



How To Make the Most of Feedback

Workbook

The Program

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Learning Points

Participants will:

- Understand the benefits and the limitations of feedback both offered to others and received from others.
- Examine the most effective ways to prepare for and to participate in a feedback session.
- Heighten awareness of personal feedback blocks & identify ways to improve the timing & accuracy of feedback delivered.
- Emerge from the session with tools to deepen self-care & self-awareness to better serve as an effective leader.

Ask Yourself...

- How would you define effective feedback?
- What does constructive feedback mean to you?
- When you think about receiving feedback from a supervisor, what picture forms in your mind?

Ask Yourself...

- How has negative feedback impacted you?
- How does positive feedback affect your performance?
- When you recall receiving the most beneficial feedback from a caring supervisor, what or how did you change?

Value-Added Feedback

- Helps each person to thrive within the parameters of the job, while promoting professional & personal growth.
- Describes what you see & how you feel when you encounter “a moment of excellence” from an employee.
- Enhances optimal learning when someone pays attention to what’s working already & requests it to be cultivated more fully.
- Fosters open lines of communication with employees.
- Sets performance standards that cultivate employee empowerment and enhance overall performance.

- How could you use value-added feedback to encourage an employee? _____

- How have you benefitted from value-added feedback regarding your performance? _____

“Like time, energy is finite;
but unlike time, it is renewable.” - Tony Schwartz

What would you
be able to
achieve if you
had more
energy more
often?

Feedback Types, Definitions & Examples

Negative feedback

- Negative language.
- Purpose: to belittle and/or denigrate the work.
- e.g. "Can't you do anything right?"

Positive feedback

- Expresses encouragement & approval.
- Purpose: to reinforce (continue) positive behavior.
- e.g. "I enjoyed your well-researched & written report!"

Constructive feedback

- Specific & concrete steps to improve performance.
- Purpose: behavior modification or change.
- Inviting, respectful & behavior based.
- e.g. "You can improve by doing ..."

How do you structure your feedback for others? _____

What type of feedback best supports your improvement as an employee and/or as a leader for your organization? _____

How Effective Is This Feedback?

You are...

- Rude.
- Lazy.
- Inconsiderate.

I notice that you have been..

- Absent from required team meetings.
- Tardy to client meetings.
- Late with reports

What are the essential differences in the two forms of feedback to others? _____

Your Turn to Practice

You Are ...

- Careless/clumsy.
- Unhelpful/rude
- Not doing your job

I notice that you have been...

How could you improve your feedback to others? _____

What makes you more responsive to feedback? What do you notice
with those you supervise?

Blocks to Accurate & Effective Feedback

- ☐ Feelings of discomfort & anxiety about discussing performance issues.
- ☐ Worry about the response from the recipient.
- ☐ Unrealistic fears about conflict or confrontation.
- ☐ Hope that the situation will resolve and the need to get involved will dissipate.
- ☐ Creating busyness so there's never a "right" time to give constructive feedback.
- ☐ Gathering performance issues over time to discuss at the end-of-year meeting.

☐ What are your personal barriers?

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

☐ _____

Setting the Stage For Giving & Receiving Feedback

- Set a positive intention to be helpful rather than to be “right.”
- Stay calm while embracing the possibility of discomfort.
- Envision more understanding & trust between parties.
- Show a willingness to listen.
- Use a flexible communication style.
- Stay curious! Be open to listen to what the other says.
- Keep your mind open without judging their motives
- Manage your own emotional reactions.

Tips for Offering Effective Feedback

- Take time to establish rapport before moving to feedback.
 - Be specific, focus on the issue & acknowledge feelings.
 - Allow time for recipient to react & respond.
 - State desired outcome and address common goals.
 - Be aware of personal stress levels prior to event.
 - Focus on strengths to enhance.
 - Ask questions for clarity.
 - Have a follow-up plan of action.
 - Others that work for you?
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Tips for Receiving Feedback

- Approach your session as a learning opportunity.
- Be open to hearing both positive & constructive feedback.
- Maintain a calm & composed demeanor.
- Request specific examples to gain more clarity.
- Engage in positive self-talk to ease stress.
- Focus on your breathing to balance emotional reactions.
- Express appreciation for the feedback.
- Other ideas that work well for you?

Increasing Self-Awareness

Mindfulness

The basic human ability to be fully present, with awareness of where you are & what you're doing, without being overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around you.

Self-reflection

A key to self-awareness in order to look neutrally at thoughts, feelings, emotions, and actions. With practice, you will be able to look at yourself with interest and curiosity. Gradually you begin to dig deeper and to question feelings & motivations.

Self-assessment

After reflection, engage in an honest self-assessment of your actions & attitudes. Assess your performance on the job both related to working independently and engaging with others,

Counseling Support

Reach out to your EAP to sort through personal issues that may be affecting your job performance. You may need to dive deeper to resolve old hurts and address unhealed areas of forgiveness for self and others.

Increasing Self-Awareness: Coping With Stress In Healthy Ways

Change your attitudes/beliefs

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Create a healthy environment

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Take time for self-care activities

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Enlist your support system to help you manage

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Self-Care To Optimize Your Feedback: Breathing Exercise

Try the following exercise:

Assume a relaxed position. Sit comfortably with both feet on the floor, eyes closed lightly, hands at your side with palms up. Allow your knees to fall apart as you slowly begin to relax.

Take a deep breath — hold for a moment, then slowly release as you begin to relax. Take another deep breath, hold and again slowly release. Allow your breath to become calm and quiet.

Notice all the muscles helping you to breathe. Let your body relax and just focus on your breathing. Become aware of your legs, heavy and relaxed. Feel the heaviness move up your body. Feel your arms becoming heavy and relaxed, feel the muscles in your neck relax. Let go, feel your whole body relax. Experience this calm. Notice this place. Remember it so you can return to this place again if you wish, with an alert mind and a calm body.

Now, as we prepare to return, let your breath become deeper, feel your chest expand as you take deep full breaths. Imagine that with each breath you're bringing fresh, positive energy into your body and with each exhale you're releasing old, tired feelings. Breathe deeply, hold, exhale. Take another deep breath, hold it and exhale. Feel positive, nourished, more in control. Take another deep breath. Allow your fingers to move and stretch. Take another deep breath and allow your eyes to come open. Feel your mind — rested, alert and energized. When you're ready, we'll move on.

Self-Care To Optimize Your Feedback: Progressive Relaxation

When you experience mental stress, your muscles tense. This tension escalates your stress reaction. Alternate between tensing and relaxing your muscles to break the cycle and build your relaxation response.

- Sit in a comfortable chair with your feet on the floor.
- Make a tight fist with your right hand; hold it for five seconds; experience the tension.
- Unclench; let the tension flow out, noting how it feels to relax.
- Do the same with your left hand, the muscles in your upper arms and shoulders.
- Tense your neck; hold; relax. Note how it feels to relax.
- Frown as hard as you can; relax.
- Smile as hard as you can; relax.
- Raise your toes, feel the tension; relax. Again, notice the tension drain away.
- Take a deep breath; feel the tension in your chest. Exhale; relax. Feel how calm you are.
- Daydream of a peaceful setting; enjoy it for a while.
- Count slowly to four; open your eyes. You should be alert and relaxed.

Listening Skills

- Reflective Comments:
 - “It sounds like you are saying...”
 - “I’m sensing that you feel frustrated ...”
- Clarifying comments:
 - “Do I understand you want...?”
 - “Oh, your preference is to ...”
- Short summary to address:
 - Content of what was said.
 - Emotional tone of interaction.
- Active Listening Techniques:
 - Make eye contact.
 - Match and mirror their body language.
 - Nod and use appropriate facial gestures.
 - Use encouragers, such as “yes,” “uh huh, or “go on.”
 - Ask gentle questions.
 - Avoid interrupting.
 - Reflect with paraphrasing.

SMART Goals

Be prepared to discuss SMART goals when you offer feedback to create actionable items:

Specific (simple, significant).

Measurable (meaningful, motivating).

Achievable (attainable).

Relevant (reasonable, realistic, results-based).

Time bound (time-based, time limited).

Write your own SMART goals below!

Follow-Up Strategy for SMART Goals

What ideas, behaviors, attitudes, feelings, techniques about value-added feedback did I gain from the training:

I will focus on applying these techniques by: _____

I will seek support for this from: _____

(This could be a professional peer, friend, supervisor, group, books, audio or video files, or other resources that you may put together for implementation.)

I will review my progress one month from today: _____

☐ I am satisfied that I have made sufficient progress.

☐ I will choose another area of my professional behavior to address:

I want to continue to develop my skills and will review again one month from today.

I commit to this action plan.

Signature _____ Date _____

Feedback Delivered Remotely

You will need to engage more intentionally and focus on additional issues when you discuss performance issues remotely. Consider these relevant points:

- ✓ Take more time to set the tone and to create a foundation of trust & rapport before you begin your feedback.
- ✓ Create a sense of being in the same place at the same time to make a connection, or “co-presence.”
- ✓ Be able to maintain eye contact to convey caring & read reactions more accurately.
- ✓ Be prepared to be detailed when you need to address areas of concern and identify specific actions that need to occur.
- ✓ Make notes before your conversation so that you have clear examples to strengthen your main points.

Identify your specific challenges with remote feedback:

About Professional Support

You may consider seeking professional support if you experience any of the following:

- Sleep problems.
- Performance issues at work.
- Relationship difficulties with family or friends.
- Loss of interest in hobbies you normally enjoy.
- Lack of care about normal everyday work tasks.
- Excessive anxiety or worrying more than normal.
- Feeling overwhelmed or sad for more than two weeks.
- A noticeable change in appetite, eating too little or too much.
- Behavior and coping methods have become harmful to yourself or others, whether that is through aggressive behavior or unhealthy habits, such as drinking too much alcohol or taking drugs.
- Thoughts of harm to self and/or others.

Keep in mind some of these conditions may warrant more urgent professional help and you should seek support if you are unsure.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all employees and their covered dependents and may include some free counseling sessions per issue, per year. Please check with your employer or your health plan for details.

Citations

American Psychological Association: How to choose a psychologist.

<http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/choose-therapist.aspx>.

Helpguide.org: Depression Symptoms and Warning Signs.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/depression/depression-symptoms-and-warning-signs.htm>.

Helpguide.org: Suicide Prevention.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/suicide-prevention/suicide-prevention.htm>.