

giving feedback

(gɪvɪŋ fɛd'bæk)

v. telling people tactfully what you think of their performance so they can continue to develop into stronger leaders

An important aspect of being a leader is giving feedback to your group members. Here are some tips for providing feedback:

Be clear about what you want to say

Give feedback promptly

Emphasize the positive

Be specific and avoid general comments

Focus on the behavior rather than the person

Refer to behavior that can be changed

Own the feedback – use “I” statements

Avoid generalizations such as “all,” “never,” “always,” etc

Examine your own motives – be sure your intention is to be helpful, not to show how perceptive and superior you are

Be open to receiving feedback yourself

Avoid overload – focus only on what is most important and changeable

Be very careful with advice – the best help is helping the person to come to a better understanding of their issue, how it developed, and how they can identify actions to address the issue more effectively



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If you are the one receiving feedback, it is important to reflect back to the person what you hear them saying. It is also important to not become defensive but to communicate and be open to feedback from others.

Reflect feelings. Expressing in your own words the essential feelings stated or strongly implied by the person.



Reflect content. Secondary to feelings, this is repeating in fewer and fresher words the essential thoughts of the person.

Mirroring and Parroting. Reflections that merely repeat what they have said, using the same words and avoids unintentionally under or over stating the degree of feeling.



Paraphrasing. A method of restating the person's basic message in similar words, which tests your understanding of what the person said.

Summarizing. Involves a process of tying several ideas and feelings together at the end of a feedback session.

Clarifying. This brings vague material into sharper focus, asking for confirmation or correction on what was said.

Cheerleading. Not only is it OK to tell the person that you are glad he or she took action by talking with you, it's helpful to encourage the person further by commenting on what a positive sign of strength asking for or giving feedback can be.

References:

McNamara, C. Basic guidelines for giving feedback.

http://www.mapnp.org/library/commskls/feedback/basic_gde.htm.

Woodsmall, C. (2002). Micro-skills Training on Feedback. Presentation to Summer Leaders program, Washington University in St. Louis.



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