



AQUA



Lesson 1 of 3



Feedback

Feedback is **our best tool for continued improvement**. It's how we know what we're doing well, and what we can be doing better. If no one tells us, how can we be expected to know?

Understand that feedback is a **normal and necessary part of everyday life**. It's something that must be done regularly. Especially within a group that shares a common goal. For example, it can help your team reach quarterly goals.

Practice feedback in all areas of your life: at work, with family, with friends, etc. It won't just **strengthen your relationships and build trust**, but will also **help others reach their goals**. For example, if you give feedback to your daughter about her lackluster study habits, you can help her work on them and, thus, improve her grades.

Use **positive feedback** to develop and reinforce behavior and attitudes, and **constructive feedback** to convey possible improvements or alter behavior.

Remember, if you're not able to ask for and receive feedback, it will be much more difficult for people to accept it from you. **Receiving feedback is a surefire way to grow and improve.**

Lesson 2 of 3



Positive feedback

Your natural tendency will be to talk to people when they do something wrong (it's more obvious when you should correct behavior, rather than reinforce it). However, **you should also try to find situations where you can give positive feedback.**

Positive reinforcement is the more effective of the two types of feedback; it has a much greater impact on people. It increases their self-confidence and motivation, as well as brings out their full potential.

Positive feedback should **always be genuine**; never try to force it because it will be obvious.

Don't just give positive feedback for good results. **Give it for behaviors that generate good results** as well. For example, don't just praise your daughter when she shows you her final grades, do it during the school year as well when you see her studying hard.

Consider **giving positive feedback publicly** whenever the attitude you want to recognize has an impact at the group level. For example, if you want to reinforce the hard work and dedication of an employee at work, take advantage of a team meeting to do so.

It's important for praise to be immediate. If you let time go by, the impact won't be felt as much.

Follow these 4 steps to effectively craft your message:

1. **Describe exactly what it is they've done well.** Be specific about the action, behavior, or achievement.
2. **Describe how it's impacted the person and the team** in a positive way.
3. **Encourage them to continue** what it is they're doing.

4. Be upfront about your happiness and appreciation.

Never negate your positive feedback at any step of the process: avoid expressions like "it was about time," "but," "although," "finally," etc.

Lesson 3 of 3



Constructive feedback

Constructive feedback is helpful and fosters improvement; however, it's not something people generally like receiving. It goes much smoother when you use it naturally. Lead by example by asking for feedback and appreciating it when it's given to you.

For it to be effective, **prepare what you want to say beforehand**, don't improvise. Sometimes the difference between good and bad feedback can be one word. **The message has to be clear and direct**; get to the point, and don't complicate things.

Give feedback for each occurrence. Then, the message will come through more clearly.

Only give feedback if it will help change or improve something or if the person receiving it will get something positive from it. If not, what's the point? Talk about things that the person can control and change.

Constructive feedback **must always be given in private**, never in public or in front of the group. Doing so in public can make the other person feel bad and actually achieve the opposite effect.

You should **give constructive feedback immediately**. When something has been done wrong, it must be corrected quickly. **Never give feedback if a long time has passed**. In this case, it won't be seen as an attempt to help, but rather as a reproach.

Follow these 4 steps to craft your message correctly:

1. **Specifically describe facts and behaviors.** Describe, rather than grade. "You left the door open three days in a row" (indisputable) instead of "you're careless" (disputable).

2. **Explain the impact** their actions have had on you, the rest of the team, the organization, the family, etc.
3. **Tell them what you expect in a direct, clear, and concise way.** Always offer one or more alternatives to the behavior you want them to change.
4. **Show your optimism:** express confidence that things will get better.

Follow these guidelines at each step:

- **Talk about "non-debatable" things.** Never say anything that can be refuted or argued.
- **Talk about the facts, not about the qualities of the person.** Don't put them on trial, attack, or belittle them.
- **Talk about yourself, your emotions, your feelings, your opinions,** etc. "It bothered me a lot that you said ..." (indisputable) instead of "It is rude to say ..." (disputable). Use expressions like "I think", "I feel", "my feeling is that", "it hurts", "I feel bad", "I'm concerned", "I'm outraged," etc.
- **Always show them that you're on their side,** that the problem is with a specific action and not with the person.
- **Don't use the "sandwich technique,"** which is when you start and end with positive feedback to soften the constructive feedback in the middle. By using this approach, the positive feedback won't be as impactful because they're waiting for that "but."