

# Feeding Back

# Self-Coaching Guide

## *How can I be good at giving feedback?*

The aim of giving feedback should be to have a positive impact on the person receiving it, to help them improve their situation or performance. It should never be about making the giver of feedback feel better. Therefore, before giving feedback, it's important for the giver to explore their motives and reasons for giving it. The bigger the challenge the person giving feedback intends to make, the more important it is for them to do this. (The '*I know I'm ready to give feedback when ...*' Checklist overleaf provides a helpful self-check.) Here is some useful guidance on **giving feedback**:

- **Motivation:** Be clear and honest about why you are giving the feedback. For example, "*I want to help you improve*", "*I have high standards which you can meet*", and "*I know you can learn from this*".
- **Personal:** Give feedback that is only from you and your own direct experience. Do not use other people's comments or allow them to influence your opinion.
- **Positive:** Give more positive feedback than negative feedback so as not to demoralise someone and prevent them from listening. First say what is going well, and then say what there could be more of.
- **Specific:** Give clear and objective feedback. Avoid vague, subjective, and general statements. State the facts, relevant behaviours, and give real examples. Never get personal or seek to apportion blame.
- **Timely:** Give feedback as soon after the event as possible. If the situation is emotionally-charged then it's best to wait for the emotions to cool down first so as to avoid worsening the situation.
- **Regular:** Give informal and simple feedback on a regular basis, depending on the situation. This ensures that anything said during formal feedback sessions is expected and doesn't surprise someone.
- **Private:** Give feedback in a private safe place, where you won't be interrupted or overheard, so as to avoid embarrassing someone. An exception can be when you want to praise someone publicly.

It is often difficult for a person to receive feedback, but it's something they need to be willing to accept if they are to grow in their career and in life. Here is some useful guidance on **receiving feedback**:

- **Receive it:** Feedback can help you grow in your career and as a person if you learn from it. This only happens if you are willing to hear it and be open to what others say about your performance.
- **Act upon it:** Feedback can help you grow if you make it a focus for improvement. Changing your behaviour due to feedback shows a proactive attitude towards work which is appreciated by managers.
- **Don't take it personally:** Feedback (if given correctly) is not meant as a personal attack. Someone has taken the time, effort, and courage to give it because they care enough about you to want you to grow.

Note that it is always important that feedback is given within a relationship of acceptance and respect.

*"Giving honest and well-intended feedback is often confused with being mean. It's not mean; it's nice."  
Robert Kiyosaki*

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## More Information

**M** +44 (0)7711 856804 **E** [hello@paulhollywell.com](mailto:hello@paulhollywell.com) **L** [www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell](http://www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell) **W** [www.paulhollywell.com](http://www.paulhollywell.com)

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## **The 'I know I'm ready to give feedback when ...' Checklist**

This checklist helps someone examine their motives and reasons for giving feedback. If they can honestly agree with all these statements, they know they are ready to give the feedback.

- I'm ready to sit next to the person rather than across from them
- I'm willing to put the problem in front of us rather than between us
- I'm ready to listen, ask questions, and accept that I may not fully understand the issue
- I want to acknowledge what they do well instead of picking apart their mistakes
- I recognise their strengths and how they can use them to address their challenges
- I can hold them accountable without shaming or blaming them
- I'm willing to own my part
- I can genuinely thank them for their efforts rather than criticise them for their failings
- I can talk about how resolving these challenges will lead to their growth and opportunity
- I can model the vulnerability and openness that I expect to see from them

This checklist is based on the one given in Brené Brown's book '*Daring Greatly*'. The original version of the checklist can be found at: <https://brenebrown.com/downloads/>.

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**M** +44 (0)7711 856804 **E** [hello@paulhollywell.com](mailto:hello@paulhollywell.com) **L** [www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell](http://www.linkedin.com/in/paulhollywell) **W** [www.paulhollywell.com](http://www.paulhollywell.com)