

## GIVING FEEDBACK

**Be as specific as possible.** A comment concerning specific behaviour in a specific situation is easier to accept than a general statement.

*Don't: "You never listen" Do: "At this specific moment, you interrupted him"*

**Focus feedback on behaviour, not on the person.** Say what that behaviour does to you or how you experience it.

*Don't: "You are..." Do: "What you do..."*

**Formulate feedback from an "I" perspective.** Build your feedback around that which you experience and feel.

*"I feel that..." or "I'm getting the impression..."*

**Make sure feedback builds on observations, not interpretations.**

This means keeping it to visible behaviour or fact.

*Don't: "You think you always know better than me"*

*Do: "Interrupting my explanation makes it feel as if you don't value my opinion on the matter"*

**Make your feedback descriptive.** Describe what you see, hear and feel.

*Don't: "You don't listen to me"*

*Do: "By not looking at me and constantly glancing out the window you're giving me the impression that you're not listening to me"*

**Focus feedback on desired change.** What can this person do different or better next time? Avoid giving feedback on things that can't be changed.

*"I think it would help if you waited to chime in until the other person is done talking"*

**Time your feedback right, don't wait too long to give it.** Giving someone feedback early on, makes it easier for them to link it to behaviour.

**Positive feedback works better than negative feedback.**

Highlighting positive behaviour has a stimulating effect.

**Give the other person a chance to react.** Check how the other person feels about the given feedback.

*"It seems as if..." or "How do you feel about that?"*

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## GETTING FEEDBACK

**Listening and questioning.** Check if you understand what the other person meant and ask for clarification if needed. You could ask for concrete examples and time-stamps to put the feedback in perspective.

**Check and return.** Make it clear that you've heard and understood the feedback. You can do this by summarising what you've just heard.

**Differentiate between fact and interpretation.** Be aware of the fact that feedback relates to behavioural aspects and not to your entire person. Make sure you remain critical of the feedback and assess what you take away from it. If you feel that feedback is biased instead of it being objectively based on your behaviour, check with the feedback provider what they actually mean.

**Avoid getting defensive or starting an argument.** Not everyone knows how to give feedback. Try to ask for clarification about that what they try to convey.

**Take ownership in feedback sessions.** Feedback is most useful when the recipient takes active part in the feedback process. Ask questions on topics you want feedback on.

**Acknowledge when you recognise truth in a piece of feedback.** Acknowledgement of feedback shows self-reflection.

**Correcting information.** When you need to correct false information in received feedback make sure to first acknowledge what the feedback provider got right, before that what they got wrong. Immediately correcting them might evoke resistance.

**Formulating the issue and co-operatively finding solutions.** Make sure to find what the other experiences as an issue and try to find a solution together. In the exchange of feedback it is important that both sides agree what the issue is and what needs to happen to solve this.

**Show gratitude for feedback.** Showing that you are grateful for received feedback is a sign for the feedback provider that your relationship is unscathed. It makes sure that the conversation ends on a positive note.

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## HANDLING RESISTANCE

Resistance can feel like a threat. People are then quickly inclined to put forward arguments to defend themselves. This ensures that the other person does not feel taken seriously, which only increases resistance. By responding to the other person with an understanding attitude, resistance is actually reduced. You can reduce resistance by following these steps:

**Check.** Let the other person know that you notice that he thinks differently. You have to identify resistance, before you are able to change it.

*Do: "I hear you disagree" or "I get the feeling we are not on the same page"*

**Acknowledge.** Change can be difficult for people. Show understanding, empathise and try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. Make sure the other person feels taken seriously.

*Do: "It is understandable that you have doubts, it would also be a big change."*

**Question.** Ask the other person what their reasons for resistance are. By listening, asking questions and summarising you can find out what the reason for resistance is and respond to it.

*Do: "You indicate that you have doubts, what specifically do you have doubts about?"*

**Addressing the resistance.** Once you know what the other person is thinking, you can discuss it further. For example, if there is any uncertainty, you can provide additional information. If the other person thinks they have a better solution to the problem, then discussing this can also lead to better solutions.

*Do: "Could we achieve the same result with a different solution? How could we achieve that?"*

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**Check.** Let the other person know that you notice that he thinks differently. Only once resistance has been identified can you change it.

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## WHY OTHERS EXPERIENCE RESISTANCE

**The change is not in the interest of the other.** The idea of losing out on salary, getting more workload or losing autonomy, for example, can cause someone to feel resistance towards an idea.

*Take the interests of the other into account in your argumentation. What makes the change positive for the other person?*

**Uncertainty.** Lack of clarity about what a change would mean for the other person's situation or what is specifically expected of the other person can be a reason for resistance.

*Be as specific as possible with what it means for the other person and what you expect from the other person.*

**The other is convinced that there is a better solution.** The other person may have the idea that there are better solutions or sees different problems or goals to achieve.

*Look for similarities in your visions to reach an agreement together. Maybe you can find an even better solution together.*

**Fear of not being able to meet new demands.** The other person may worry about having to learn new things, they may lack knowledge and skills that are necessary to be able to go along with new innovative ideas.

*Explore together what the other person would need to feel more comfortable with the changes. What could support the other in the innovation?*

**Not feeling taken seriously.** The other person may disagree with you on a particular problem, when the other person does not feel seen or heard, they may start to feel resistance towards the idea.

*To prevent this, you can ask about the other person's view and what the other person thinks about the situation and thus reach a consensus about the situation together.*

**Not seeing the point of the change.** The other person may be convinced that the current way of working has always gone well and therefore does not need to change.

*By discussing what positive effect a change or different approach will bring to this person, you could somewhat reduce this resistance.*

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## ASSERTIVE ARGUMENTATION

**Create a strategy and stick to it.** Be prepared for the conversation and think about how you want to approach it. Make sure you have a clear picture of your proposition of idea.

*What do you want to discuss? How do you want to approach that? What information will you provide and when? What is the purpose of your conversation? What are counterarguments that the other person can give and how do you respond to them?*

**Take initiative in the conversation.** Don't wait around and take the initiative to start a conversation.

*"Do you have half an hour this afternoon to talk to me about this idea I have?"*

**Speak from your own perspective.** Speak with "I think" and "I want" instead of "Would you" or "What do you think?" Make sure you do not start your sentences with an open question but present your idea as a statement or fact.

*Do: "I think it's a good idea" or "I'd like to talk to you about it."  
Don't: "Do you think that" or "What do you think of"*

**Express your aspirations.** Set clear goals and expectations and come up with concrete and feasible proposals.

*Think about what would be the best outcome. What is the minimum you want to achieve? What would a first step in the right direction be?*

**Prepare your proposal as realistically as possible.** Look at facts and clear examples.

*What is information that someone else cannot undermine? How do you convey that?*

**Avoid relativizing comments.** Express yourself strongly by speaking in the first person and avoid words that express doubt.

*Do: "This way of working will increase productivity by..." "My proposal is that..."*

*Don't: "I would like, actually, maybe, in my opinion, I think, don't you think so too"*

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## PERSUASION AND NEGOTIATION

**Be prepared for the conversation.** Be aware of the goal you want to achieve with the conversation you are having. Look at the goals you want to achieve, but also think about the interests of the other party.

**Don't talk about positions and viewpoints, but about interests.**

Don't formulate your goal as a concrete end point but as a problem to be solved or an interest for the company.

*A point of view can be; "Within a year we must have at least this number of solar panels on the roof of our company." The interest behind this is, for example; "By becoming self-sufficient in energy as a company, we can save on energy costs in the long term, and we can become an example within our field." An interest for a company can be aimed at saving costs or to stand out as a company among all the competition. By looking at the actual problem (saving energy costs and being clearly visible among the competition), we can investigate together what other solutions are available.*

**Look for common interests.** There are almost always common interests to be found, even if it does not seem that way at the beginning. Once you have been able to express a common interest, you can look for a solution that both parties can agree with.

**Focus your energy on solving common problems.** Discussions about whose fault it was or who was right or who won are not interesting for finding a solution. It takes a lot of energy and usually leads to hardening of viewpoints and an unpleasant atmosphere. Focus on the future (solving the problems) and less on the past (who was wrong).

**Subjective criteria are legitimate.** Accept the other person's interests and opinion as a given. Even if you disagree with someone's subjective opinion, you should still take these objective opinions into consideration.

**Look for objective criteria.** Look for facts to strengthen your argument.

*For example, look for facts you can find about the emissions of the cars that the company leases to their employees or what a comparable company has saved by switching to solar panels.*

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## HANDLING TENSION AND EXPRESSING YOUR IDEA

You can reduce tension in a conversation in various ways.

**Use humour.** Look at your own behaviour objectively and put how you feel into perspective.

*"As you can tell, I have quite a passion for this" "I notice that it takes me a while to process all these ideas, I just can't find the words anymore."*

**Showing interest.** Discuss what the other person is talking about, ask questions to encourage the other person to say more. By letting the other person talk a lot, you can sort out your thoughts and you may get new information react to with your own perspective.

*"You were just talking about a different way of working that you had found, can you tell me more about that?"*

**Show appreciation.** Even though a conversation may be difficult, you can show appreciation that someone is having the conversation with you. This helps reduce negative feelings and relieves tension.

*"We may not agree with each other, but I appreciate that you are having this conversation with me. I find it interesting to hear your views on this too."*

**Listen and confirm.** Letting someone tell their story and confirming that you are listening can do a lot for the tension someone feels in a conversation. Listen, summarise what they are saying and ask questions.

*"So you're saying that you think this is the problem, how did you find out?"*

**Steps to finding a solution together when you don't see eye to eye.**

1. Find out the other person's needs, wishes, interests and values.
2. Tell them what you think is important and what your needs are.
3. Identify the common interests or goals.
4. Look for creative alternatives that take the interests of both parties into account.
5. Choose one of the possible options.

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