TALKINGCONSTRUCTIVELY

How To... Give Constructive Feedback

Giving effective feedback to others is an important and often overlooked skill, but it can help build and bond teams and work groups. Here motivational guru and FutureWork Forum partner, Shay McConnon offers some personal advice for anyone who wants to get this aspect of managing and leading honed to perfection.

1 Recognise the hero
While you may see the person as a villain, they probably see themselves as the hero Acknowledge their positive intention.
Say : "I appreciate you need to get things done quickly, however …"

2 Be specific – talk facts
Talk about what you saw and heard rather than what you think or believe.
Say: "When you arrive at 9:15 for work, as you did twice this week…"
rather than "When you ignore company policies…."

3 Replace 'you' language with 'I' language
Rather than "You are always late", or "you make me so angry…" say: "I feel angry when I have to wait around…"

4 Hard as it might be avoid any hint of blame, judgement or criticism
Beware of phrases like "You should" "You never" "You make me feel …"

5 Talk solution rather than problem

Speak about how you want things to be, rather than looking back on the past, what has happened, who said what, etc

6 Feedback on the behaviour, never the person
Talk about the behaviour being a problem for you rather than criticise the person

Your ongoing mantra is : problem solve, problem solve, problem solve

7 Be very clear about what you want, need and expect
Keep the focus on the outcomes rather than the problem
"What I need is …"
"My situation is …"

8 Invite the other person to talk about their needs
Recognise the person's needs. Ask : "What do you need from me?"

9 Negotiate to a solution acceptable to everyone
Remember that: The other person's needs are to be met as well as your own

Build on what s/he says. Avoid the "Yes buts …" Be prepared to compromise to achieve a win-win. Offer support, now and ongoing

10 Check the solution works for everyone
How good a solution is this for you? How could it be an even better solution?

11 Non-verbal
It's not just about the words you use : Match the energy, feelings and tone of voice. Make eye contact. Keep an open posture

12 …. And a few other thoughts:
Give affirmative (what you value about the other person) as well as developmental feedback (how things could be better). Describe rather than judge behaviour. Talk needs, feelings and concerns . Problem solve, problem solve, problem solve

Never argue with perception (the OTHER person's). Ask the other person to stop you and let you know if they hear any hint of blame, accusation or demand from you