How to Give (And Receive) Constructive Feedback
Objectives

- Why Constructive Feedback is Valuable to Our Team
- Essential Characteristics for Giving Feedback
- Steps for Giving Feedback Effectively
- Essential Characteristics for Receiving Feedback
- How to Handle Received Feedback
Thought...

“I have never in my life learned anything from any man who agreed with me”

--Dudley Field Malone
Why Constructive Feedback is Valuable to Our Team

- Core Values
  - Integrity
  - Teamwork
  - Excellence

- Continuous Quality Improvement

- Destructive Silence
Personal Characteristics for Giving Constructive Feedback

Becoming a trusted source

- The “3 B-s”
  - Benign
  - Beneficial
  - Benevolent

- Privacy, dignity and discretion
Thought...

“The right to criticize must be earned, even if the advice is constructive in nature. Before you are entitled to tinker with another person’s self-esteem, you are obligated first to demonstrate your respect for him/her as a person. When a relationship of confidence has been carefully constructed, you will have earned the right to discuss a potentially threatening topic. Your motives will have been thereby clarified.”

--Dr. James Dobson
Barriers That Prevent Positive Feedback

- I don’t have time
- I don’t know how to do it
- I don’t want to be perceived as “weak” by praising others
- Praising feels awkward
- Nobody gives me positive feedback; I have no role model
- I have too many employees/ coworkers to do it effectively with all of them
- My employees will expect a raise if I praise them
- It’s their job to complete assignments, why should I praise them for meeting their job requirements?
- Our employees already know they are doing a good job
- I feel silly giving positive feedback
- This employee/coworker is motivated and doesn’t need positive feedback
- I don’t care whether the employee progresses or grows
Guidelines for Giving Positive Feedback

1. Tell the person in specific, descriptive terms what behavior s/he did right and the impact of that behavior – up front.

2. Tell the person how you feel about the behavior or how the behavior will affect others – be specific.

3. Encourage more of the same behavior.
The Art of Constructive Criticism

- Realize that relationships matter
- Review assumptions
- Relax and center yourself before the meeting
- Share your intention to contribute to the other’s success
The Art of Constructive Criticism

- Clarify expectations
- Ask questions (and listen to the responses)
- Speak respectfully
- See the positive as well as the negative
Essentials of Constructive Feedback

- Describe rather than evaluate
- Be specific rather than general
- Focus on the behavior rather than on the person
- Feedback must reflect the needs of both the receiver and the giver of feedback
- Direct your feedback toward behavior the recipient can do something about
- The best constructive feedback is solicited rather than imposed
- Timing is important
Essentials of Constructive Feedback

- Share information instead of giving advice
- The amount of information should be appropriate to what the receiver can use
- Focus on what is said and done, or how it is said or done, not on your assumption of why it was said or done
- Check to determine the degree of agreement from others
- Follow up feedback by paying attention to the consequences of the feedback
- Constructive feedback leads to authenticity
Pinpointing

- First, you have to plan ahead
- Second, you have to behave assertively
- Third, it must be done privately with the coworker
Now let’s study specific steps for giving constructive feedback.

- **Step 1: Set Realistic Goals**
- **Step 2: Research the Facts**
  - What Happened?
  - What Were the Expectations?
  - Why Are You Providing Feedback?
Do’s and Don’ts of Giving Feedback

**DO…**
- Be Timely
- Be Specific
- Be Open and Offer Suggestions
- Create the right environment
- Check for understanding and buy-in
Do’s and Don’ts of Giving Feedback

- DON’T...
  - Don’t make it personal
  - Don’t give feedback only when there’s a problem
  - Don’t address multiple issues in one discussion
Thought...

“Humility is... accepting the possibility that someone else knows something about me that I don’t know myself”

--Anonymous
Personal Characteristics for Requesting Feedback

- Humility
- Courage
- Curiosity
- Philosophy of self-improvement
Activity: Johari Window
Anecdote
Receiving feedback

- If you ask for feedback, be sure you are ready to receive it
- Actively listen with your full attention
- Ask for specific examples of what you did well and what could have been better
- Ask questions to clarify, and paraphrase to check your understanding
- Don't resist the feedback and avoid being defensive -- don't explain, rationalize or justify
- Listen for the impact your behavior is having on the other person
Receiving feedback

- Consider carefully whether, and how you want to change your behavior
- Let others know immediately so they can support you
- Ask for help and assistance, if appropriate
- Most importantly, thank others when they provide you feedback. They have taken a risk to help you grow
- Remember: Feedback is a gift, a unique learning opportunity. Whether you agree or not, it has value because it represents a set of perceptions about you and your behavior.
Steps for Unwelcome Feedback

- **Step 1: Inform. For example:**
  - “Do you realize that your comment is hurtful?”
  - “That comment was rude.”
  - “I didn’t ask for your feedback.”

- **Step 2: Request. For example:**
  - “I ask that you keep your opinions to yourself.”
  - “I only want constructive feedback.”

- **Step 3: Insist. For example:**
  - “I insist that you only give constructive feedback.”
  - “I insist that you keep your judgments to yourself.”

- **Step 4: Leave.**
  - “I won’t continue this conversation while you’re criticizing me.” Say nothing confrontational.
Ten Tips for Dealing with Feedback

- Seek feedback on projects or assignments before miscommunication occurs and mistakes become a crisis
- Ask others for positive feedback if none has been offered
- Keep a ME file with examples of work for which you are especially proud
- Listen carefully to your critic to make sure you understand the critical feedback
- Do not automatically assume your critic is right or wrong
Ten Tips for Dealing with Feedback

- Evaluate the source of feedback and whether it was offered constructively.
- Do not passively accept critical feedback or become a silent victim.
- When you have made a mistake, avoid over-apologizing or over-compensating.
- Don’t make globally negative assessments about your character arability based on one mistake.
- Lower your emotional temperature when dealing with critical feedback.
Activity: Break-Out Groups
Feedback Challenge

What one new trait of Constructive Feedback will you adopt...

- Immediately?
- In one month?
- This year?
For more...

Contact info

- Center for Work & Family Life
- 213-821-0800
- cwfl@usc.edu