



TOOL | ROSE, BUD, THORN

TIME REQUIRED: 30 MINUTES

The Rose, Bud, Thorn framework is a great way to gather feedback from a large group. It creates space for different types of thinkers and contributors to share their feedback and provides structure to keep feedback conversations on topic.

USING THIS TOOL WILL HELP YOU:

- Gather feedback from a group on anything (e.g., an idea, a concept, a plan, etc.)
- Make sure that feedback does not focus only on either criticism or praise
- Make it easy and more comfortable for others to provide feedback
- Make sure that one voice does not dominate the conversation
- Visually identify similarities or differences in feedback
- Build alignment around core issues, opportunities, or challenges

OVERVIEW

Rose, Bud, Thorn is a structured way for groups to provide feedback, which is very handy for anyone involved in community change. Participants give feedback in the following categories:

- **Rose:** Positives. These are things that make this idea fantastic!
- **Bud:** Potentials. These are additional suggestions or questions that we'd like to explore.
- **Thorn:** Negatives. These are concerns, challenges, or potential roadblocks

This activity is best structured by giving a specific amount of time for each type of feedback to make sure that all types of feedback are gathered and considered.

THE TOOL

To use this framework, follow the steps outlined below:

1. Create a space on a wall or flip chart marked Rose, Bud, and Thorn (this space will be used to record feedback in each category)
2. Introduce the Rose, Bud, Thorn framework and how feedback will be captured. Make sure to do this before sharing the topic you are seeking feedback on, so that participants know how to collect their thoughts
3. Introduce the topic, idea, concept, or plan you are seeking feedback on
4. Give participants 2 minutes to write down as many points of feedback they can on individual sticky notes, making sure that their sticky note colour matches the category (Rose, Bud, or Thorn)
5. Starting with a category (usually roses), invite people to share their post-its one by one, around the group. After each person has shared, check to see if anyone else had similar feedback. If so, group similar post-its on the wall or flip chart together. Continue for 5-10 minutes.
6. Once all the roses have been captured, or time runs out, move on to the next category. If anyone did not have a chance to share their feedback with the group verbally, invite them to post their feedback on the wall or flip chart.
7. Once all the sections have been completed, share your reflections on the main themes and emerged and next steps
8. If appropriate, type up the post-it notes and share them with participants afterward.

PRINCIPLES FOR USING THIS TOOL

- It is usually best to start with roses to start feedback on a positive note
- Similarly, it is usually best to end with buds to make sure that
- Quiet time to capture notes before sharing is important. Some people are much more comfortable processing their feedback individually before sharing it with a group and this approach helps them participate effectively
- Look out for anyone who is not sharing or is not capturing their feedback on post-its
- Encourage participants to write their feedback down. Not only is this helpful for you as a facilitator, it helps make sure that one voice does not dominate the conversation (as others can contribute while the person is writing).

THE TOOL IN PRACTICE

Here's an example of Rose, Bud, Thorn, feedback on a new website for an organization.

Rose

- Very clear and easy to understand
- I like the vibrant colours!
- I'm excited that we're finally updating our website!

Bud

- Are we going to archive all of the content from the old website? Should we?
- I think we should have a search bar to help people navigate the content
- The pictures we're using are really vivid. I'd like to see more of them on the site

Thorn

- Some of the headers were confusing to me
- We need to include more diversity in our images
- Some of the text is too small

DIVING DEEPER

¹Check out more descriptions and uses of this tool [here](#) and [here](#)

²This tool can also be a helpful tool for [self-reflection and cultivating positivity](#), as described by Neil Pasricha, author of *The Book of Awesome* and *The Happiness Equation*

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