

Tips for Feedback Effectively

Principles of Receiving Feedback

- Personal and organizational growth and learning require each of us to improve our ability to receive (and give) feedback well. When receiving feedback, try to keep your professional goals in mind.
- Receiving feedback well is a skill. However skilled we are at it now, we can get better with some thought and practice accepting feedback.
- Feedback is formal and informal, verbal and non-verbal, and can be from faculty, clinical colleagues (e.g., nurses), classmates, patients, and families of patients.
- Being good at receiving feedback allows us to improve academically and results in better patient care. Studies have shown receiving feedback effectively leads to higher morale and better performance evaluations. Take the viewpoint that you will love the opportunity to learn about yourself and your profession.
- Leaders who receive feedback well provide an invaluable model for their subordinates and teammates.
- One of the best ways to improve our ability to give feedback well is by improving our understanding of what it takes to receive feedback well.

Detailed Guidance

- Listen to the feedback given. If someone is giving you feedback directly, hear them out. You can absorb more information if you are concentrating on listening and understanding rather than being defensive and focusing on your response. If the feedback comes in another form (e.g., assessment results, written evaluation) try to dispassionately understand what is being communicated. Even in the case of a test score or grade that is lower than expected, useful information can be used to improve.
- If you are receiving feedback directly, be aware of your response. Your body language and tone of voice often speak louder than words. Being attentive sends the message that you value what someone has to say which can put both of you at ease. Even when reading feedback being attentive and focused will help make the most of what has been written.
- Be receptive to new ideas and different opinions. Being willing to consider new approaches or ideas could have unexpected and positive results.
- Understand the message being conveyed before responding to the feedback. Ask clarifying questions and a summary of key points are effective ways to make sure you understand. Even in the case of indirect feedback (e.g., assessment results, written evaluation), you can write down clarifying questions.

You can also break down global feedback into component parts to make more sense of it.

- If you don't receive feedback, don't be afraid to ask.
- Reflect and decide what to do. Assess the value of the feedback. Not all feedback is equally valuable. However, everyone has a blind spot, which prevents us from reaching the next stage of growth, feedback may help us discover it. It might be helpful to organize the feedback into three different kinds: appreciative (giving thanks), coaching (aimed at improving your skills), or evaluative (comparison to expectation). Consider what happens if you use the feedback or choose to ignore it. Your response is your choice.
- Follow up. There are many ways to follow up on feedback. Sometimes, your follow-up will simply involve implementing the suggestions given to you. In other situations, you might want to set up another meeting to discuss the feedback or to re-submit the revised work.

Resources:

Algiraigri, A. H. (2014). Ten tips for receiving feedback effectively in clinical practice. *Medical education online*, 19(1), 25141.

Stone, D., & Heen, S. (2015). *Thanks for the feedback: The science and art of receiving feedback well*. Penguin.

van der Leeuw, R. M., & Slootweg, I. A. (2013). Twelve tips for making the best use of feedback. *Medical teacher*, 35(5), 348-351.