Giving Clear Feedback

Giving feedback is a way to take responsibility for how you experience others. Your feedback is a gift; it gives others an opportunity to learn how they may be impacting you and others.

DO

• Check to see if you are curious while having your opinions and judgments.
• See the other as an ally, here for your learning and growth.
• Be open-hearted: treat the other like you would want someone to treat you or a loved one.
• Look for projection: Does what you see in the other reflect a part of you that you have not owned or accepted about yourself?
• See the other as empowered and responsible for their experience of the feedback.
• Ask if now is a good time to give feedback. If not now, then when?
• Be clear and specific: “When you did _____, I felt angry.”
• Be brief: Give feedback in one or two outbreaths.
• Be specific: “Last Thursday when we met, you said you would get X done by Monday. I still don’t have it.”

DON’T

• Use the following excuses to avoid giving feedback:
  ▪ They haven’t asked for your opinion
  ▪ You don’t know how to say it the right way
  ▪ It’s not your role or position to say this to them
  ▪ It’s not appropriate
  ▪ Make up the story that that they’re not ready to hear it or won’t get it
• Gather a list of evidence for how they are wrong.
• Avoid conflict: “They will be upset.” or “They won’t like me.” or “They’ll seek revenge.”
• Dismiss the person completely.
• Flatter the person to disguise the message.
• Be critical or righteous.
• Appreciate them to try to manipulate them to change their behavior.
• Over generalize
• Be too wordy: “And furthermore ..................”
• Pretend nothing is going on.
• Give up: “What’s the use?”
THE ART OF FEEDBACK

Openly Receiving Feedback

Feedback is a gift. No matter whom it comes from or how it is delivered, it presents a unique opportunity to learn and grow.

**DO**

- Ask yourself how, not if, what they’re saying is true.
- Ask questions to understand more about the person’s perspective.
- See the person as an ally: “How is this feedback and this person for me?”
- Get curious: “What can I learn from this?” “Is this part of a feedback pattern?”
- Thank the person for the feedback to encourage them and others to give more.
- Acknowledge any defensiveness, breathe and move, and check if you are willing to shift.
- If you are unwilling to shift, let the giver know you are not available for feedback and offer another time to complete the conversation.
- Give yourself some time to contemplate any feedback that is particularly triggering for you.

**DON’T**

- The following common responses reflect a lack of openness to receiving feedback:
  - “You don’t understand my issue.” or “That’s not it.”
  - “I’m already working on that.” or “I knew that already.”
  - “I didn’t ask for your opinion.”
  - “I don’t like your tone, words, timing...”
  - “You’re not an expert in this subject so you’re feedback is not useful to me.”
  - “You don’t care about me.”
  - “It’s not me, it’s them.”
  - “What’s the big deal?”
  - “This is not supportive.”
  - “You do the same thing.”
  - “That’s not the way I remember it.”
  - “I don’t think this is an issue, but I will change if it makes you feel better.”
  - “Whatever.”
  - “You’re just trying to control me.”
  - “I don’t trust you and your motives for giving me feedback.”
  - “It’s not funny!”
  - “How come you are always right and I am always wrong?”
  - “I need a time out from this issue.”