I Like, I Wish

The goal of this exercise is to encourage and accept constructive feedback.

INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1: Set the tone for a constructive conversation and explain the I like, I wish method. For example, "I am interested in hearing about how this workshop experience has been for you. Please express feedback in the form of I like, I wish. You might say, 'I like that we have started on time every morning. I wish we had 30 minutes to every afternoon to stretch our legs.'" We have found it helpful to model good feedback by demonstrating "I like, I wish" in action. Feel free to play with the format. You may want to gather just the "I like" comments first, and then ask for the "I wish" statements. In other groups, it may make sense to let the give-and-take of statements flow organically.

Step 2: The participants take turns expressing I like/I wish statements, while the facilitator records their statements. For example, if you are reviewing a work-in-progress for a new personal finance software tool, you might offer support such as "I like that you have incorporated five different ways for customers to view their current financial status." After describing other pluses, you might then say something like "I wish we could make the website easier for first-time users to navigate" or "I wish we could help people examine their financial situation from the long-term perspective of years, not the short-term perspective of months."

Make sure people receiving feedback just listen. This is not a time to defend decisions or challenge the critique. Ask everyone to listen and accept it as a well-meaning offer of help. You can ask for clarification and engage in further discussion at a later time.

Step 3: Stop when participants run out of things to say in both the "I like" and "I wish" categories.

"I like, I wish" signals that what you are stating is your opinion—it's not absolute. The goal is to move the listener away from a defensive posture so that they can more objectively consider alternative ideas and take them to heart, when appropriate. We all naturally tend to become invested in our own ideas, and seek to defend them. But in a creative culture, candid feedback that is sensitively conveyed is a sign that colleagues care enough to speak up. The message can be delivered quite clearly, without resorting to the negative language of "That will never work" or "We tried that before and it failed."

-Adapted from Chapter 7 of *Creative Confidence.* IDEO

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