

Top 10 tips on giving remarkable feedback

Giving feedback is crucial to being a good manager and leader. Getting it right is the difference between being “good” and being “great”, writes Georgia Murch.



Georgia Murch

Georgia Murch is an expert in teaching individuals how to have the tough conversations and create feedback cultures in organisations. She is the author of 'Fixing Feedback' and a highly engaging speaker. Visit www.georgiamurch.com or email georgia@georgiamurch.com

You finally muster the courage to have the tough conversation and give a colleague, customer or friend feedback. Or courage is not your issue, but diplomacy the challenge. So how do you make sure it has the impact you need it to, that builds trust and respect rather than damages it. And improves performance and productivity not decreases it.

Many people feel that giving feedback is a really tough thing to do. We avoid it in the hope that the need to talk will go away. But it rarely does. The good news is, that it's easier than you think. When you learn how. Follow these tips and you are on your way.

1. Lead with facts, not opinions and feelings. Facts are non disputable, can not be argued, tangible pieces of information or data. It is what people say or do. Or what the data tells us. It is when we give examples and facts, that people are able to really understand why your opinions and feelings are relevant. Examples helps others really understand context. Too many still think that their opinions are facts. They are not.

2. Search for the 'real truth'. The 'real truth' is a combination of what you know (your truth) and what they know (their truth). When we're able to see all sides, we have the whole picture and are able to make the best decisions. When we are not open enough to see both sides we can make flawed decisions. After all, we might not be right.

3. Focus on making others feel 'safe'. Maintaining safety in a conversation is the difference between an outcome and an outbreak. When both parties feel 'safe enough' to be honest with each other is when you reach the best outcomes and drive working relationships. We need to cultivate this in conversations just as much as getting the content correct.

4. Preparation preserves relationships. When we take the time to prepare for difficult feedback conversations and ensure they are structured correctly we are more likely to get the outcomes we are looking

for. It's so much easier to stay on track and for others to be clear on what we are saying.

5. Face to face or voice to voice. If there is a tough conversation to be had then do them as any conversation should be done – in person or on the phone. Anything else does not honor the person or the outcome.

6. Make silence your friend. When we become comfortable with the space of silence we not only create time to learn more from the person or circumstance but we allow the other person to feel seen and heard. Try not to fill the spaces with your own air time. Just breathe.

7. Nip them in the bud. Dealing with situations as they arise is the difference between putting out a spot fire compared to a bush fire. Having the conversations early ensures we things get done, create a culture of accountability, and they are so much easier to tackle before they become big issues with multiple stakeholders. We should not wait for the performance review or the end of project review. It's too late and has the opposite affect.

8. Both agendas are important. If you're not talking about the same thing, then you might as well not be talking. So don't create competing agendas – discuss what is important to both of you. Then you will both feel heard.

9. Apologies matter, use them. When an apology is coated with genuine self reflection they go a long way towards building and repairing trust and respect. They promote reconciliation and move conversations forward, whether you have wronged the person or not.

And remember, giving feedback well is when it enhances productivity and builds trust and respect, rather than damages it. But there is one more important tip for receiving;

10. Be the change you seek. Receive the feedback as graciously as you would like them to receive it from you. We need to lead by example if we really want to make a difference. Otherwise you are just the talking example not the walking one. ☑