

How to Give Negative Feedback

APPLICATION

Very broad use. You can't correct problems or change the behavior of others without this skill.

INTRODUCTION

Providing others with feedback is an important communication skill. Good communicators are able to do this well even when the other person might not be receptive to it.

IMPORTANT TIPS

- A. *The Timing and Demonstrated Positive Intent* are two particularly important factors to doing this well. You should attempt to find the appropriate time when the other person is potentially most receptive to listening and when you are calm and focused. People find a way to dismiss criticism, particularly if they believe the intention is negative.
- B. Effective feedback requires a clear statement and demonstration that the reason for giving feedback is positive. This must get through to the recipient in order for you to earn *the right* to give feedback.

KEY POINTS

1. First, check yourself. What is your mental state? Are you upset or angry? Do you want to get something off your chest? If so, buy some time and don't give feedback now.
2. Identify in advance *a purpose* you intend to accomplish. Ask yourself, "What is my reason for giving feedback?" Letting the other person have it is not a good reason. If you are going to request a change in behavior – identify specifically what this is. Consider how difficult will the recipient find my feedback to accept?
3. Approach the individual and indicate you would like to discuss something important with them. Use the word "*discuss*" as this should be a dialogue, not a monologue.
4. Ask them "*when would be a good time for us to talk?*" Seek permission to have a discussion, and mutually choose a good private time. Thank them for agreeing to talk.

5. Thank you. Begin your session by again thanking them again for agreeing to talk. Negative feedback is best delivered in a seated environment.
6. Describe the specific behavior you are having a problem with. Remain calm and use descriptions that explain what you observed or
7. Explain how this behavior has impacted you and then how this makes you feel. Use "I " statements not "we." State clearly your emotion. Are you surprised, disappointed, angry, left out, frustrated? Be clear. Explain why you feel this way.
8. Reassure the person that you have their best interests in mind. "I am not here to criticize you, I am here to talk with you about a problem or concern I have."
9. Request a specific change in the person's behavior. Pose this as a question, not a demand. "Would you be willing to consider . . ."
10. Listen openly to the response of this person. Do not get into an argument or debate.
11. Agree. Try to reach a mutually acceptable agreement for a new behavior.
12. Thank them for their willingness to try to resolve the problem.