

Business Matters – Feedback

Top 10 Tips for Giving Feedback

1. Agree a 'contract' between yourself and the recipient so that they are prepared and receptive for feedback.
2. Check for wellbeing and also for capacity (i.e. ability to take on more information). Back off when their capacity limit has been reached. You can always agree to talk again at a future date.
3. Take your time to explain things, checking for understanding. If what you are trying to say is difficult to explain say so up front and perhaps try saying it a couple of ways. If working across cultures and languages ask the individual for help to 'get the meaning right'.
4. Where possible illustrate with real examples but if your examples are weak or inappropriate be open about this. Do not fall into the trap of giving feedback through giving an example, having it refuted, finding another, having it refuted, and so on.
5. Do not treat questions and challenge as further 'evidence' ['I said that you did not listen, and here you are, not listening] or unwillingness to listen and learn. Some people absorb feedback best through asking questions.
6. Allow space for the recipient to reflect, check, challenge, etc
7. Ask the individual if they can think of examples that illustrate what you are saying
8. Engage the individual in generating ideas for development actions. Allow individuals to come up with their own ideas. Present options and ideas for improvement and development – not solutions
9. Allow time for the positives. See if you can harness positives and strengths towards addressing development areas
10. Remember that perception is reality but also that intentions are important and where there is a disconnect the person to whom you are giving feedback needs to focus on how to better realise their intentions and figure out what is coming between their intention and their impact

. *And, don't forget to ask for feedback in exchange*

We all benefit from feedback but not when it is given badly. If the consequence is that you feel badly treated, bruised and battered you are not in a frame of mind to listen, let alone do something about it.

Giving honest, constructive feedback requires skill and practice. Perhaps not surprisingly the more open and honest you are when giving the feedback, the more receptive the recipient and the more open and honest they will be in taking it on board. Thus, if you are uncomfortable giving feedback, explain this up front. If you are struggling to get the description 'just so', ask to be allowed to try again [*a simple, 'I'm sorry that did not come out right' is a useful intervention when faced with a shocked and uncomprehending recipient*].

This 'Top 10 Checklist' aims to help you master the challenge, and thus help those around you reach their full potential and through their feedback to you, reach your own.