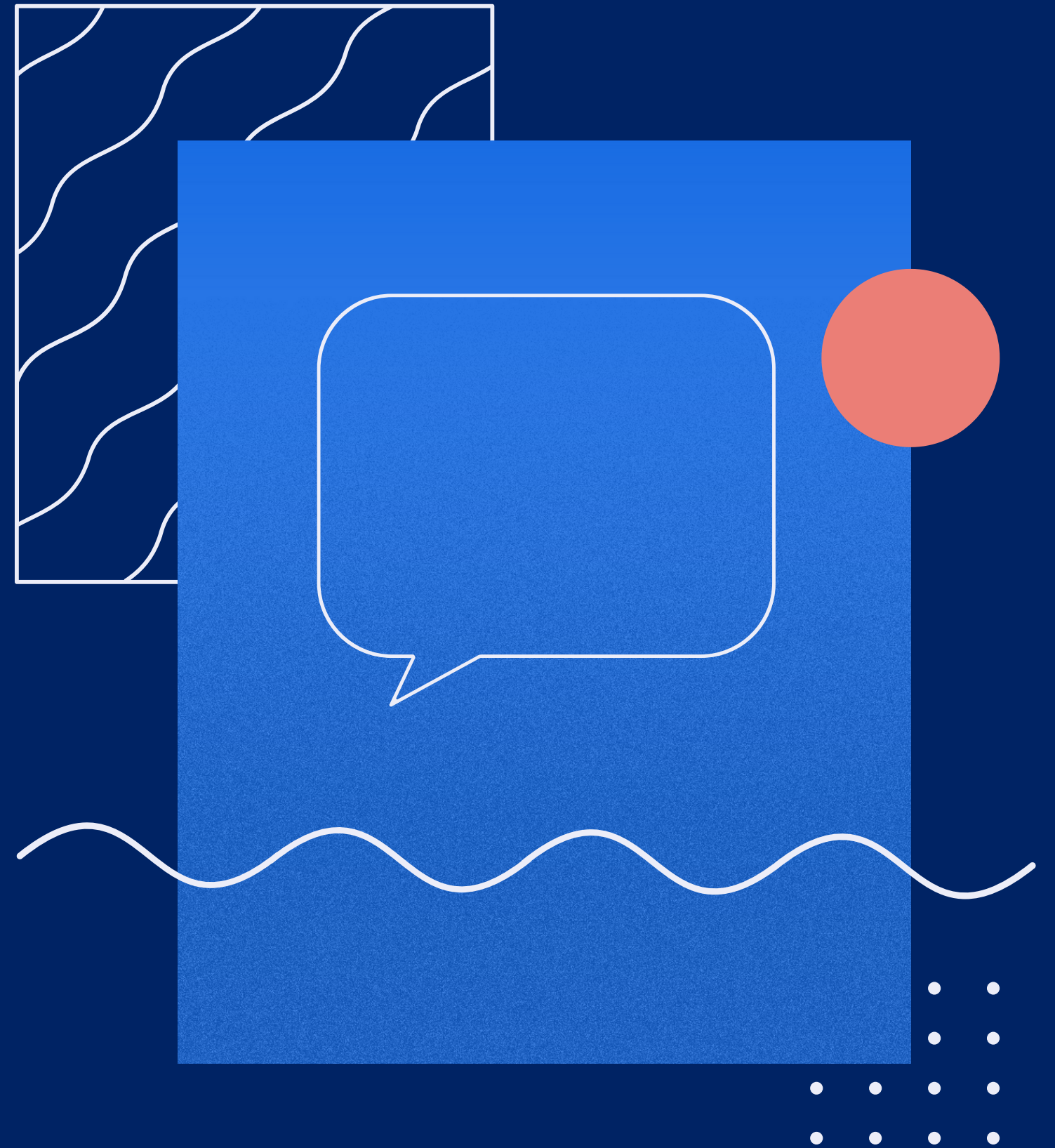


# Communication Hacks

STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING COLLABORATION  
AND DEALING WITH CONFLICT IN OPEN SOURCE

BY NURITZI SANCHEZ  
SR. OPEN SOURCE PROGRAM MANAGER, GITLAB







# Nuritzi Sanchez

Sr. Open Source  
Program Manager,  
GitLab



@1nuritzi



# Today we'll cover

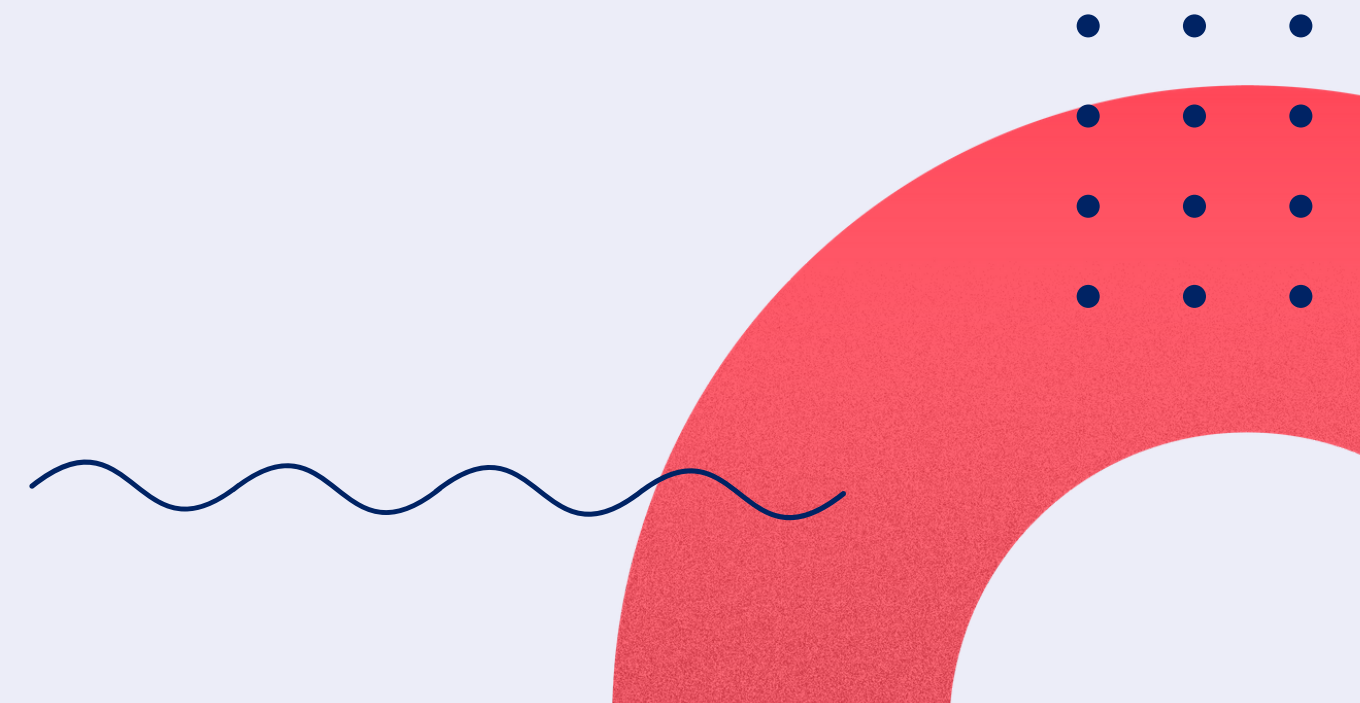
Navigating cultural differences

Improving feedback

Active listening

Favorite hacks

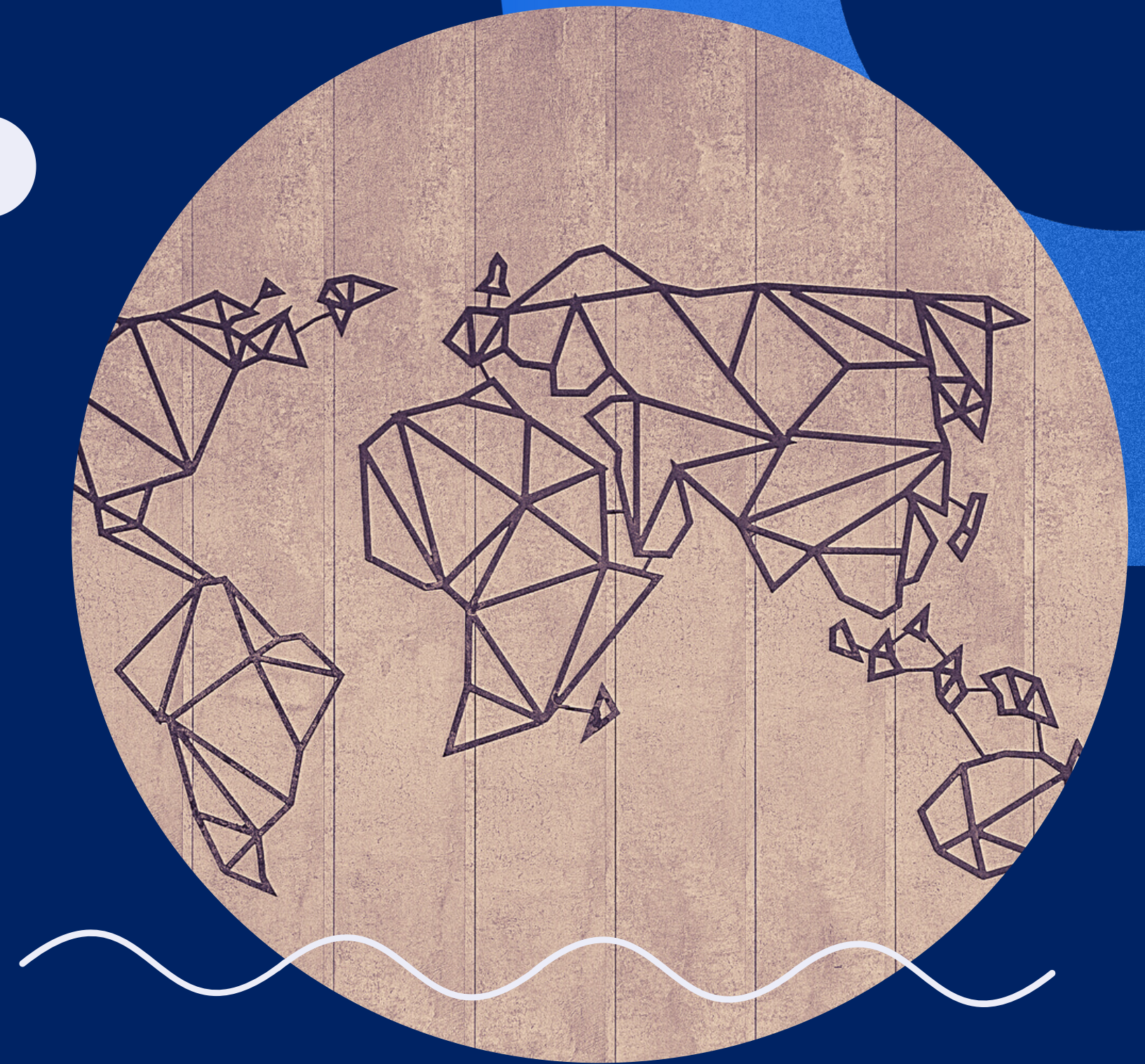
Slides can be found: [bit.ly/communication-hacks-ns](https://bit.ly/communication-hacks-ns)





# Navigating cultural differences

Open source  
communities  
attract members  
from all over the  
world





# We need to understand cultural differences

Countries are ranked along these 7 indicators:

1. Communicating
2. Evaluating
3. Leading
4. Trusting
5. Disagreeing
6. Scheduling
7. Persuading

Low-context	COMMUNICATING	High-context
Direct Negative Feedback	EVALUATING	Indirect Negative Feedback
Egalitarian	LEADING	Hierarchical
Consensual	DECIDING	Top-down
Task-based	TRUSTING	Relationship-based
Confrontational	DISAGREEING	Avoids Confrontation
Linear-time	SCHEDULING	Flexible-time
Principles First	PERSUADING	Applications First



# What it means

## Communicating

Low context: good communication is precise, simple, and clear. Repetition is often used to avoid misunderstandings.

High context: good communication is sophisticated, nuanced, and layered. You must read between the lines.



USA



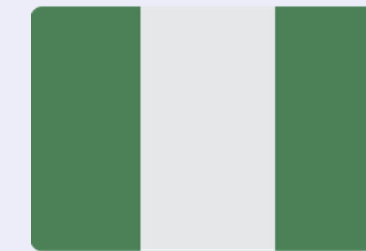
Germany



UK



France



Nigeria



India



China



Indonesia

Low Context

High Context

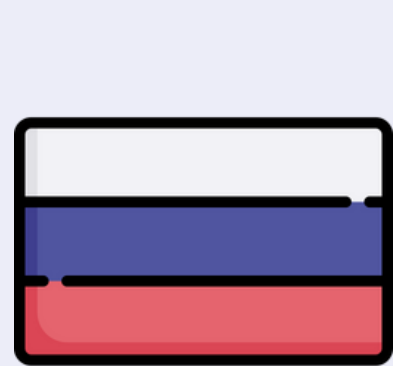


# What it means

## Evaluating

Direct negative feedback: delivered frankly, bluntly, and honestly. Negative messages are not softened by positive ones. Absolutes are used. Ok to give in front of groups.

Indirect negative feedback: delivered softly, subtly, and diplomatically. Positive messages wrap negative ones. Qualifying descriptors are used. Feedback must be given in private.



Russia



Germany



Nigeria



France



USA



UK



Mexico



India



China



Indonesia

Direct Negative Feedback

Indirect Negative Feedback

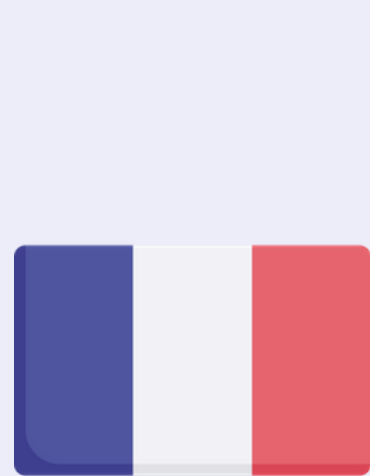


# What it means

## Persuading

Principles first: Value the "why" first. Have been trained to develop the theory or concept first before presenting the fact, statement, or opinion.

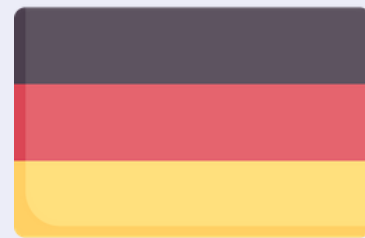
Applications first: Value the "how" or "what" first. Trained to begin with a fact, statement, or opinion and back it up or explain the conclusion as necessary.



France



Spain



Germany



Italy



UK



USA

Principles First

Applications First



# Culture Map Example: 2020 GNOME Foundation Board of Directors

In 2020 there are Directors with backgrounds from:

UK

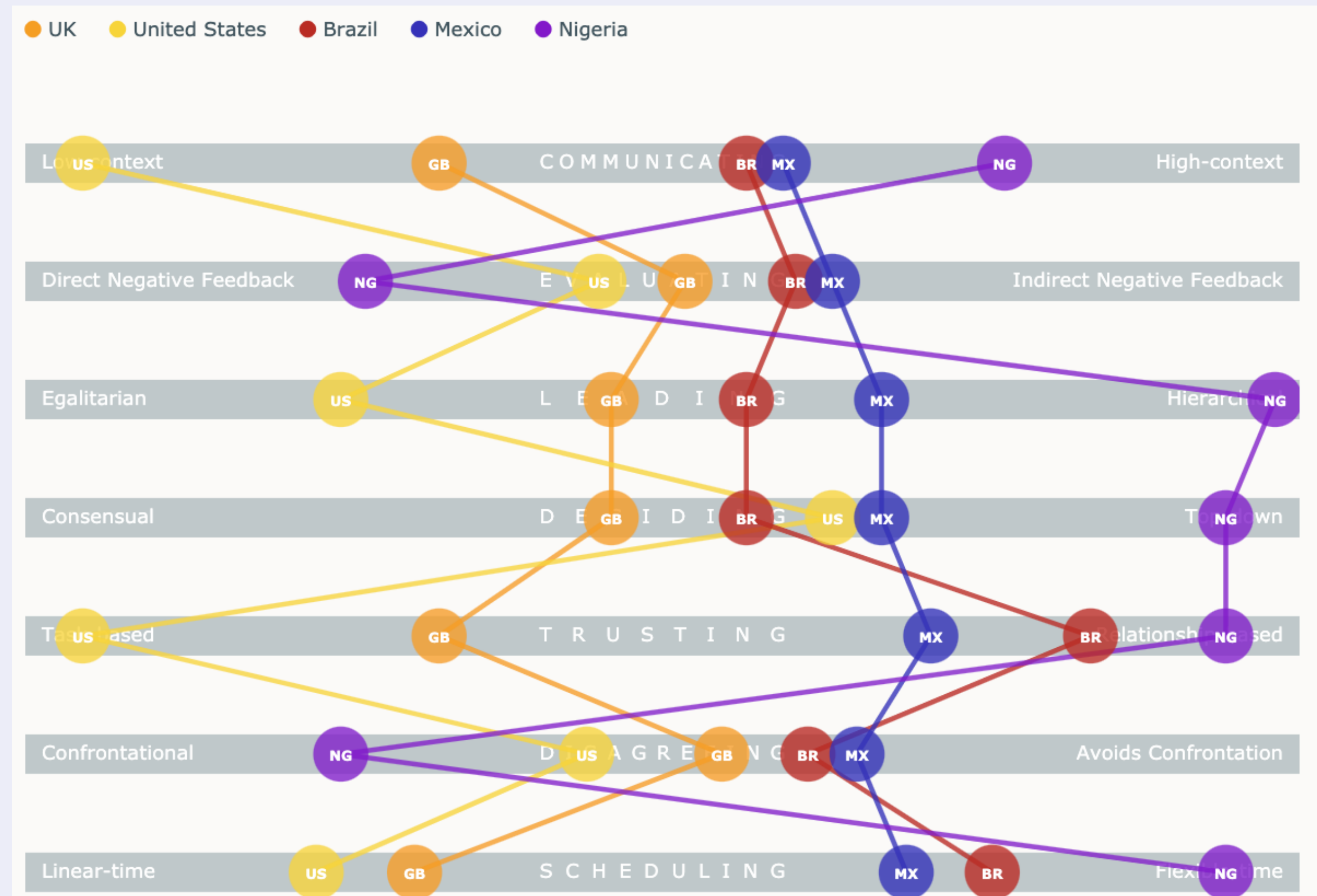
United States

Brazil

Mexico

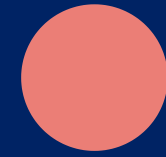
Nigeria

Source: The Culture Map by Erin Myers via <https://www.erinmeyer.com/culturemap/>

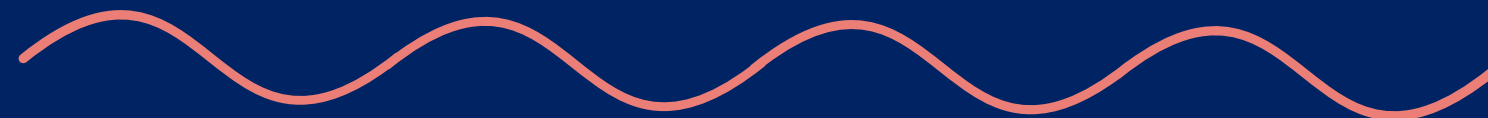




# Improving feedback



Feedback is a gift,  
but most of us  
find it challenging



# FEEDBACK

Giving and receiving feedback is a skill that we can build!

**Be aware of underlying biases or tendencies**

As we just learned, real cultural differences exist that we need to be aware of. When we give or receive feedback, we are influenced by our own stereotypes and biases.

**Feedback is a good thing!**

Feedback-seeking behavior has been linked to higher job satisfaction, being more creative on the job, and adapting to things more quickly.

Seeking negative feedback is associated with higher performance.





# TIPS FOR RECEIVING FEEDBACK

## Take some time

We often get defensive or angry when we first hear negative feedback. It is ok to take some time to process the feedback!

## Create a script

Make taking a time out a part of your process and develop a script to help: "Thanks for the feedback. I'm going to take some time to process it and will come back to you later."

## Focus on your physical body

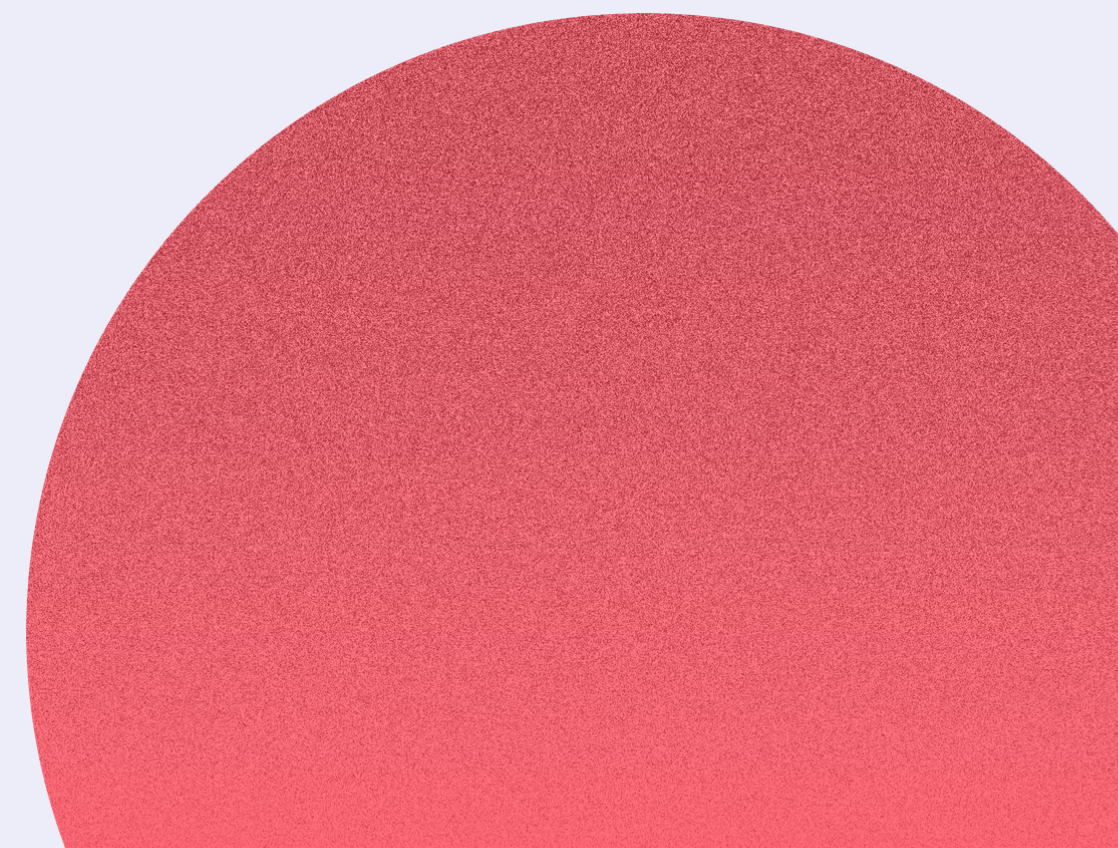
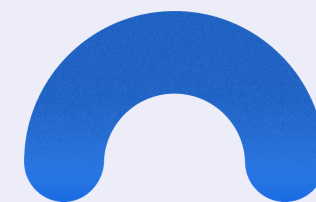
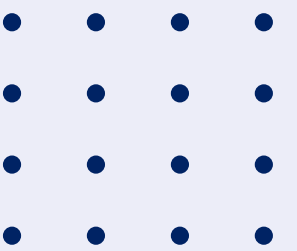
If you have a physical reaction, focus on your physical body to ground yourself. Try a breathing technique: 4-4-4. Breathe in for four seconds, hold for four, release for four. Try that at least four times.

## Process the feedback

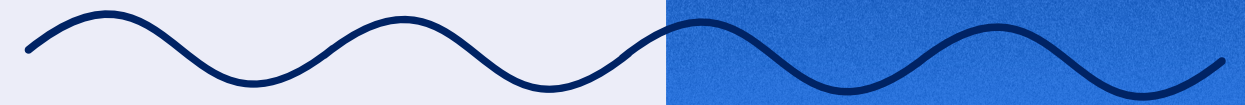
Ask yourself: What is true about what you heard? What do you think is biased? How can you use this to progress?

Receiving negative feedback is tough!

We feel bad emotions more strongly than we feel good ones because our brains are wired to detect threats to help us survive. Our fight, flight, or freeze instincts can kick in when we receive negative feedback.



# Identify your triggers



## Truth Triggers

Set off by the substance of the feedback itself. We feel that it's somehow off, unhelpful, or simply untrue.

## Relationship Triggers

Set off by a particular person who is giving us this gift of feedback. Our focus shifts from the feedback itself to our relationship with the person giving us the feedback.

## Identity Triggers

Causes us to question our sense of identity. We feel overwhelmed, threatened, ashamed, or off balance. We're suddenly unsure what to think of ourselves and we end up just trying to survive.



# TIPS FOR GIVING BETTER FEEDBACK

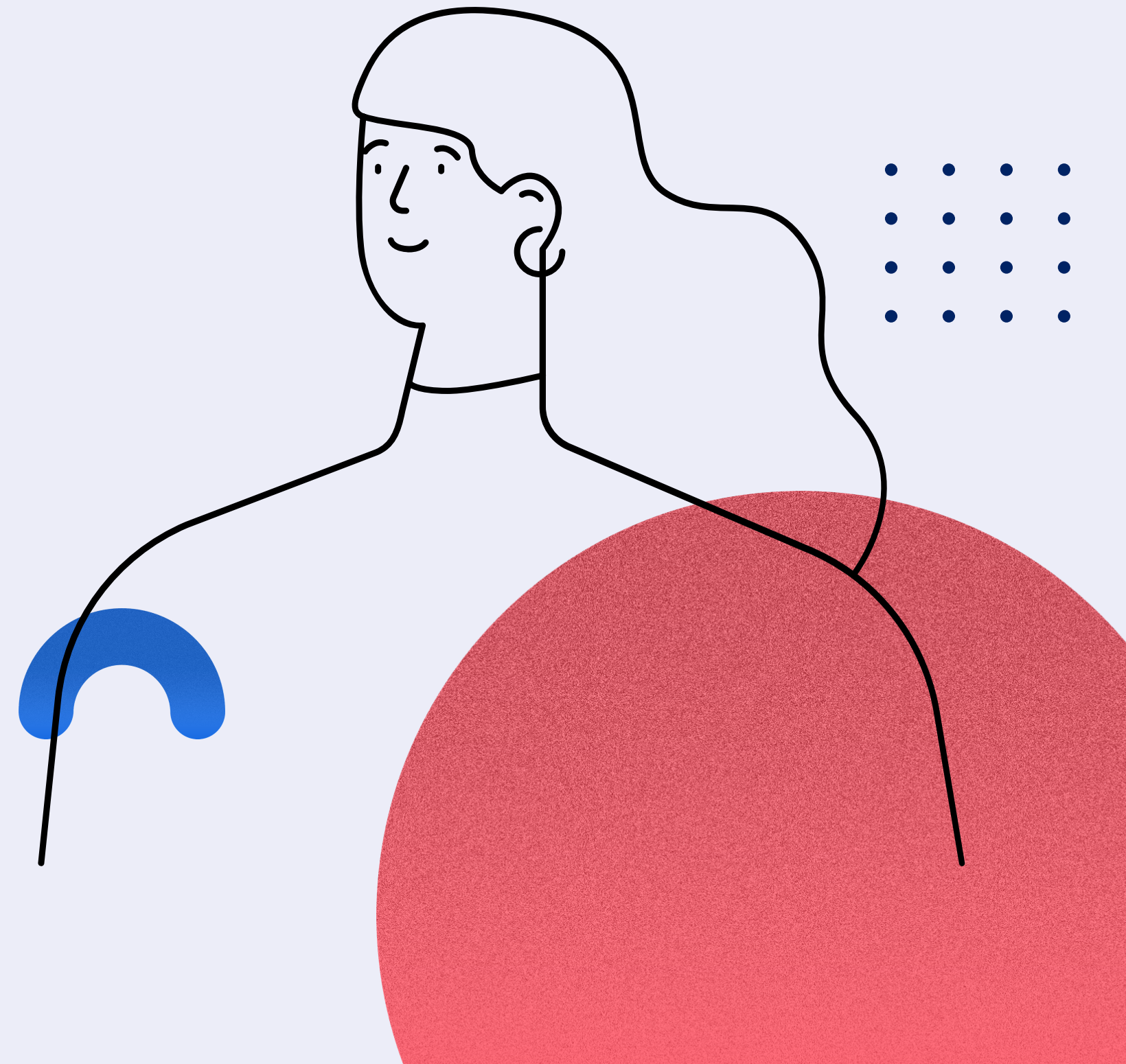
Think about what kind of feedback you're giving:

- **Evaluation:** helps you understand where you are and expectations
- **Coaching:** helps you improve
- **Positive / Appreciation:** motivates and encourages

When I think ... it makes me feel...

Right person, place, and time.

Positive feedback public, negative feedback private



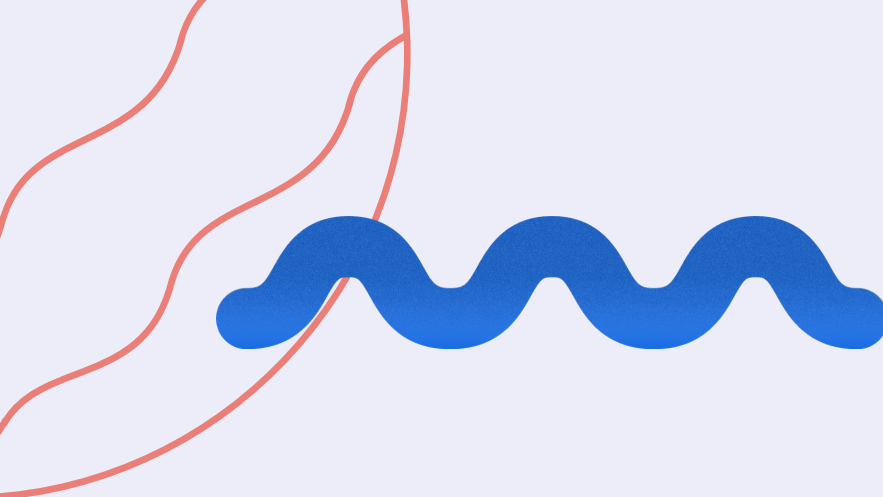


# Active listening

Communication  
isn't just about  
talking -- listening  
is just as  
important







“Being heard and understood is  
one of the greatest desires of the  
human heart.”

- Richard Carlson



# Types of Listening

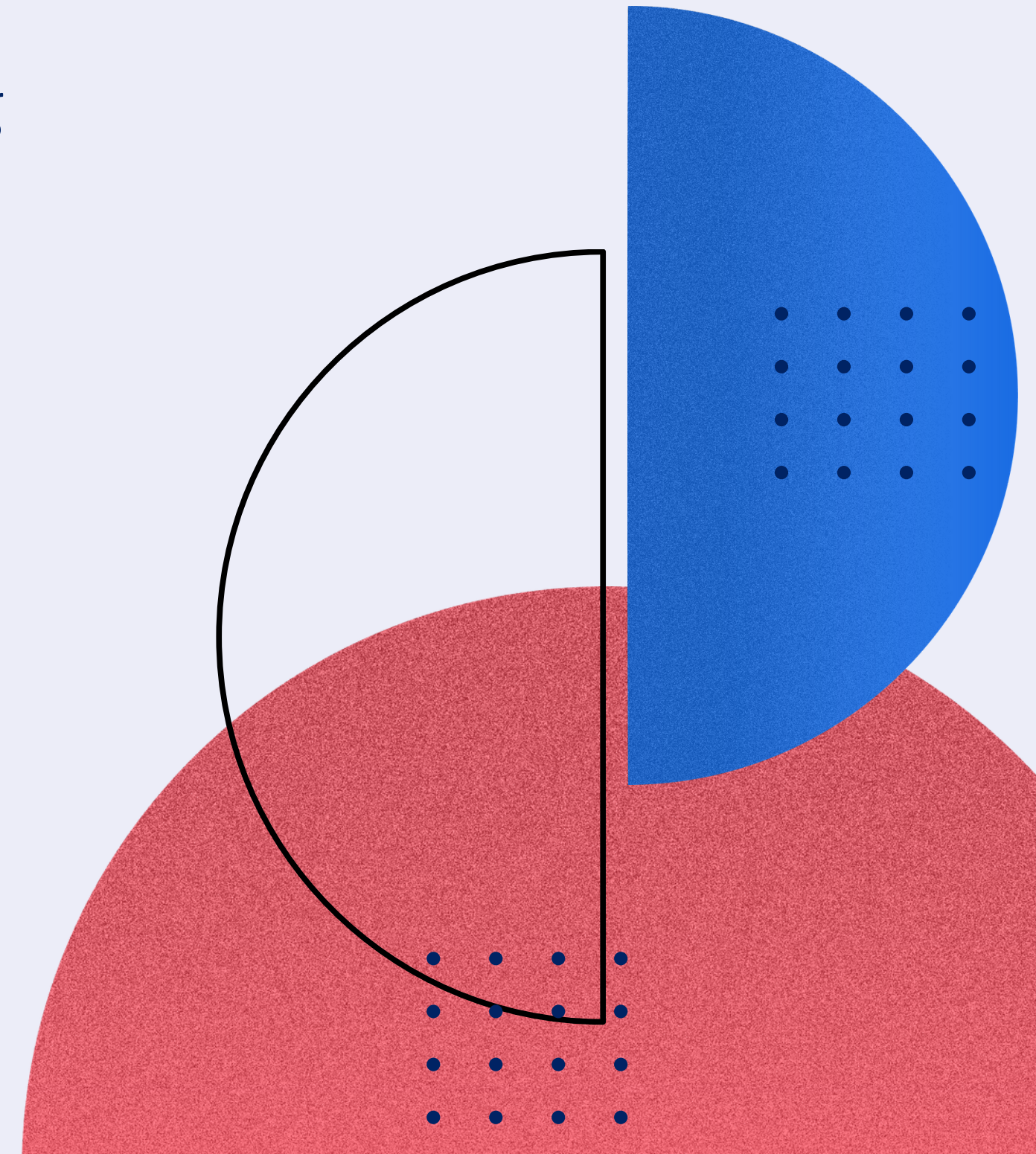
Distracted Listening - multitasking or preoccupied.

Content Listening - listening to the facts and planning how to respond.

Identifying Listening - responding with a similar situation to show you understand.

Problem Solving - listening with the intent to provide feedback and ideas on how to solve the situation.

Active Listening - you hear the facts and the feelings and respond appropriately to both.





# ACTIVE LISTENING

## Simple Signals and Questions

Cues help us understand what to do. For example, traffic signals let us know if we should stop, go, or yield to traffic.

Our actions and words do the same. Looking at people in the eye, putting down our phone, or looking away from our computer may signal that we're interested and listening.

Verbal cues that show we're listening may include:

- Really?
- Uh huh
- Interesting
- Wow!
- Tell me more about that
- What's going on?
- What do you think?
- How are things?

# ACTIVE LISTENING

## Paraphrasing

Identify key words and the meaning of what is being said. Then, rephrase what you have heard in your own words and to repeat the message back to the speaker.

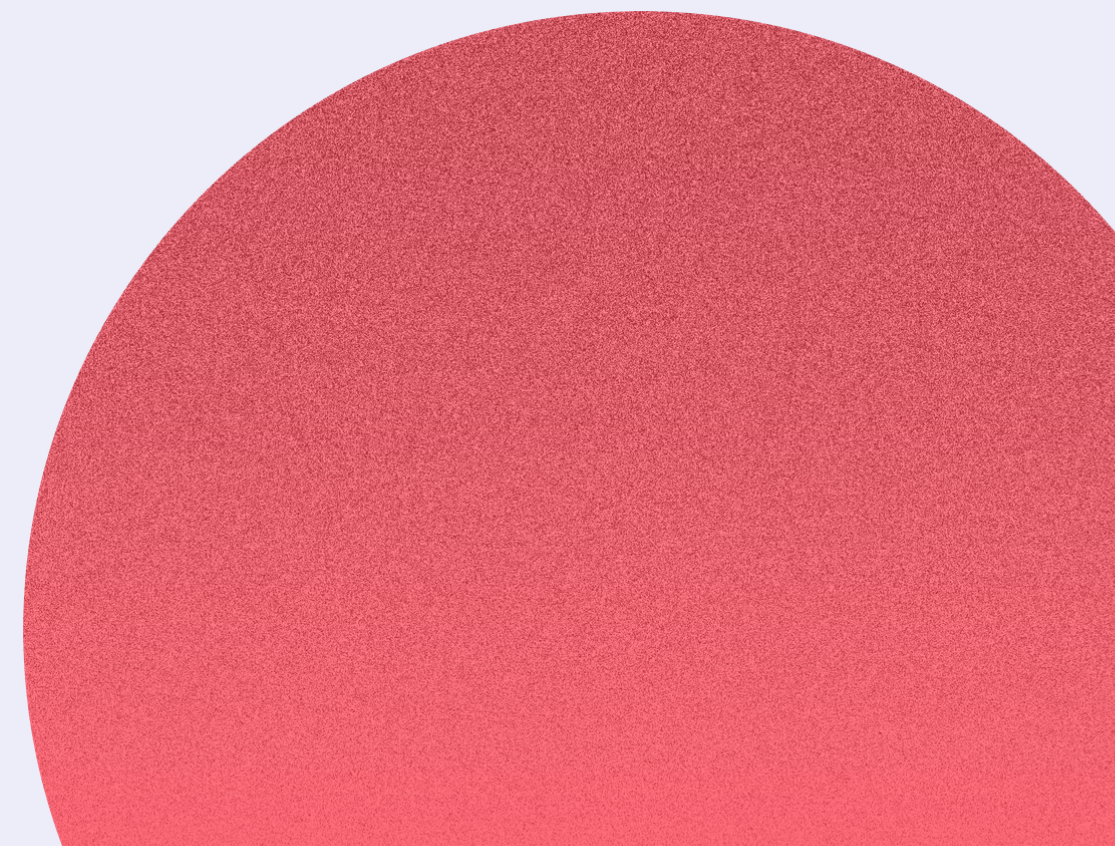
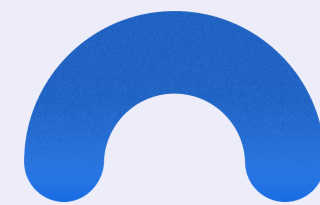
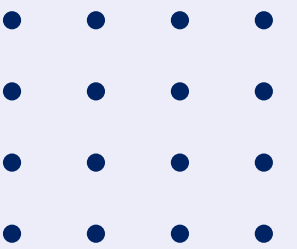
Why this is powerful:

- Helps the speaker feel heard and understood
- Don't have to be in agreement
- Makes room for many ideas
- Summarizes and can lead to closure
- Gives you more information and buys you time to think



# Active listening is important for building relationships

You can employ these principles in the virtual world, but more importantly, you can use them in person at events to build relationships that carry on into the online world!

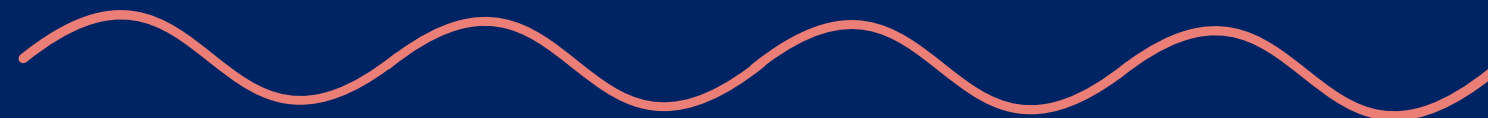




# Favorite Hacks



Practical advice  
you can try out  
immediately





# It's the writer's job to be understood!

Formatting helps!

- Avoid long sentences. Whenever you see yet another "and," break it up into two sentences.
- Don't assume previous knowledge. Try to make it easy for someone new to jump into the conversation.
- Skim test. See if you can skim through and get the main points.
- Call to action. Make your call to action clear and state who needs to do it, and by when.

Yes, and...

Instead of saying, "No" or "Yes, but," use "Yes, and."

This acknowledges what people say and still gives you room to disagree with them.  
People are more likely to listen to you if they feel like you listened to them.



# Collaborative Phrases

How might we...

Might I suggest we...

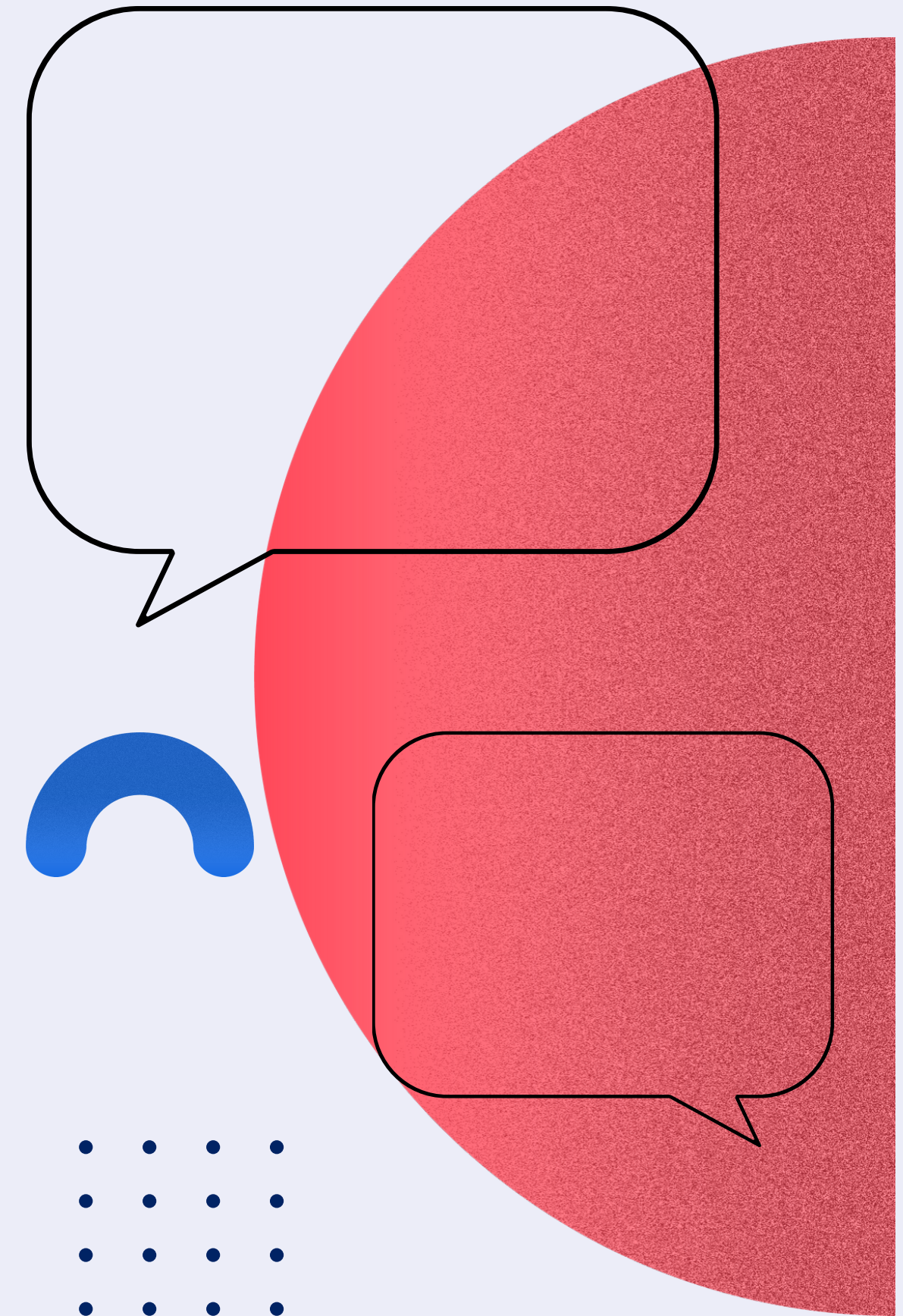
What are your thoughts?

From my perspective, it's a little bit different. Let me explain...

I hear what you're saying, and I have a different perspective...

Let me see if I understand what you're saying....

I like your idea, have you thought about...







“Communication works for those  
who work at it.”

- John Powell



# REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

*The Culture Map* by Erin Myers

Cross Culture Collaboration Guide by GitLab -- a guide to acknowledging cultural differences in the workplace and setting expectations for interactions

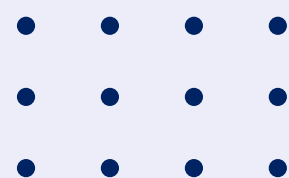
*Thanks for the Feedback: The science and art of receiving feedback well* by Douglas Stone and Sheila Heen (book and article)

*Feedback (and other dirty words): Why we fear it, how to fix it* by Tamra Chandler and Laura Dowling

*SBI Model* -- Center for Creative Leadership

*10 Phrases that Inspire Collaboration* -- Randstad Risesmart

Communication Essentials Workshop -- novaworks.org







# Thank You!

Slides can be found: [bit.ly/communication-hacks-ns](https://bit.ly/communication-hacks-ns)  
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# QUESTIONS?



@1nuritzi



/nuritzi