

Feedback scripts for every working style

Word-for-word openings, follow-ups and repairs for the conversation every manager dreads — tuned to the person across the table.

THE STRUCTURE

One skeleton, four deliveries

Good critical feedback has the same bones regardless of who's receiving it. What changes — dramatically — is the staging: how much warm-up, what the payload is, how they respond live, and what actually repairs afterwards.

The five steps (use every time)

- **1. Genuine, specific appreciation.** Not a hollow sandwich — a real observation about real work.
- **2. One behaviour.** Specific, recent, evidenced. One per conversation — stacking criticisms multiplies the sting and divides the signal.
- **3. Their view.** Ask, then handle what comes back per style (pages 2–3).
- **4. One agreed change,** confirmed in writing afterwards — framed as support, never as evidence.
- **5. Close on confidence,** and follow up in the way that this person recovers.

Two universal rules: always private — assume nobody is thick-skinned. And never deliver feedback into a stress spike; if they're already showing pressure signs, today is not the day.

How the styles differ at each step

	STAGING NEEDED	LIVE REACTION	WHAT REPAIRS
Bold	Low — respect their time	Pushback, on the merits	Engaging with their argument; conceding good points
Warm	High — relationship first	Emotional, immediate	Fast social reconnection; explicit confidence
Curious	Medium — idea-framed	Deflection to the idea	Positive framing; a new problem to run at
Calm	High — advance notice	Composed silence	Processing time; the follow-up conversation

SCRIPTS

Bold and Warm

● Bold — direct · decisive

Opening:

"You closed the Hartley piece two weeks early — genuinely strong work. I want to flag one thing from Thursday's review, because it's costing you influence: when Priya raised the budget risk, you cut her off mid-sentence. What's your read on that moment?"

Handling the pushback: expect it, and welcome it — debate is how this style engages, not a sign the message failed. Bring your evidence, argue the merits, and concede anything they're right about, explicitly: *"That's fair — the timeline pressure was real."* Backing down on a valid point buys you the invalid ones.

Repair if it goes wrong: re-engage on substance, not with social warmth alone. A Bold colleague who was dismissed needs the intellectual concession — *"I've thought about your objection and you were right about X"* — more than they need a coffee.

● Warm — open · relational

Opening:

"Before anything else — the way you brought the new starters together this month didn't go unnoticed; that's why this team feels like a team. I want to talk about one thing, because you're too good at this job for it to hold you back: the client report went out with the March figures in it. Walk me through what happened?"

During: the relationship is the stakes. Keep it to the one behaviour, watch the emotional temperature, and end on explicit confidence: *"None of this changes how much I rate you."*

Repair — this is the part most managers miss: for a Warm colleague the wound that festers is isolation afterwards. Reconnect socially and quickly — a short, warm conversation the next day repairs more than a long email. Never deliver feedback on a Friday afternoon and let them stew over a weekend.

SCRIPTS

Curious and Calm

● Curious — animated · exploratory

Opening:

"Your concept for the onboarding flow is the best thinking anyone's brought to it — I want more of that. One thing to tighten so the ideas land the way they deserve: the last two handoffs went out without the edge cases documented, and it burned the dev team both times. How do we make the boring part easier for you?"

During: frame the issue around the work and its impact, never the person. Detail-gloss is almost always the topic with this style — they know; positive, practical framing ("how do we make this easy") beats a lecture they've heard before.

Repair: quick, and usually easy — this style recovers fastest. Point their energy at a new problem and the relationship resets itself.

● Calm — considered · steady

Pre-announce it (this is the script most people skip):

"Could we take fifteen minutes tomorrow morning? I want to talk through how the Meridian handover went — nothing dramatic, and I'd rather you had time to think about it first."

Opening, the next day:

"Thanks for making time. The requirements doc you built for Meridian was the most thorough this team has produced. The piece I want to look at: the handover call itself — the client came away unclear on the migration risks, and I think some of your analysis stayed in your notes. What's your version of it?"

During: factual, unhurried, private. Then the crucial move — don't force a live response. *"You don't need to react now — shall we pick this up tomorrow?"* Their composure is not agreement; the follow-up conversation is the real one, and it's where the actual view arrives.

Repair: consistency. Keep the next one-to-one exactly where it was; cancelling on a Calm colleague after a hard conversation reads like a verdict.

Where Throughline picks this up: these scripts are tuned to styles. Throughline tunes them to *people* — including how strongly each pattern shows, what this specific colleague's triggers and recovery look like, and what to avoid this specific week. Inside Claude or ChatGPT, at the moment you're writing the message. → **throughline — book a demo**