations. And so as you're thinking about cultivating this culture where people want to seek feedback, how can a leader create a space where the team wants to seek or the team appreciates these feedback conversations?
Dr. Adam Sumner	I think the core of that to me is commitment. Yeah. Which the manifestations of that in any organization, in any relationship and any system starts with that core of commitment. And there are times in which we all give and seek feedback in which we're not fully committed to the process, in which we just want to say what we want to say and what we want to hear, and that we want to go have coffee and on to the next and to really create that authentic, trusting environment in which people feel safe to turn into the sharp edges.
Dr. Adam Sumner	It starts with that core commitment, and whatever comes next will be specific to the context, but will unspool from the idea that we are really in it together.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, Being able to create that relationship across your team with your people, for them to be able to believe that we truly are in it together. This is in a space where I just go to my leader and they give me feedback and then I have to figure out what to do with it. It is that space of being in it together.
Dr. Shari Dade	And even though in that first example that I gave, I know you were saying, I don't know in my in my years back there and during the master's program or thinking that maybe I was giving that out of that seed of expert, the meaning that I made of it was that we were in it together. And it is this space of being seen, being heard, being curious, and allow for there to be this connection between yourself and the people who are there to follow you, the people who are there to work with you as you reach a goal.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And, you know, surprise mind is a two way street because often the surprises we have are kind of unpleasant. I was not expecting to hear that from my son about what it's like, you know, to be in a relationship with me. I was not expecting to hear that from my supervisor. I was not expecting to hear that from my partner.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And every so often surprise mine is delightful. And so here's an instance where, reflecting on myself and my identity, I was worried as you brought that up, I was like, Oh, no, if you're say, I'm so scared of me, you know of me a number of years ago, we won't name, but it's a lot, right? And how I might have approached something like that, how I might have tried to be self-centered or justified or try to earn the \$11,000 I was making to do that job right.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And to and then to be able to reflect and metabolize the experience of that was that was okay. And it's just as important to be fully present when things don't go our way in a way we don't like as it is to be present where things are going in a way that, hey, that, that's kind of nice or that's a pleasant surprise, or that might help me just stand up a little taller and feel a little more confident as I move on in my day.

Dr. Adam Sumner	So I would say thank you for that.
Dr. Shari Dade	Of course.
Dr. Adam Sumner	I feel appreciative for that and I am relieved to work because I'm sure I did a lot of things in that phase of my life that did not work right. And I can be president with those sharp.
Dr. Shari Dade	Edges, too. Yeah, Yeah, absolutely. I like this notion of thinking about feedback that we receive in very formal that pragmatic way. That formal. Let's have a conversation. But the also the idea of the informal feedback that we receive from those around us, from family, from friends, from partners, from our coworkers, from our leaders, and oftentimes we get into this space and we think it's going to be a conversation, it's going to be verbal, It's going to be this space where we've got this on our calendars.
Dr. Shari Dade	Now it's the feedback moment.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And we get the feedback sandwich.
Dr. Shari Dade	Exactly.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Going to hear like what's going good and then I'm going to get a little corrective feedback. And then the other part of the sandwich and I'm just going to eat that sandwich and go about my day, right?
Dr. Shari Dade	It's predictable until it's on our calendar again, Right. And the next quarter or the next month. And one of the things that we were chatting about when we were talking about creating this episode was the unspoken feedback, this silent kind of stealthy feedback that you don't directly receive. But, you know, it's there. You know that your partner is not happy with how you behaved at the supermarket or the presentation that you did.
Dr. Shari Dade	It fell flat and you understand, you know that. But no one has verbally said to you, Hey, that wasn't the best that I know you can do. What is the responsibility for someone in that situation that knows that that feedback is there? They're picking up on that stealthy ness, but they may sit back and say, Well, no one said anything to me.
Dr. Shari Dade	So I think I'm doing kind of good. What's their responsibility.

Dr. Adam Sumner	The kind of that high context versus low context to somebody to spell everything out for me, or should I be expected? Can I be expected to read between the lines a little bit?
Dr. Shari Dade	Right.
Dr. Adam Sumner	You know, I think the core piece of that for me personally and reflecting on this experience is managing our own anxiety about uncertainty. You know, there's the Lewis Carroll quote, to paraphrase like I think three impossible things before lunch. Right? Well, I think that people often through experience are think three paradoxical things before lunch time. And so, you know, as a human being, as a leader, as a member of a family, as a member of a community, it's normal for us to want certainty.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And sometimes when that feedback isn't verbalized, it could be because there's not the sufficient context of safety and support. It could be that the person just isn't sure. And we're seeing the manifestations of their own uncertainty either about how to approach us or about their own feelings or reactions. And so if I think about myself in that context, in my own interpersonal or even attachment style, a core thing for me is managing my own concern or fear around what I don't know.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah, and to be resilient, to sit with that, to hold that and then explore. And so what doesn't work in those situations is asking 7500 questions about what's wrong. Right. And and there are instances in which we can open that conversation saying, I want to hear what's happening with you. I feel like something's off. I'm not sure what it is.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Right. And there are other instances where our job is to sit and hold the space of uncertainty, of discomfort, and wait.
Dr. Shari Dade	It out for sure.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And be present and together in that process, recognizing we don't know. And maybe they don't either.
Dr. Shari Dade	Right. And you're speaking to the importance of the leader seeking feedback, too. And we often focus on the feedback conversation. It's set up on how leaders can give feedback to their teams or it's set up on how can you receive feedback if you are an employee or a staff member or you know, if you aren't the leader and so however, feedback, like you said, is a two way street, it's a two way conversation.
Dr. Shari Dade	And so being able to allow for leaders to understand the importance of seeking feedback, there may be moments where, like you said, those individuals who are giving that unspoken or that stealthy feedback, they may not know exactly how to approach it or they may not know exactly what's there. It's like something's off, but I can't put my finger on it.

Dr. Shari Dade	And it is the responsibility or it can be the responsibility of the leader to be able to go in and seek some of that feedback, to be open, to remain open to seeking it, as opposed to, well, if something's up, they'll come and tell me, you.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Know, if.
Dr. Shari Dade	Something's going on, they'll let me know. But because no one said anything, I think I'm doing all right. But there's this notion of seeking feedback in order to take control of the situation and in the uncertainty and the unknown.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah. Do you have a sense about how you would start that conversation?
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, I think that's a great question. As a leader, there are moments where it is imperative to seek feedback relating to your management style, your work style, relating to decisions that you've been able to make. And in those moments there has to be this ability to lean into those sharp edges like you've mentioned, and leaning into them a little bit faster than you typically may in your day to day life and sitting in them a little bit longer than you may feel comfortable doing.
Dr. Shari Dade	And so that that discomfort is definitely a part of it. But in order to start some of those conversations, I think it's important to be very pointed about what you're looking for feedback around. And so asking questions like after I made this decision X, Y, Z, what would you do differently after I've made one, two, three decision? How would you approach it in a different way?
Dr. Shari Dade	How is it impacted you as a team member, as an employee here? How is it impacted your perception of me as a leader? Let's sit and let's chat about it. This doesn't have to be a one time conversation. We can kind of journey into it together and we can talk about it more than once, and we can have these spaces where we're both uncertain and being able to sit in that.
Dr. Shari Dade	So having those types of really uncomfortable at times, especially with that possibility for there to be a surprise or a possibility for there to be feedback or answers to those questions that we weren't expecting, taking the time to actually lean into it instead of just saying, Hey, I know X, Y, Z happened, it seems like things are different.
Dr. Shari Dade	Do you have some feedback for me? So because sometimes people don't know how to lean into that feedback with their supervisors, with their leaders. And so being very pointed about the questions that you ask to help guide people into those conversations, to let them know that it is safe and that they can ask those questions, that's going to be important.

Dr. Shari Dade	And before even and maybe even backing up and before asking for feedback or seeking feedback, there has to be this space where trust has been built, where the relationship is not firmly and only based on the work that you do, what you produce, what you perform, but it is based around who you are as a person. Like you said, making meaning and connecting with individuals.
Dr. Shari Dade	And so taking talent around, taking time to get to know your employees, taking time to know who they are outside of the work that they produce is going to set the ground and it's going to set the stage in order for you to lean into those harder questions in order for you to go to someone and say, Hey, I know I made a decision, how has that changed how you view me as a leader?
Dr. Shari Dade	There has to be the trust, the psychological safety built, and that takes time. You know, trust is behavior over time. And so being able to start building that trust, building that relationship so that it does make it a little bit easier to lean into those sharp edges and those difficult and uncomfortable at times and surprising and growing conversation.
Dr. Shari Dade	And so that's a great question. Adam. Great question.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah, I really I really appreciate that.
Dr. Shari Dade	That's when we think about feedback being kind of this two way street. Oftentimes it still feels to intentions, feedback that intends to change behavior and then feedback that intends to continue a behavior. When you think about both of these, was the usefulness in these in a conversation and in a in a workspace.
Dr. Adam Sumner	The sense about how do we reinforce the things we want to see and how do we. Right. And, you know, hey, there's this idea, the ratio, right? The 5 to 1 ratio that successful engaged content relationships involve essentially a math problem that we provide five pieces of positive feedback or expressions of gratitude and appreciation for every one piece of corrective feedback.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And, you know, I think that that's one of the areas where we can really lean on psychology to help us understand the lies that for our relationships to work, we really do have to stack the deck towards positive reinforcement. Recognizing that reinforcement is a much more powerful tool for behavior change than corrective feedback, or to use the term punishment.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Right and and corrective feedback as can be a form of punishment, particularly in a workplace context where like your rating or bonus or, you know, time off award leans on that. And so again from a pragmatic perspective, yeah, thinking through that we use reinforcement because it works and we, we save corrective feedback because it's not as effective for behavior change.

Dr. Adam Sumner	And then I think we can reflect more deeply again on what are our values about these relationships? How do I want to be in my role as a leader, in my role as a community member, and my role as a family member? Do I want to be the person who's always giving corrective feedback, or do I want to be a person who consistently expresses gratitude, appreciation, who notices where things go well, not just because that be more effective, but how do I want to move in the world as a human?
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, I think that conversation really does wrap up like this whole conversation around how do I want to navigate the relationships that I have in this world as a human right? What ratio do I want to live in? Right? We don't want to end up in that space where we're only giving that positive reinforcement. We want to be able to be truthful in our spaces.
Dr. Shari Dade	We want to be able to be truthful in our relationships. And it really is this ability to pivot between giving feedback that reinforces behavior that that asks people to continue the great things that they're doing, the things that are moving us forward, the things that are in alignment with where we're going, and how do I also be truthful in the way that I speak about behavior change and the things that I would like to see look differently?
Dr. Adam Sumner	And how do we model working through our own discomfort for others, you know, and to say like, okay, well, I'm a people pleaser and I would really love like a 35000 to 0 ratio because I don't really want to have a lot of conflict in my life right. And also recognizing that that for me personally could be turning away from some of those sharper edges.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And then how do I if I only turn away from the sharp edges, if I shy away from vulnerability, if I don't want to experience discomfort by being honest, then what is it that I'm teaching people? What is it that I'm modeling? And again, that moves on a scale of vulnerability? So in a workplace, okay, that model's one thing.
Dr. Adam Sumner	As a parent, being afraid of sharp edges, being afraid of taking a break from being a people pleaser, well, that's a whole different ballgame. And and again, that comes from that set of core values, which is why do I want to do this right? Am I committed to truth? Am I committed to authentic engagement? Am I committed to being surprised and fully there?
Dr. Adam Sumner	And that why can help us move towards the things that, again, for those of us who have that conscientious parent, are terrified right. But but, but if we know why we're doing it because it's caught us because of our values, because it's the kind of person we want to be. Okay. You know, that can help us do the hard thing.
Dr. Adam Sumner	And that's across the spectrum.
Dr. Shari Dade	Yeah, you gave us a great roadmap, understanding the why right beforehand, being able to say, Why am I doing this? Why am I leaning into this? But then as you lean into it, as you see the sharp edge, you know, being willing and open to leaning into that with

	kind of this sense of curiosity and knowing that there may be some surprises ahead, but then also being able to to bring truthfulness into space.
Dr. Shari Dade	Right. In order to connect, in order to build that relationship, in order to build and be comfortable in that vulnerability. And so that roadmap, those spaces of navigating through the feedback conversation is something that is is great to think about and to practice. Well, we are at the end of today's episode, but before we go, I do want to play a game of word association and get your thoughts on a few terms that we've talked about throughout the episode.
Dr. Adam Sumner	I had no idea this was coming, so let me put my quiz show cap on.
Dr. Shari Dade	It's the fun part. It's the fun part. So the first word vulnerability presents engagement, fear, all of those things. Yeah, all of those things. The next phrase is feedback is a gift.
Dr. Adam Sumner	It makes my grandmother. You got.
Dr. Shari Dade	To think more.
Dr. Adam Sumner	About that. So. So my grandmother was what you might call, you know, bless her was a idiosyncratic gift giver who loved Avon. And I spent a fair amount of my childhood getting coached on how to say thank you. Even if you didn't got a gift you didn't necessarily want. Right. This was a big part of like kind of induction or preparation for holidays.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Yeah. And for three straight Christmases, my grandmother gave me Avon soap on a rope. It was a gift that I was not expecting and I wasn't sure I wanted. But you know what was very useful to me, right? I took that to college. It smelled kind of nice. It was very useful. Right? I didn't have a soap dish when I was 19.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Right. And so. So that.
Dr. Shari Dade	Was maybe.
Dr. Adam Sumner	A gift. It made me smile. It made me think of my grandma and it made me think of that experience of getting something that you didn't expect. Maybe you didn't even want. But then you can still make great use of that. A lot of years later. I still reflect on that.
Dr. Shari Dade	That is perfect. That is a perfect story that goes exactly what we talked about this episode, Life Lessons from Grandma, for sure. And then lastly, Audacity to Fail.

Dr. Adam Sumner	I think I think real with that, which is the recognition that let's be real about this experience, be courageous, move forward and be real. Yeah.
Dr. Shari Dade	Great, great. Adam, this has been a pleasure to chat with you, to pick your brain on some of these things, to have a conversation, to be in dialog about feedback, to give and receive feedback, even in the process of talking about it. Right? It's been a great pleasure and I'm so grateful for the relationship, the connection, the camaraderie that we've had over this time.
Dr. Shari Dade	And so thank you so much for being on today's episode.
Dr. Adam Sumner	Well, it was a real honor and just beyond wonderful to get to talk to you today. So thank you so much.
Dr. Shari Dade	So we've come to the end of another great episode of The Audacity to Fail podcast. Thank you for tuning in to learn how missteps can lead to growth and success, Be sure to check out the key lessons in the show notes for a refresher. To request services from the National Center for Organization Development, check out our website. Also linked in the show notes.
Dr. Shari Dade	Remember, if missed the target 100 times, you had that failed. Instead, you've simply found 100 strategies that did not work. Be well and continue to fail forward. Until next time. Thank you.