

GIVE FEEDBACK WELL

If you can provide feedback well, people will walk away from the conversation feeling as if they matter. In order to do this, it's important to understand the person you're giving feedback to.

- How do they like to receive feedback?
- What's their communication style?
- What motivates them to do a great job?

Whenever possible, don't wait for the feedback meeting to learn these things. Knowing this type of information before you head into a feedback meeting, can be helpful.

Providing feedback well, doesn't just happen in the feedback meeting itself. In order to show up as a leader, it's important to consider these four stages:

1. Prepare for the feedback meeting.
2. Remain thoughtful in the feedback meeting.
3. Prepare for a follow-up meeting.
4. Remain thoughtful in the follow-up meeting.

Let's take a look at each one of these four stages in more detail.

① PREPARE

Whenever you're talking with someone about their performance, you want to be thoughtful that you're prepared. You've thought it through, have specifics, and know what you want to say, and how you want to honor the person. Consider these things:

- **Pause.**
Think about your goal for this meeting and set your intention to manage any reactivity that arises by reminding yourself of that goal.

If you get reactive, you can PAUSE and ask yourself, "**Is what I'm about to do or say in alignment with my goal for this meeting?**"
- **Reflect.**
Consider what you're afraid of going into this situation and how you can be at your best. Then, guess at what the other person is likely afraid of in this situation and how you can help them be at their best.

So make a guess to answer the questions, "**What are they afraid of in this situation?**" and "**How can I help them feel safe?**"
- **Script.**
It's always helpful to write out a script to support you in providing effective feedback. You want to be specific about what's going well or poorly and the consequences of the behavior that are contributing to success or hindering success. You don't have to "read" your script during the conversation but thinking it through will take you far.

② FEEDBACK MEETING

If feedback is happening in-the-moment, ask if the person is available to meet. Even if it's a required part of your job, you'll have the most impact if they agree. If they say yes, proceed.

If they say no (and if feedback is mandatory), look for a time on your calendars to meet as soon as possible.

Remind yourself of your goals and how you want to show up in this meeting. In order for you to have influence, it's important to remain as objective as possible. Focus on the problem versus the person, and remember, clear is kind.

- **Discuss the possibilities.**

Enter into the discussion with objectivity and a possibility mindset. Describe their behavior like you would a scene in a movie and share examples. While you may not be solving the problem yet, you can start to help them think this way.

Example:

What would have to be in place in order for you to come prepared to brief the project team in our weekly meetings?

- **Own why it matters.**

When providing feedback, address the problem (vs attacking the person). Here you'll want to focus on the problem caused by the person's behavior and help them to understand the greater impact that's it's having. Remember to be as objective as possible.

Example:

You're a valuable member of our team and when you're constantly late to our meetings, we miss out on your expertise and we often have to play catchup or circle back and discuss things again. It's important to the team culture that we respect each other's time.

- **Focus on the "we".**

Share the impact of their behavior as you observe it and how it relates to their job performance. Let them know that you're in their corner to support them as they learn new behaviors. Seek to influence them with some suggestions and remember to allow yourself to be influenced by them with their suggestions.

- **Enable action.**

Whenever possible, we recommend giving them time to process the information and come back at a later time with their thoughts. The action is for them think about the feedback, what they understand and what they still need more information about, and to then come back to the follow-up meeting with any questions they may have and a proposed game plan.

- **Review and Refine.**

You'll want to let them know that you're invested in their success. In addition to the follow-up meeting, you'll want to agree on a cadence of check-in meetings.

③ PREPARE AGAIN

Reflect on how you showed up, how your feedback was received, and whether there are any additional examples/scenarios that they requested. Again, planning ahead and making notes about what you want to discuss can be helpful.

- **Pause and Reflect.**

As you reflect on the feedback you gave, make some notes about how you think it was received. This is just a guess but is an important step. If you can guess at any feedback that wasn't received well, then you can prepare additional information for the follow-up meeting.

The goal here is to decrease their reactivity so that they understand the feedback change that's required.

Again, you'll want to make a guess to answer the question, **"What are they afraid of in this situation?"** and **"How can I help them feel safe?"**

- **Script.**

After reflecting on the feedback you gave and how you think they received it, think about some questions that they may ask or additional details you might want to give. It can also be helpful to write some scripting about the reflection you did so that you can be prepared to respond as a leader versus reacting in the moment.

④ FOLLOW-UP MEETING

It's important to remain respectful, listen to their concerns, remind them of the effect their behavior is having on the team, and discuss what the new behavior could look like and how you will help hold them accountable.

Follow the same steps that you used in the initial meeting and repeat important information, discuss any new thoughts, and answer questions that may come up.

- **Discuss the possibilities.**

Enter into the discussion with objectivity and a possibility mindset. Influence them with your best thinking and ask them to influence you.

Example:

What would have to be in place in order for you to come prepared to brief the project team in our weekly meetings? Have you had any ideas since our initial meeting?

- **Own why it matters.**

When reiterating the main points from the first meeting, be sure to address the problem (vs attacking the person). Remind them of their value to the company and help them to understand the greater impact that their behavior is having, while being as objective as possible.

Example:

You're a valuable member of our team and I'm curious if you've thought about the impact it has on the team when you're late? We miss out on your expertise and we often have to play catchup or circle back and discuss things again. It's important to the team culture that we respect each other's time.

- **Focus on the “we”.**
Share the impact of their behavior as you observe it and how it relates to their job performance. Let them know that you’re in their corner to support them as they learn new behaviors. Seek to influence them with some suggestions and remember to allow yourself to be influenced by them with their suggestions.
- **Enable action.**
Remind them that you’re invested in their success. Be sure to end the meeting with a clear understanding of the new behavior you’d like to see from them and any actions you may be taking as well.
- **Review and Refine.**
Discuss and agree on a cadence of check-in meetings and add them to the calendar - don’t put this off!
- **Thank them for their time.**

We encourage you to practice giving feedback, as it will make you stand out among your peers.

**Giving feedback effectively,
has the potential
to leave the listener feeling valued and respected.**

With time and practice, you can become very skilled at helping people understand the impact of their behavior. When you connect with people in ways that leave them feeling like you respect them and have listened to what they have to say – you’ll always be more successful.