



Succeed through Constructive Feedback, Top '7' Tips

By Ann Golden Eglé, MCC

Managing up or down, it takes courage to provide constructive feedback. No one wants to purposefully make another feel inferior; tell them that their work is not good enough (which is internalized as 'I'm not good enough'); or sustain the backlash of anger which can occur.

Feedback is intended to improve a situation, not diminish it. A common complaint I hear is: "I keep giving him feedback on how his actions lessen his effectiveness but he just doesn't listen. All I want to hear is that *he hears me and is working on it* instead of immediate defensiveness."

In order to succeed in anything important to you in life, from sports to business, it's vital to have a pulse on how you are doing. If you don't get feedback from others, you make up your own which is often inaccurate.

Here are my **Top '7' Tips** to grow and succeed through graciously accepting constructive feedback:

1. **Listen respectfully.** Stop what you're doing, breathe and demonstrate that you're listening through nods and body language. Fully take in the verbal and nonverbal cues. Remember that the person providing the feedback intends to help you succeed.
2. **Clarify the message.** Make sure you understand the entire message. As tempting as it may be, don't interrupt. Ask brief clarifying questions and again, listen. As the person providing your feedback may be nervous or inexperienced, their initial wording may not get the full point across.
3. **Acknowledge the feedback provider.** It's rarely easy to deliver what may be perceived as negative information. Acknowledging the provider for their courage or insight does not mean that you agree or take blame. You truly appreciate their caring enough to provide their point of view.
4. **Don't get defensive.** Stay open and present. By now your mind may be racing from 'you're completely wrong' to 'I don't need this job' to 'it's someone else's fault'. Instead open up to the possibility that you may not have seen the ramifications of your actions.
5. **Remain positive.** Staying positive will open the conversation to a greater result. You may be tempted to lash back at the feedback provider or bring up unrelated situations. This only makes things worse and can damage your relationship.

6. **Take responsibility.** Taking responsibility for an action plan moving forward does not mean that you fully agree with all parts of the feedback. Rather that you have graciously listened, heard there is a problem and that you are willing to take action to improve yourself and/or the situation.
7. **Be accountable.** Don't wait for your feedback provider to circle back with you, create a schedule to meet with him or her in a timely manner to provide updates on the action plan you created. This demonstrates that you are serious about making the needed changes to become even more brilliant in your endeavors.

Following these tips will not only bring you greater success, it will also strengthen relationships and open the door for future feedback for ongoing growth.

If you have an extremely difficult time in either providing or accepting feedback, join Toastmasters. There you'll do both and witness how others deliver and accept feedback on a weekly basis. You'll also become a more polished communicator.

I challenge you to seek feedback today to practice these tips, moving you even closer to your vision of phenomenal success.

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