

## Engage360 Episode 118 | Feedback and Personal Transformation

**Intro** [00:00:04] Welcome to Engage360, Denver Seminary's podcast. Join us as we explore the redemptive power of the gospel and the life changing truth of Scripture at work in our culture today.

**Don Payne** [00:00:16] Hi friends. Welcome again to Engage360 at Denver Seminary. My name's Don Payne, your host. Really glad you've joined us for this conversation. It would be difficult to count the resources devoted to helping people grow in one way or another. Stop and think about how many Christian conversations, sermons, talks, podcasts, and other efforts are devoted in some way to helping people grow and helping us pursue our own growth, especially in our relationship with God. Now, if that subject is of any interest to you, then this conversation is going to peel back some of the popular familiar surface layers and take a bit of a deeper look into one of the most critical factors for genuine sustainable growth. That factor is feedback, which may sound simple, but if you stop and think about it, good, meaningful, informed, empowering feedback can be quite difficult to find. So, to guide us through this, we have our three professors of mentoring from our training and mentoring department, Deborah Anderson, who is chair of the Department. Terry Elliott-Hart and Nathan Scherrer. So welcome to Engage 360. I think some of you've been here before, but if not, welcome, and welcome back.

**Nathan Scherrer** [00:01:37] Yeah, thanks.

**Don Payne** [00:01:38] Our three faculty members of mentoring work in a facilitated, mentored, self-directed learning situation with our students. And this has been at the heart of our curriculum for 25 years now. So, they bring a lot of experience and a lot of expertise to this. Let me throw out kind of a general question first. Why is feedback so crucial to our growth? What role does that play uniquely in our growth?

**Nathan Scherrer** [00:02:03] I can kick us off. When we're talking about feedback, we're talking about a tool that helps to increase your capacity for self-awareness. And maybe a good place to start is this story. I'm thinking about one of my students who just recently finished her sequence of courses with TM, and at the finish line, we ask our students to think about some of their strengths as a learner and some of their opportunities for future growth, and this student took it upon herself to also ask her mentor and some of her closest relationships to, by giving them the same list, stack up their perception of her strengths and weaknesses. And then she kind of stacked them all next to each other. And when she did that, she discovered that one of the elements she had identified as a learning strength of hers, everyone who knew her and supported her and loved her identified that same quality as an opportunity for growth.

**Don Payne** [00:02:56] Okay.

**Nathan Scherrer** [00:02:56] So this student discovered that the criteria she used to self-assess a strength in her learning was not the same criteria used by the people in her life and context. So, as you can imagine, that kind of unexplored discrepancy would lead to, you know, relational friction or workplace conflict or an out of touch view of yourself or any number of things like those. Students who come to Denver Seminary will consistently claim that they're growing in their self-awareness, this is a really popular word. But oftentimes what they really are getting at is their growing in their familiarity of themselves, as kind of this what I've heard Deb call self-referential sentimentality, when in fact self-awareness is relationally attested. So true self-awareness kind of requires various sources of feedback for us to deeply know. Otherwise, we again, are just merely self-referential in the way that we view ourselves. So, for this student that took reaching out and procuring that feedback to better understand the discrepancy between her self-perception and the way that her relationships perceived her.

**Don Payne** [00:04:07] This is really interesting because I don't think I've ever heard that type of distinction made between self-awareness and what you called self-referential, what was it?

**Debra Anderson** [00:04:16] Sentimentality.

**Don Payne** [00:04:16] Yeah. Say more about that. That difference, that distinction between true self-awareness and that self-referential sentimentality.

**Debra Anderson** [00:04:27] I think you can contrast it with introspection. We often think that we grow the more that we think internally about ourselves, and that seems to lead us to insight. And that's true. There's a piece of self-awareness that's internally formed, but the external self-awareness is what I think most of us are learning to do, to learn how we impact the world, rather than just to think so highly of ourselves or even lowly. I mean, we do that internally as well. But how we impact the world is something that we cannot know outside of relationships. We cannot know without feedback from our environment. Others. The Holy Spirit of God.

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:05:09] I think if we think about it in a leadership development context, this trend, I don't know how long it's been, probably more than ten years, but a 360-feedback loop, right? So, executives or managers, the idea that even just one boss, right. Even just one person who watches you work doesn't give you and your own thoughts and reflections don't give you enough of a picture of yourself. So, the separation of it's great to have self-awareness. And that's also in the business and leadership world right now. There's lots of books that use self-awareness in the title, but the folks who are really doing research around that are trying to make this distinction that, as Debra and Nathan have both said, it's relationally attested, which does not sound like how could self be about being relationally attested. But even in that, if you think, okay, a 360-feedback kind of loop, it's for your growth, it's for my professional development. But in order for me to know myself well, I have to know how I'm perceived. So, I think that's a really interesting and very Christian also but has that very practical wisdom of we can't deceive ourselves when other people are giving us that feedback.

**Debra Anderson** [00:06:15] Right? And the obvious assumption in all of this is that genuine growth depends upon some level of healthy self-awareness.

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:06:24] Yes. So that would be connected. And I think one of the exciting things when Nathan I was doing a little work last year on thinking about the things that get in the way of self-assessment and self-awareness, and I started to think theologically, and there's many connections, but sort of this essential, search me, oh, God.

**Don Payne** [00:06:46] And know my heart. Try me.

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:06:48] Yes, know me, try me. This is not like a pop psychology sort of trend. It's in relationship with God from the beginning. There's something about living in a way that says, God, know me. And it must be for a purpose, right? Because God does know me. So, show me my heart. The idea of even God will give you the desires of your heart. But our desires are shaped by the Holy Spirit. So, thinking about a fundamental relationship with God that has to do with holding up a mirror to ourselves and somehow that has to do with our human flourishing if we're willing to look at ourselves. And I think whether that's looking at, because we need to be able to turn toward God and away from sin and life that isn't God, right? That kind of fundamental knowing of self. But then I think it's part of our ongoing transformation as well, that we really do have to be willing to be seen by God, by others, and see ourselves truthfully to grow, not just to be self-deprecating. I think criticism when I hear the word feedback. That's not the only thing that it means.

**Don Payne** [00:07:55] Sure. Help us connect the dots between feedback and this kind of healthy self-awareness that you have in mind. How does feedback foster that in a way that we're pretty much unable to get at by ourselves?

**Debra Anderson** [00:08:19] Yeah, feedback is going to help us shape our perspectives. It's going to help us draw new boundaries around what we think is true about ourselves and how we impact others. It really holds a mirror to our thoughts and our feelings and our actions so that we can see how we might be closed to new views that could lead us into some sort of new freedom or knowledge or power. It also helps us to

step out of that introspection because we receive more objectivity when we receive it from other individuals. It removes our delusions. We are often guilty of being a little delusional, particularly the higher up we go in any leadership, because we tend to get less feedback, the higher up we go in leadership, or at least real feedback. So, we tend to believe our own PR, and we like to be overly confident in America. But delusions that we have can make us overestimate our abilities, to overestimate our empathy or adaptability or effectiveness and collaboration. So that's one of the benefits of feedback, is it helps reshape our perspective and it helps us walk away from any kind of illusion or delusion toward objectivity.

**Don Payne** [00:09:36] Yeah. Okay. Deb, you're putting your finger on something that has intrigued me for a long time, I think. And that is why feedback, the kind of feedback that can genuinely help us know ourselves and grow, is so difficult both to find and maybe sometimes difficult to receive it. And it may be difficult to give it as well. But I'd love for us to talk a bit about the challenges, the various types of challenges involved in finding and receiving and in giving the kind of feedback that really does have the potential to help us know ourselves and grow. What are some of those challenges? Why is that so difficult?

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:10:17] I'm always impressed with the student who will reflect back to me how they're so excited that their mentor challenges them. Part of our program is we get to watch them interact at least a few times, right? So sometimes if they sort of just start doing their natural way that they relate and they're not just describing the relationship, you can see it. Because I think it's really hard really, if we're honest, right, to say, I just love, I'm so open to criticism. I just love, I know I grow from it. I mean, we do know that it might be true, but people who seek it, I think there are some, maybe it's a personality type, a learning style. I'm assuming there's a humility posture. I mean, I know just personally, right. That's the piece of like self-revelation that comes from, I'll take feedback, but I'm going to carefully select who gives it to me because I have the feeling I know what she'll say. But to have a student say, I'm so excited that it's required to have a mentor because I know I need someone to challenge and keep me, like they already know they want this. So, I think there is probably a consciousness that needs to come, either that has to be coached or a natural sense of I will not be everything that I need to be as a student, as a person of God, as a pastor, unless I'm letting somebody challenge me. And I love that posture.

**Don Payne** [00:11:38] So it does take a lot of courage to genuinely be open to that. When we realize that some of that feedback may not always tell me what I want to hear or affirm what I already am or what I already think, right?

**Nathan Scherrer** [00:11:55] I might attach to courage there a sense of agency for the individual, that if they have a clear understanding of the goals that they do have, then pursuing feedback actually can be empowered by understanding that they have the agency to seek after it. So, an appropriate kind of appreciation of the role that feedback can have towards meeting your goals can have its own kind of motivational consistency for the individual.

**Debra Anderson** [00:12:25] Yeah, to attach to something each of you said, Nathan, to go off of that, we don't receive it because we don't seek it out often. What do we call that? The Dunning Kruger effect, where we think more highly of ourselves and what is really true about ourselves. They call that the better than average effect, I think in their research. That we will rate our abilities better than average, and most of us will do that, which makes that statistically impossible. Because if most of us think that, then we're not better than average. But that's what also prevents us from seeking feedback. And to connect with what you were saying, Teri, our relational systems aren't set up for the kind of feedback we need for growth. When you think about particularly people in leadership, like I was saying, the higher up you go in leadership, the less feedback you get, it's because the system isn't set up for it. You don't get a 90-day review when you become a VP or you don't get a six-month review, or if you've set yourself up with a board, they might not actually get around to that work of giving you that candid observation kind of feedback, because there is a lot of other good work that they do. So, we just tend not to have the structures relationally to get that kind of feedback. But in our program, our students have that structure built in and they're benefiting from that structure.

**Don Payne** [00:13:48] Well, for those who are maybe in leadership positions where getting the kind of feedback they need is increasingly difficult, do you have recommendations? How should people go about? I mean, this is all on the assumption that we all continually need feedback, no matter who we are, no matter what our positions are, we need that. But if, as you say, we can sometimes find ourselves in positions where people are less likely to give it for whatever reason, how do we go about getting that?

**Debra Anderson** [00:14:24] Well, it speaks to feedback literacy, which is a term we've been tossing around lately. We'll go and seek it first. We have to be willing to go seek it and then know what to do with it, apply it, make meaning out of it. So, for example, I know a particular pastor who has asked the board of elders over and over again, will you give me a review? Will you give me a review? And it has just, they say, we'll get around to it. And so, he's really begging for that kind of feedback. It shouldn't be that hard. So even when we ask for it, we might not get it. But that's the first step for all of us, is to ask for it in different ways.

**Don Payne** [00:15:05] I want to come back to that. But what are the thoughts do you all have on that?

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:15:10] I wonder if there's a way that if we think too hierarchically about where feedback ought to come from, that we do at some point maybe get to a place where we don't know where to look? So, what I mean is, is that if we think like sort of above right, and that can be true of a mentoring relationship that some people think I will learn the most if I have someone who is however many steps ahead of me, whether that's discipleship or work. And I think for feedback, again, part of the 360 is usually you get someone who might be in charge of you or who you report to, but you also get feedback from people who report to you. So, I think if we're taking proactive kind of, I want feedback, who are we willing to get feedback from? Do we think that maybe someone who, maybe we need to let go of some of what does it mean to be qualified to give feedback? Right. Because there's multiple angles of our presence. So, things like, I hear of, you know, school principals who sweep the floor when everyone leaves, even though there's a custodian. But there's something about she wants to connect with her building, so she does that. If somebody noticed that, what does that say about her? But that wouldn't have to come from the superintendent of a school, might not see it. So, what do teachers and parents and students, right like who are the stakeholders that you would make a difference to? Are we willing to hear from all of them, or do we think we've run out of people because we're in a position where, oh, the elders won't do it, so who's going to?

**Don Payne** [00:16:41] Would it also be the case that we may have to even take an additional step and proactively give those individuals permission and somehow create a safe space for them to do that? Particularly if in a hierarchical organization of some sort, if those are direct reports or people who are, to use hierarchical language, kind of down line organizationally from a person, even to invite that feedback can feel very unsafe to a person if they feel like somehow, directly, or indirectly, that might come back on them. So, what suggestions? How do you create that safe space for people actually to do that in a way that is going to be beneficial and safe?

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:17:26] That might speak a little bit to relational culture, right, I think, Deborah, which we can't solve, but it's really nice when we get to just name what we think is a cultural issue. So, if there's a culture that someone has an opportunity to create that feedback as normal and maybe call it different things, there's observation, there's not evaluative feedback. It's really like I'm open to understanding my impact on you. But I think safety is important and there's probably wisdom in people who are afraid to give feedback to people. So, they might have a good reason, maybe that it hasn't gone well. But how do you enter a space and say, I want to make this a place where people observe each other, and they ask good questions. I'm not sure. It feels like a culture shift.

**Don Payne** [00:18:14] Yeah, there's probably no end to the list of the people and experiences those people have had where feedback well-intended has backfired on them somehow, gone very poorly one way or another.

**Nathan Scherrer** [00:18:29] Yeah, at the end of the day, you have to make a judgment based on the feedback you receive. Whether that feedback has been positive or difficult for you to receive. If I was going to go through a process where I wanted to increase my own feedback literacy or my own capacity for using the opportunities possible from the feedback I'm receiving and approach that in two ways. One would be by monitoring. So that would be more on drawing information from my environment. So, this is more the internal reflective processing on what is the feedback my environment is giving me on my productivity, my own efficacy, how I'm being perceived. But then two would be through inquiry, which is what we're kind of getting at here, is directly eliciting feedback from other people and taking that initiative as a non-agent. But again, at the end of the day, you have to make a judgment on the feedback that you receive. And I like to think of that in terms of recalibrating. So, the broader swath of feedback sources that you can engage will help you reinform your own kind of self-assessment and the judgment process there. And as you make those judgments and recalibrate what your assumptions or your expectations were to the feedback that you're getting. So, if you have a broad pool to draw from, you can kind of dial back on the ones that are more harmful or a less appropriate and kind of funnel into the ones that have practical application that you can then go act upon.

**Don Payne** [00:19:55] This is really helpful. I love your insights. Let's switch this around for a moment and think about it from the vantage point of those who would be the givers of feedback. I think we've probably all seen loads of examples of people who well-intentioned, offered feedback, and for whatever reason or reasons, it ended up being not received or maybe even being harmful. And again, there could be a lot of reasons for that in the dynamic between any two people. But what advice, what guidance can you offer to people who can and should be giving feedback for the sake of others so that the feedback has a greater chance of being received and being fruitful?

**Nathan Scherrer** [00:20:47] One of my favorite kind of conversations to have with students and their mentors when I get time to spend with them is around this idea of challenge, which is a kind of feedback, right? And I'm seeing a pattern, and I like to affirm that when you seek to challenge someone, it's not arbitrary. You're not just looking at ways to poke the bear in your mentee. What the mentor is doing is attending to that person and what they're speaking to, how they're living their life, and they're looking for the gaps that exist between what that individual says they want or what they see as their future with their goals are. And any gap or discrepancy between that and how they're actually behaving, what decisions they're actually making. And then the mentor's job is to just shine a light on those things. Hey, you've said you want to grow in this way, but you're consistently choosing this. Do you see that gap? What do you want to do about that? Right. So, the challenge exists as an invitation to see the truth and then a platform for that individual to express what they want to do about that discrepancy. So, in a similar way, that kind of feedback from the giver is less about I've determined what the only criteria of right and wrong is for you and more about reflecting back to the individual, the goals that they've expressed in reality to the environment as you perceive it and seeing if there's an invitation for them to seek a better way forward.

**Don Payne** [00:22:20] Yeah, I love the way you express that, Nathan, because that feels to me anyway, much less attacking than possibly many people the way they experience feedback that's given, whether even if it's wise, appropriate, well-intended, but somehow it often is received as or experienced as an attack, an assault in some way. Is that fair?

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:22:41] I think that observation is a form of feedback. So, assuming that if I'm going to give feedback that it includes evaluation or even analysis, isn't necessarily true. So, I love that example, Nathan, that even asking a good question, a person could leave one's presence, if you're a good mentor who gives good feedback and not have heard advice per say, you know, not have heard, oh, I think you did that wrong. They might experience wow, you see really good questions, but my intention is feedback, because if the point of feedback is better self-awareness than if the person comes to it on his or her own, even better. They're not depending on, oh, she interpreted my experience this way and told me it was good or bad, but asking a question that might lead a person to see what I see, knowing I might be wrong. But if I'm right, it could be really helpful. So, I think sharing observations, which would mean sharing space together, you actually have to kind of walk-through experiences together and then even if you just observe,

the person might then hear something. So, I think about that in giving feedback. It can be a natural listening and asking good questions. It can be, I noticed this, that's feedback, but I don't have to put a judgment on it for an adult.

**Don Payne** [00:24:05] You both mentioned the element of asking questions, which really stuck out to me, which puts some of the agency back in the hands of the one who's receiving the feedback, right?

**Debra Anderson** [00:24:20] Yeah. I think you both also pointed out the difference between feedback and advice. I've heard feedback called filling a blind spot as a quick definition. It's different from advice. Advice is more about expanding the scope of someone's knowledge, and that feels optional. You can decide for yourself, do you know that or don't you? And what are you going to do with that? Feedback is more about providing something that the other person may never see on their own. And so, it dips into some very personal places because they are blind spots. So, we need to give it carefully. And I think, Nathan, you brought up a good point that we need to give feedback that really connects with what a person values what they want to do in order to grow, what do they need to learn in order to grow. And that's going to be that place of value that our feedback needs to attach to or it's not going to be very usable to that individual. I remember when I was a child, the pastor of our church got some feedback from someone in the congregation that the candles were distracting, the flicker of the flame in the candles was distracting, and the pastor had no category for this feedback. It wasn't relevant to him. And so that wasn't authentic feedback for him. So, it needs to attach to what the individual finds to be important. Our feedback needs to provide evidence of their affect that's relative to their intent. What is it they are trying to grow in? That's where our feedback is going to have the deepest roots.

**Don Payne** [00:26:04] Wow, because I've conducted lots of trainings about feedback, I'm realizing now how surface level most of my trainings about feedback have been. They were well-intended but only went so far. I really appreciate your perceptions and your probing insights here. I know y'all have used, or you do use the language of self-managing, self-monitoring, and self-modifying. Tell us what you mean by that.

**Debra Anderson** [00:26:32] Yeah, these descriptors come from self-directed learning theorists, Kallick and Costa, and they believe that these describe people who are self-directed and who can construct meaning and insight from their life experience. So, people who are self-managing, self-monitoring, self-modifying are the kinds of people who can continually search for alignment between their values and their actions. So of course, as people of God, we learn to know and to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth. So as people who are being transformed, we seek to align with that will and the character of God, and we put away those old ways of being. So, this really merges with how do we relate this to the Holy Spirit's work in our transformation.

**Don Payne** [00:27:22] I was going to ask you about that.

**Debra Anderson** [00:27:23] If we're helping to align between our values and our actions, this feedback is really taking us into theological spaces of what do we believe the Holy Spirit can do in our lives? How much will we trust them with who we are?

**Don Payne** [00:27:37] Yeah, the way I was thinking about that was the popular notion. I know you all have heard it, that we really can't grow ourselves. We can't transform ourselves. Only the Holy Spirit can do that, right? Clearly, the Spirit of God has a pivotal, crucial role in that. But what that role is sometimes gets strangely pitted against at least the language of self-managing, self-modifying. So, when we're using that kind of language, how do we dock that with what it means properly to depend upon the Holy Spirit?

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:28:16] We could add another self to it. I was thinking about Ignatian spirituality and the self-examination. Right. So briefly, the idea that basically a person, as a way of discernment, as a way of connecting with God and trusting that they can hear from the Holy Spirit, might go through a practice in prayer of just asking. Or it's self-examination in the light of the Holy Spirit. So, you ask yourself, where have I seen or experienced God's love today? Where have I been far removed from experiencing God's love?

There's lots of different language, but I think the idea of that kind of practice around this wonderful old gift of spirituality from the Ignatian tradition is that the self-examination is not other than God. There's no separation between what I'm doing in my spirit and God's presence with me. So, it doesn't have to be either or. But that question is, I'm coming before God. I'm asking myself and God the question, sort of this simultaneous and believing I can get insight and then you do something with that. I heard you say action a few times, right? So, in that practice, it's and what will I do tomorrow? I repent for the ways that I was separate from you. And I have hope because I did also experience life with you today. I feel like that's feedback in a way. It's believing that if I ask that question, and I might have to train my spirit, so to speak, to hear it. But if I ask God, where were you today? What do you want from me tomorrow? I mean, that kind of relationship with God in prayer is asking for feedback.

**Don Payne** [00:30:05] Divine feedback. That is a sort of feedback loop with the Lord, right? Is that what I'm hearing?

**Nathan Scherrer** [00:30:11] Yeah. I think at the end of the day, we're looking at are you passive or are you a participant in this journey with him? I'm kind of getting at that 2 Peter, make every effort. And that leads us to a kind of knowing of who God is in our life with Him that's deeply interpersonal and necessitates a lot of his energy, but a lot of our participation with him in the process.

**Don Payne** [00:30:36] Yeah, it never negates responsibility or agency. You mentioned the word action. And I guess maybe a final question. What does it look like to assess feedback that we're given and take action on that feedback? Now, implicit in that question is the assumption that we may get feedback that is not helpful or good feedback. And so, the receiver of feedback always has to do some kind of assessment, right? What does it look like to assess feedback and then be able to take action on that?

**Debra Anderson** [00:31:11] We often have conversations with our students about how to assess the feedback or how to even just move through the resistance that feedback can often garner in us, and that takes some skills too. So, we talk with them about how can we involve others in this? You've received feedback, and Teri was alluding to and talking about this, we receive it from one individual, but we probably need it from more than one. In fact, I heard a local organizational psychologist, Tasha Eurich, she has this rule of thumb that says if that feedback, that opinion, if that idea is coming from one person, that's an opinion, but it's something we can consider. But it's an opinion. If it's coming from two people, that's a pattern to be aware of. And if it's coming from three or more, that's a fact. So, seeking out feedback from more than one source, that's a fantastic action to take on that feedback, to follow up with it with other people, but also using our past as a resource to help us evaluate the nuances of the feedback. Have I heard this before? In what context do those contexts have something to say about that, the way I was impacting them, and can we attach feedback to our relevant need? If it's going to be helpful, it's got to touch our lives, so we have to be able to evaluate it in light of who we are and what we find to be valuable. If it touches our values, it will increase our motivation to then apply it. So those are just some ways we talk with our students about what to do with the feedback you get and how can you integrate that into your life.

**Don Payne** [00:32:47] I'm going to bet that it would be more challenging to do what you've suggested, Debra, with positive affirming feedback than it would be with challenging feedback. Because if somebody gives us some really affirming feedback, I mean, isn't it our natural instinct to just take that as gospel and run with that? Maybe this is a leading question but is it just as important to vet and look for patterns with the positive feedback that we're given so that we're not, you know, not just buying into that immediately because some person likes us, or they happen to resonate with something about us or something we do where the pattern may be otherwise. I mean, is it just as important to vet positive feedback as it is challenging feedback?

**Nathan Scherrer** [00:33:34] Of course.

**Don Payne** [00:33:37] Right answer. I told you it was a leading question.

**Nathan Scherrer** [00:33:40] Certain relationships in your life that might find a benefit to giving you what it is you want to hear. So, your evaluative judgment needs to be sharpened through practice. But assuming that an individual is on a lifelong trajectory of growth, whether that's professionally in the workplace or in their relationships are as a person following Jesus, it's going to require ongoing feedback to help you assess the efficacy of your adaptive process over time. Right? You're going to garner feedback and you're going to take action on that. How do you know if that action works? Well, you're going to need more feedback. And so, as you do that, you're probably going to receive positive feedback that is going to demonstrate to you that, yeah, I'm headed in the right direction. So, vetting that for the truth also fits into the total trajectory of how you're growing as a person. So, there is good function there as well.

**Debra Anderson** [00:34:35] And you want to look at who you're receiving that feedback from as well. You want to look for feedback from people who are loving critics, not unloving critics, and also not uncritical lovers.

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:34:48] Yes, that's it.

**Debra Anderson** [00:34:49] Look for those people who love you, they know that you're faulty. They're not too overly impressed by you. But look and listen to that rather than the people who you know are just being critical.

**Don Payne** [00:35:07] You don't know this or intend this, but that's really affirming to me because I can remember years ago frequently telling students, many of whom were headed into some form of pastoral ministry or maybe other kinds of ministry leadership, that the more experienced and maybe more proficient they became at what they were doing, the more difficult it was going to be to get feedback that would help them continue to grow. And what they needed was people who take them very seriously, who love them deeply, but who are not impressed with them or intimidated by them. Which is harder and harder and harder to get, I think it, that combination which you just pointed out.

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:35:53] As the person increases in power and authority and their self-management. Right. We see that happening, unfortunately. Their distance from anyone who would be willing to give that kind of feedback.

**Don Payne** [00:36:08] Yeah. Well, the thread I'm hearing in our entire conversation is the crucial role that feedback plays in personal transformation. And in discipleship and mentoring, in any kind of formational endeavor, as well as our own formational pursuits. Feedback is a crucial, crucial element and is as equally nuanced, delicate, dicey, difficult as it is crucial. I don't want to make it overcomplicated, but we've all seen, I think, how easily feedback can go off the rails or can have a counterproductive effect. So, learning the skill of giving and learning the skill of receiving feedback are maybe about as important as any other element in formational activities and endeavors.

**Debra Anderson** [00:37:04] And relationships. And at the end of the day, that's what we're talking about, relationships.

**Don Payne** [00:37:09] It is, yeah. Well, thank you all three for these insights for the time with us, for the work that you're doing with our students that I know is paying and will continue to pay cascading layers of impact on the people they serve because of the way you've served them. Yeah. Our professors, Debra Anderson, Teri Elliott-Hart, and Nathan Scherrer.

**Teri Elliott-Hart** [00:37:32] Thank you for having us.

**Don Payne** [00:37:33] Friends, we're grateful that you've chosen to spend some time with us. If you get the chance, please leave us a rating or review wherever you listen to podcasts. And please send any questions or comments to us at our email address, which is a [podcast@DenverSeminary.edu](mailto:podcast@DenverSeminary.edu). Our website, [denverSeminary.edu](http://denverSeminary.edu) has plenty of other resources you can explore, such as advanced degree programs and

also more episodes of Engage 360, including full episode transcripts. We're really grateful for your interest, for your support, and for your prayers. Until next time, may the Lord bless you. Take care, friends.