

THE ART OF FEEDBACK

Giving Clear Feedback

Giving feedback is a way to take responsibility for how you experience others. Your feedback is a gift; it gives others an opportunity to learn how they may be impacting you and others.

DO

- Check to see if you are curious while having your opinions and judgments.
- See the other as an ally, here for your learning and growth.
- Be open-hearted: treat the other like you would want someone to treat you or a loved one.
- Look for projection: Does what you see in the other reflect a part of you that you have not owned or accepted about yourself?
- See the other as empowered and responsible for their experience of the feedback.
- Ask if now is a good time to give feedback. If not now, then when?
- Be unarguable: *“When you did _____, I felt angry.”*
- Be brief: Give feedback in one or two outbreaths.
- Be specific: *“Last Thursday when we met, you said you would get X done by Monday. I still don’t have it.”*

DON'T

- Use the following excuses to avoid giving feedback:
 - They haven't asked for your opinion
 - You don't know how to say it the right way
 - It's not your role or position to say this to them
 - It's not appropriate
 - Make up the story that that they're not ready to hear it or won't get it
- Gather a list of evidence for how they are wrong.
- Avoid conflict: *“They will be upset.” or “They won’t like me.” or “They’ll seek revenge.”*
- Dismiss the person completely.
- Flatter the person to disguise the message.
- Be critical or righteous.
- Appreciate them to try to manipulate them to change their behavior.
- Over generalize
- Be too wordy: *“And furthermore....”*
- Pretend nothing is going on.
- Give up: *“What’s the use?”*

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Openly Receiving Feedback

Feedback is a gift. No matter whom it comes from or how it is delivered, it presents a unique opportunity to learn and grow.

DO

- Ask yourself *how*, not if, what they're saying is true.
- Ask questions to understand more about the person's perspective.
- See the person as an ally: "*How is this feedback and this person for me?*"
- Get curious: "*What can I learn from this?*" "*Is this part of a feedback pattern?*"
- Thank the person for the feedback to encourage them and others to give more.
- Acknowledge any defensiveness, breathe and move, and check if you are willing to shift.
- If you are unwilling to shift, let the giver know you are not available for feedback and offer another time to complete the conversation.
- Give yourself some time to contemplate any feedback that is particularly triggering for you.

DON'T

The following common responses reflect a lack of openness to receiving feedback:

- "You don't understand my issue." or "That's not it."
- "I'm already working on that." or "I knew that already."
- "I didn't ask for your opinion."
- "I don't like your tone, words, timing..."
- "You're not an expert in this subject so your feedback is not useful to me."
- "You don't care about me."
- "It's not me, it's them."
- "What's the big deal?"
- "This is not supportive."
- "You do the same thing."
- "That's not the way I remember it."
- "I don't think this is an issue, but I will change if it makes you feel better."
- "Whatever."
- "You're just trying to control me."
- "I don't trust you and your motives for giving me feedback."
- "It's not funny!"
- "How come you are always right and I am always wrong?"
- "I need a time out from this issue."