

Strategies for Delivering Effective Feedback

- Who:**
- What is your relationship with the person?
 - “Know your audience”
 - **Depersonalize the message: focus on the BEHAVIOR not the PERSON**
- What:**
- **Give Specific and Descriptive Feedback**
Clarify which particular behavior needs to be changed to avoid confusion.
Be cautious to try and use factual feedback rather than inferential feedback
 - Factual: The person was late
 - Inferential: “why you THINK the person was late”
 - **Provide suggestions for corrective action**
 - **Don’t dwell on the past**
Bring up only the current issue. Do not bring up past issues.
- When:**
- **Feedback should be given within a relatively short period of time**
 - **Feedback should be given regularly to be more effective**
Increase the number of stand-alone positive responses to everyone with whom you maintain consistent, ongoing, significant contact. Critical comments are more effective when they are the exception, not the norm.
 - **Consider the other person’s “attitude” and emotional state at the time**
- Where:**
- **Never deliver feedback when other people are around**
 - **Consider possible distractions and choose a location to minimize them**
 - **If at ALL possible, deliver feedback in person**
- Why:**
- **Examine your motives, don’t use feedback as an opportunity to “get back” at someone**
 - **Focus on what outcomes you are seeking or what behaviors you want to change**
 - **Give feedback with the desire to help the person and/or team**
- How:**
- **Be tactful**
Dignity and respect must be maintained at all times.
Never structure communication to cause anyone to lose face.
 - **Identify the positive**
Critical comments can be positioned with positive statements. Stand-alone negative messages create a predictable and understandably defensive response in the receiver.
 - **Use assertive, not aggressive, communication**
Assertive: “I”- based messages. Reduces negative emotive impact that results when making you statements, encourages receivers to listen, and increases willingness to process your message.
Aggressive: Harsh “you”-based messages. They increase negative emotive impact, shut down listening activity, and reduce objective consideration of your communication.

Strategies for Receiving Feedback Effectively

1. Seek honest feedback.

- Consistently provide others with the opportunity to offer constructive criticisms of your efforts.

2. Give others permission to disagree with you.

- Repeatedly say to yourself, “Not everyone thinks as I do, and others have a right to see things their way.”

3. Accept critical comment with a commitment to learn.

- Input can help you to: consider alternatives, better understand the sender’s thought process, identify more efficient methods, develop an idea of your own vulnerabilities, see how others’ priorities may differ.

4. Lower the stakes.

- Every discussion is not a battle that must be won.
- Repeatedly say to yourself, “Whether or not I agree, I can still learn something from these comments.” This will help you to defeat your initial negative response.

5. Depersonalize the issue.

- Do not interpret statements of disagreement, contention, or critical comments as personal attacks.

6. Seek solutions.

- Use assertive probing questions to begin to identify alternatives: “Help me to understand how I could have done this differently.” “What are some options for correcting (overcoming) this?” “Can I hear your thoughts on a better way of dealing with this?”

7. Listen for accuracy, not emotion.

- Examine critical comments for content and avoid emotional response.
- Discard preconceptions.