

Job Performance Feedback: 7 Tips For Receiving Feedback Gracefully

By Lyndsay Swinton

Giving or receiving feedback can be hard, but of the two, receiving feedback can be harder. Whether you get a sinking feeling in your stomach or a raging bull in your head, receiving job performance feedback is never easy. Unless you know how. Here are 7 tips for receiving feedback gracefully, allowing you to learn from it and quickly move on.

1. Do Welcome Constructive Feedback

Your powers of self-perception only go so far. People around you notice things, both good and bad, which you don't and you might learn from their input. There is a "virtuous circle" of feedback whereby the more you actively seek it out, the less you can hide bad behaviour, and generally your feedback is better. E-bay seller feedback is an excellent example of a transparent feedback process, encouraging positive behaviours.

2. Don't Justify Your Position

Telling the person why their feedback is wrong will not work. Ever. Arguing, justifying your position or denial are all powerful negative emotions, making the conversation more challenging than it need be. The only way for the conversation to go is downhill, with tempers flaring and insults flying.

3. Do Accept Feedback At Face Value

Although the feedback might feel like a personal insult, challenging your whole identity, keep some perspective. The feedback relates to specific instances, in one part of your life AND now you know about it, you have the opportunity to do something about it.

4. Don't Ruminates On Feedback

Only cows need ruminates before they digest. Chewing over feedback again and again will not make it clearer or easier to understand, particularly if the feedback is less than glowing. Avoid the temptation to re-enact the conversation to a friend as this only makes you feel ten times worse. Do talk about it with someone else, but make sure you're emotionally detached first.

5. Do Evaluate Feedback Before Responding

Feedback often tells you more about the person saying it than it does about you. For example, a person who says you never praise their work might have difficulty evaluating their work themselves. Teaching this person to give themselves "marks out of ten" for their own work may be a better approach than simply praising them ad nauseam. In the long run, you'll be giving them a more powerful boost to their self-esteem.

6. Don't Throw Your Toys From The Push-chair

Sulking, stonewalling or withdrawing from the person giving the feedback is childish. If need be, give yourself some space from the person, allowing you to calm down and deal with the feedback, and person, as a rational adult.

7. Do Make Your Choice How To Use The Feedback

Feedback can be a gift allowing you to grow and develop as a person, in a job or in a relationship. But some feedback is downright useless and best ignored. Yes, ignored. It is ultimately your choice how to act, or not, upon feedback received.

For example, you receive internal customer feedback saying you don't do "x" and they think you should. You've actually spent some time considering "x", and it's simply not cost effective. How about thanking them for the feedback, letting them know the history and asking how else you could meet their needs. Chances are they will be happy enough, and go off not noticing that you didn't respond directly to their feedback. Slick!

Giving or receiving feedback, in particular job performance feedback, can be an emotional roller-coaster if you let it be. Learn how to receive feedback gracefully, giving you the emotional headspace to learn and grow from the experience.

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