Key Elements of Effective Feedback

**|| Praise and recognition ||**

* Be specific
* Emphasize process and approach, not result
* Be genuine
* Be timely
* Seek out opportunities
* Save constructive feedback for another time (unless a review situation)
* Be surprising
* Spread around, all directions (not just down to direct reports; laterally and upward)
* Create a recognition culture

**|| Constructive feedback ||**

*Is not* a way to admonish or tear people down

*Is* an essential tool to support growth and development

It is fundamentally important to provide constructive feedback with the genuine intent to *support one’s growth.* It is important that this is conveyed in content and tone of communication.

Process

1. *Pick an appropriate time and place* - It is best to give constructive feedback in a place and at a time when both parties can be focused and are not distracted. Do not give feedback when you are in an emotional state.
2. *State the purpose of your feedback* - State your purpose briefly by indicating what you'd like to cover and why it's important. Be sincere, clear and direct. For example: "I always want to support your success and toward that end, I wanted to give you some constructive feedback..."
3. *Describe specifically what you observed* - Have a certain event or action in mind and be able to say when and where it happened, who was involved, and what the results were. Stick to what you personally observed and don't try to speak for others or insert judgment or interpretation. Avoid talking vaguely about what the person "always" or "usually" does. For example: "When we were in the ops meeting yesterday, I noticed that you kept raising your voice, speaking with a sharp tone."
4. *Describe your reactions* - Explain the consequences of the other person's behavior and how it made you feel. Give examples of how you and others are affected. When you describe your reactions or the consequences of the observed behaviors, the other person can better appreciate the impact their actions are having on others and on the organization or team as a whole. For example, “I noticed that after you spoke out, several people didn’t speak again for the remainder of the meeting.”
5. *Give the other person an opportunity to respond* - Remain silent and meet the other person’s eyes, indicating that you are waiting for an answer. Ideally they speak. If not, you can ask for their perspective and wait for a response: "What do you think?", "What is your view of this situation?", "What are your reactions to this?", or "Tell me, what are your thoughts?"
6. *Offer specific suggestions* - Whenever possible make your suggestions helpful by including practical, feasible examples. Offering suggestions shows that you have thought past your evaluations and moved to how to improve the situation. Even if people are working up to expected standards, they often benefit from ideas that could help them to perform better.
7. *Summarize and express your support* - Review the major points you discussed. Summarize the Action items, not the negative points of the other person's behavior. If you have given neutral feedback, emphasize the main points you wanted to convey. For corrective feedback, stress the main things you've discussed that the person could do differently. End on a positive note by communicating confidence in the person's ability to improve the situation. Give a vision of how the new behavior will create value for the team. By summarizing, you can avoid misunderstandings and check to make sure that your communication is clean. This summary is an opportunity to show your support for the other person—a way to conclude even a negative feedback situation on a positive note.

The above steps should be adapted for the specific situation and also the nature of your relationship with the other person. We recommend using the above as a reference framework.

**|| Give praise and recognition more often than constructive feedback ||**

*Remember*: The most effective ratio of praise and recognition to constructive feedback is about 6 to 1.