

How to Receive Feedback

How do you like getting feedback? It can be as wonderful as a compliment or as earth shattering as criticism. It can raise your spirit or crush you if you let it.

A time when you usually get a lot of feedback is during performance appraisals. Oh, those nail biting times! How you receive that feedback is important to consider. Here are a few pointers that will help you weather one of the most hated times for any employee.

1. Always remember that feedback is a gift. It is a time to learn what you are doing right so that you can do more of the things that please your boss and your company. It can also be a time to learn what you are doing wrong so you can do something about it before it destroys your chances to get ahead.

Remember that your manager is setting aside time to help you grow and improve and taking a risk in doing so. Look on it as a benefit, not something to be tolerated, or worse yet, ignored. So thank the feedback giver for taking the time to help you improve yourself.

2. Remember that perception is reality. Even if you think the criticism is not true, if they perceive it to be true, then it is. For example, if she tells you that you are not dressing professionally, yet you feel that you are. What your boss perceives or thinks is the reality. Ask some more specific questions in order to get more details on the issue.
3. Always adopt a "What can I learn from this?" It may not all be true, but probably some of it is. Check your understanding by paraphrasing back what you just heard and clarify anything you are unsure about.

For example, if your boss tells you "You are not being a good team player," ask for some specific things that you do or don't do to make him feel that way. Maybe you don't offer to help when you see that others are overwhelmed. Isn't it better to know that than to wonder why you aren't moving ahead?

4. Always assume the feedback giver has good intentions in mind. Believe that the giver values you and wants to improve your relationship, even if the feedback expresses temporary dissatisfaction. Most managers do want to see you do your best and get ahead. If you take the feedback very personally, the giver may just stop doing it and you will be left to wonder just what happened to your career.

And finally, keep in mind that the feedback you received relates to just one aspect of your behavior, not your worth as a person.