



Leadership Tips

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The

Give & Take

of Effective

FEEDBACK

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The Give & Take of Effective Feedback



Giving effective feedback

Tis the season of giving. Of course, not all giving is equal. In the workplace there is one kind of giving that can:

- Arrive unsolicited
- Miss the mark, despite the best of intentions
- Do more damage than good
- Leave a lasting mark

We're referring to the way in which feedback is shared, whether between colleagues, your co-workers, or between supervisors and direct reports.

Assess your own acumen when it comes to [critical conversations](#) such as the giving of feedback with this 7-question quiz.

Are You Committing Feedback Faux Pas?

Whether you're a manager, supervisor or co-worker, you are likely giving others feedback. Perhaps it's after a staff meeting, presentation or during a project review. You may be giving it privately or publicly. Might you be breaking some basic rules of giving feedback?

Quiz Pt. 1: When GIVING feedback...

1. ___ Are you prone to giving unsolicited feedback?
2. ___ Do you begin with negative feedback before sharing positive feedback?

3. ____ Do you give vague or general positive feedback yet give specific negative feedback?
4. ____ Do you wait months or up to a year before providing feedback on someone else's performance, whether positive or negative?
5. ____ Have you ever rhetorically asked "Do you mind if I give you some feedback?" before providing it on the spot, presuming you had permission?
6. ____ Do you sometimes give personal or private feedback in a public setting?
7. ____ Are you comfortable giving positive feedback but reluctant to address negative feedback about behaviors or performance?

Each of the above practices is generally considered to be either ineffective, inappropriate or unproductive, whether between friends, colleagues or between supervisors and direct reports.

How did you do?

If all your answers were No, you are a seasoned and sensitive giver of feedback. Congratulations.

Each answer of YES represents a faux pas in terms of how to give effective feedback. Continue reading to learn why.

Quiz 1 Tips: When Giving Feedback

1. **Beware of giving unsolicited feedback.** It's best to ask permission or otherwise indicate your desire or intention to share feedback. Show respect for others and obtain their consent first. Otherwise the recipient may not be receptive or otherwise resistant to receiving it, for various reasons (too soon, doesn't know you, doesn't feel you have their best interests at heart, or questions your qualifications to judge).
2. **Start with the positive** when blending negative and positive feedback. Research shows when you begin by sharing negative

feedback it minimizes the impact of the positive feedback that follows. Recipients discount it. Its impact is minimized by the previous criticisms they are mulling or sometimes stewing over.

3. **Make sure your positive feedback is *specific***, A common mistake is giving vague positive feedback, yet specific negative feedback. Millennials in particular, among generations, crave positive feedback, and for them and the rest of us, *specific is terrific*.
4. **Don't wait too long to give feedback.** It loses its impact when you wait too long. Show its importance by providing your constructive feedback in a timely manner.
5. Check your motives. **Your offer of feedback should be about the recipient.** Don't presume the moment you offer feedback is the best for the recipient. Be sensitive, thoughtful and genuine in asking for permission. What's the higher purpose in rushing to give feedback? If it's not about helping them and your organization, think twice about your rush to give feedback.
6. **Feedback should be given with care.** Consider the recipient's fragility and select, with them, a time and place that provides privacy and allows for a frank exchange.
7. **Professionals deserve to hear positive *and* negative feedback** given in a caring way. Take care in delivering criticism constructively.

(Our courses on difficult conversations and [sharpening your emotional intelligence skills](#) may be helpful here.)

How to give negative corrective feedback

When giving negative feedback here are some additional considerations:

- What do you want to say? Practice it and script it.
- Is your feedback constructive? It should be actionable and not just evaluative.
- When and where might this feedback be shared? Create a safe environment for both parties to protect confidentiality and allow for a frank discussion.

- What tone will you adopt? Style and tone are important here. Practice privately.
- Have you put yourself in the recipient's shoes? How would you feel if the shoe were on the other foot? Your aim is to deliver useful information without damaging the recipient or your relationship with them.
- Have you asked them to share their perspective on the situation?

Delivering Feedback As a Direct Report to a Supervisor

Situation: Since joining the department you've observed your supervisor's style of giving incessant praise to her employees. Being new in this job yet with a successful track record of high achievement over your career, you find her constant positive feedback annoying. At your monthly one-on-one you provide feedback to you supervisor about your desire for corrective feedback.

Solution:

You might say: "There's one more item I'd like to discuss with you today. Being new to the department I appreciate the support you've given me. o be most effective, I seek constructive criticism to help me be my best . While I appreciate your positive accolades , please know that I will not wilt from constructive criticism. (Smile.) I appreciate candor and have a thick skin so please don't hold back.

Delivering Feedback to a Peer

Situation: In a telephone support area full of cubicles one phone rep becomes overly loud during overseas calls. His loud voice drowns out his co-workers who are also fielding calls from other callers.

Solution: "Hi Ronald. Do you have a minute? There's something I'd like to talk with you about. could go use the conference room across from our cubicles. As your cubicle-mate, I've noticed when taking calls from some of our foreign customers you often speak much

louder than normally. I mention it because those of us next to your cubicle cannot hear our customers.

"You are probably not aware of how the sound carries."
(Richard explains it's a blend of bad connections, rudimentary English skills of foreign callers, and his animated nature when people don't understand him.)

"I'm hoping we might figure out a way for us all to give quality support to our customers while remaining in proximity to each other. Do any ideas immediately come to mind? Perhaps we can think about ways of using our space and technology to find a win-win."

Feedback from Supervisor to Direct Report

Situation: You've observed a direct report exhibiting anti-social behavior with customers. In your next one-on-one meeting with this person you broach the subject within the confines of your office.

Solution: "We've received several recent complaints about some impatience on your part in addressing citizen needs at our front desk. I also observed one of the situations and wanted to talk to you about it.

"Are you aware of any recent interactions where more patience could have been exhibited? (now listen with an open mind.)

"I know this is our busiest season right now. Are there any factors adding to your stress level, whether at work or outside of work? (listen some more.)

"How could I help you to lower the stress? Or do you have any suggestions?"

(If you're a new supervisor or manager check out our [Supervision and Management 101](#) training.)

Don't Fear Giving Feedback

Feedback is invaluable to the effective operation of your department and organization. When you give the gift of feedback to others in a

constructive way, everyone wins.

Next month we'll flip the coin and look at the other side of feedback... when we're on the receiving end.

In the meantime, we welcome your feedback on this and other topics, past and future editions and topics of interest to you.



**Related Assessment and Coaching resources of
The Consulting Team to help you deliver
more effective feedback:**

ASSESSMENT TOOLS:

[DiSC® Classic Communication Style Assessments](#)

[Emotional Intelligence Executive Coaching and Assessment](#)

COURSES:

[Using Assertiveness to Diffuse Difficult Situations \(course\)](#)

[Enhancing Trust by Communicating with Tact & Professionalism](#)

[Supervision & Management 101](#)

[Credibility: How to Earn It, How to Keep It](#)

[Think On Your Feet: Develop Your Ability to Think, Stand and Speak in Spontaneously](#)

COACHING:

Do you have a leader or employee in need of **coaching** to improve their leadership, communication skills (including listening skills), emotional intelligence or customer service orientation? **[Let us help.](#)**



Contact The Consulting Team to learn more about training, coaching,
consulting assistance
and also one-to-one training for leaders and employees.

Call us at 650-965-3663
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