

The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback

The following rules help to create a positive feedback situation:

Giving Feedback:

- Be constructive: Feedback should be helpful to the person addressed and inspire (self-)reflection. It ought to encourage trying out new things or modifying patterns of behavior. What you say to people should therefore provide suggestions, indicate solutions, and not rule out possibilities.
- Describe, not interpret, situations: Try to inform as precisely as possible about a situation without being judgmental. Communicate observations, not presumptions.
- Interchange: The point is not objectivity. Individual opinions are always subjective and based on personal experience. There are no right or wrong opinions, only different views. What counts is openness and interchange.
- Basic respect: It takes mutual respect and fairness to create the best possible conversation situation. Be critical but avoid hurtful remarks.
- Be specific: Feedback addressees will not have much use for sweeping statements or generalizations because they will not let them know what to do about the problem or behavior. Describe situations or conditions as specifically and illustratively as possible (e.g., by giving examples). This makes it easier for addressees to digest the feedback and respond to wishes.
- Don't forget about the positive.

Receiving Feedback:

- Listen: First, listen with concentration and let feedback givers say what they have to say.nachfragen.
- Ask questions: If there is something you have not understood or still is unclear, follow up with questions. Ask for an explanation or examples. Another possibility is repeating in your own words what has been said and making sure, "Have I understood correctly?"
- Accept subjectivities: It is important to accept the subjective reality of feedback givers as such. Feedback always reflects personal opinions.
- Don't be defensive: Let the feedback sink in and think about it. Don't apologize, justify yourself or come up with spontaneous explanations for your behavior.
- Reflect: Calmly consider what or how much of the feedback you are or are not willing to accept. Take your time to sort the things said out for yourself. What of it does make sense to you and what doesn't? What do you want to change?
- Accept the positive: Be ready to accept praise! Don't relativize, or make light of, positive feedback with your own comments.
- Communicate: Let feedback givers know what of their feedback was useful and helpful to you.