

myCareer

Giving & receiving feedback: Conversation Guide



Fair, accurate, informal feedback is an important driver of individual performance¹. Feedback should not be destructive or personal. Rather, it is meant to expand someone's awareness, focus their attention, explore options and increase accountability. **Both conversation leaders and employees should give and receive feedback.**

Giving feedback

- ✓ Feedback can be informal, provided in the moment or a more formal "let's agree a time to meet and discuss how we think things are going".
- ✓ The best feedback is immediate. It's easier to be specific about good feedback when it's fresh in your mind. If improvement is required, it can commence as soon as possible with support.
- ✓ Reflecting on your [intentions](#) improves feedback. *Am I being fair and accurate? What do I hope to achieve with this feedback? How can I foster an open and positive discussion?*
- ✓ Feedback should be a two-way conversation. If you start with [questions](#) it gives others the chance to acknowledge success or own a problem. *How do you think you're doing? What was that like for you? How do you think that meeting went? How could you have done that differently?*
- ✓ [Listen](#). When it's your turn to speak, talk about **facts, not assumptions**. It can help to identify the situation, behaviour, and impact of the action or event.
- ✓ Use **specific, observable language** in offering your feedback, such as *"In our last meeting, when you acknowledged what you heard me saying, I felt you really understood my point."*
- ✓ Feedback is a dialogue between two people; it should be a discussion, not a series of one way comments. *What's your perspective on this? What ideas do you have in regards to next steps?*

Avoid common feedback mistakes:

- × **Making assumptions:** Limit feedback to behaviour or actions without using personal interpretations.
- × **Talking too much:** Once you have opened with a question, listen and acknowledge the answer. You can then determine if your feedback is relevant. If it is, share it and continue the dialogue.
- × **Focusing too much on negatives:** Focus your feedback mainly on strengths and [appreciation](#). When you do focus on negative performance, frame it not as a weakness, but an obstacle to be overcome.

Receiving feedback

- ✓ If you get **defensive** about feedback, people won't give it to you and you'll lose opportunities to learn and grow. Defensiveness can include denying, ridiculing or blaming.
- ✓ While some of us have a hard time hearing feedback, there are those who **thrive on it**. They focus on their ability to change and grow, and see feedback as an opportunity for improvement. This type of [growth mindset](#) is a powerful advantage.
- ✓ **Ask for feedback often.** *If you had to make two suggestions for improving my work, what would they be? If you were in my position, what would you do? What do you think I'm doing well?*
- ✓ It is important to acknowledge some feedback is delivered **poorly or with poor intent**. Acknowledge the person for sharing their thoughts and then only take on what is relevant to your growth.

¹ Source: CEB HR Research