

Appendix – Feedback

Guidelines on giving and receiving feedback

Giving feedback is to inform another about the effect his or her behaviour has on you. This is not always easy! In order to create an atmosphere of trust that is supportive for learning, here are some guidelines on giving and receiving feedback.

Giving Feedback

The main point in giving feedback is that the other person hears you and is given an opportunity to improve. It is not about you saying it, but about the other person hearing it. In order to facilitate that, there are some things to keep in mind.

First of all: try to avoid being judgmental: feedback is aimed at behaviour, not at the person himself. For example, you can improve on your reading skills but changing your accent might not be so easy, and getting feedback on this might not be helpful at all.

Another point is: stick to the facts! You describe what you observed, how you perceived this and the reaction it evoked in you. Feedback is always subjective. Someone else may perceive a situation quite differently!

Also, feedback is more effective when it is specific and concise. Focus on one or two points and make sure the receiver hears your point. Feedback is meant to give the receiver an opportunity to work on it.

Finally, have a balance between feedback on things that went well and on things that could be improved.

To summarize:

1. Give feedback on observed behaviour, not on the person.
2. Stick to the facts, give a description, not an interpretation or judgment about the behaviour
3. Be specific and concise
4. Have a balance between positive and negative feedback

How To Do This?

In order to make feedback effective, here are some tips you might use:

1. Begin by allowing the feedback recipient to describe how it was for them first.
2. Water the seeds of joy; also express what went well
3. Have concrete examples to illustrate your point
4. Give feedback in 'I-messages' describe the effect that the behaviour had on you.
'I saw/ heard /felt that you ... (concrete behaviour~) ... which had the effect on me that ...'
Avoid starting with: "You are...", as you might slip in the trap of being judgmental
5. Check whether the feedback was clear and heard

Receiving Feedback

Also, in order to benefit fully from feedback, here are some things to keep in mind:

1. Listen openly to what is being said, try not to be defensive
2. Clarify if need to
3. Try to see the given feedback as a valuable opportunity to learn about the way your behaviour is being perceived
4. It's up to you to determine what feedback is useful for you
5. Remember it's not easy giving feedback in a skilful way!