

THE ART OF GIVING AND RECEIVING FEEDBACK

Feedback is essential for people who want to have open and honest relationships. Feedback is a powerful and important means for communication, and when conducted properly, it helps connect people and their behaviours for the most successful outcomes.

'There's no failure, only feedback'

Receiving Feedback

Most of us find it easier to give rather than receive feedback and yet the receiving of feedback is a wonderful gift that can allow us to improve, grow, develop and change for the better. Feedback allows us to step back and evaluate, understand what works and doesn't work and where to focus our areas for improvement.

Rather than discuss, defend or justify the feedback, it is important to acknowledge what the person / feedback is saying to you. When receiving personal feedback it is important to:

- Step into your neutral state.
- Thank the person.
- Accept the feedback as a gift.
- Constructively understand what the feedback is telling you.
- Evaluate what positive intention is behind the message.
- Consider whether you have heard the same feedback from more than one source.
- Decide how you will use the feedback.

How we handle personal feedback is based on our own self-image. Generally, the more self-confident we are and the greater the belief we have in ourselves, the easier it is to receive feedback. Our beliefs influence how we receive feedback and it is important to adopt positive self-talk so that you can wholeheartedly receive the feedback and decide whether to use the feedback or not.

'No one can make you feel inferior without your consent' - Eleanor Roosevelt

Feedback = your belief about that feedback = outcome

We can completely control the meaning we give to the feedback and therefore our response. The quality of our life is dependent upon the quality of our communication.

Giving Feedback

Giving feedback is a gift and we should treat the feedback we give in this way. It is not an opportunity to be critical, negative or 'have a go' at somebody. Given constructively, feedback can help a person learn, change and develop. The giving of valuable feedback can lead to positive changes in behaviour.

To help the person learn from your feedback:

- Own the feedback and use 'I' rather than use a command.
- Be specific - avoid generalisations.
- Be thoughtful and well considered rather than impulsive.
- Focus on behaviour rather than personality.
- Emphasise the positive.
- Be descriptive rather than judgmental.
- Be helpful, feedback is intended to be of value to the other person.
- Be very careful with advice.

Feedback is given as a method for improvement, do not overload the learner with feedback; start with one or two high-priority issues.