

## Improving the art of giving feedback

1. It is very difficult to give people truly effective feedback – something which will help them to change their behaviour. Be as specific as you can and focus on behaviour. All you can do is give your perspective and your perceptions of their behaviour and the impact it has. Stress that the only reason you give feedback is to support the other person and to help them to improve their performance
2. When you criticise someone their defences go up. It is an automatic psychological reaction. Be sensitive in the way you give feedback so that it is not only direct but also friendly. Taking time to prepare feedback shows you care. Doing it in a professional way helps to build the relationship and helps to keep the person open to feedback.
3. Provide your perceptions not your opinions. Your perceptions are your experiences, your opinions are your beliefs. People can argue with your opinions, not your perceptions. So give details of specific behaviour and its impact on you and others – do not focus on the person or things they cannot change.
4. Get feedback on your feedback. Ask if it was helpful and how you could make it more useful. This will help you with your own development in giving feedback and it will help you to get better at helping others to improve. It also models that you also seek feedback.
5. Offer to coach and support. To show that you are genuine in your desire to support the other person's development, offer to give them further feedback on a regular, or as requested, basis. Ensure your feedback is constructive, practical and performance focused.

## Improving the art of receiving feedback

6. Keep yourself open to receiving feedback. Regard feedback as important data which can help you with your personal development plans and help you to be a more effective leader. Your effectiveness is determined by your impact on others. Feedback enables you to monitor your impact and adjust it as necessary.
7. Accept the feedback and thank the person for taking the time to give it. You don't have to agree with the feedback, you just need to understand it. Then decide what action you should take. Assure the person giving it that it is appreciated and helpful.
8. If you are receiving difficult feedback, be aware of your emotional reaction. Be careful not to jump to conclusions. Your first reaction should be to neither accept nor reject the feedback but to consider it, clarify it and understand it. Avoid becoming defensive yourself. Being open to feedback and influence in turn increases your capacity to influence others.
9. Encourage others to give you feedback. If you are not getting feedback it is probably because you are not asking for it, or people think you don't want it. Create the right environment for feedback and be as specific as possible in your request for it.
10. See feedback as an opportunity to increase collaboration with the person giving it. Listen carefully to the feedback, consider it in relation to other feedback received and then see if together there are ways you can act on it to improve collaboration.