



# Receiving Feedback in a REAL Conversation

## STAFF MEMBER TIPS

A REAL year-end conversation between supervisors and staff includes giving and receiving feedback. Learning how to **receive** feedback well can accelerate your professional growth, and increase the quality of your relationships at work.

### Feedback Types

#### Appreciation

Here's what you're doing well.

#### Coaching

Here's an area in which you could improve.

#### Evaluation

Here's where you stand (in relationship to expectations, opportunities, etc.).

**Which types are you getting? Which would you like more of?**

### Tips for Receiving Feedback

- Know that performance feedback is for your growth and development.
- Listen fully before responding.
- Ask questions to gain more information.
- Restate what you heard in your own words to check for understanding.
- Take notes to remember specific words and phrases.
- Seek to understand the behavior being recognized – and what to do more or less of.
- Circle back with follow-up questions as needed.

### Why is this sometimes hard?

Feedback can trigger resistance! This is normal, and makes it hard to listen and learn. Resistance may fall into any of three categories. If you find yourself getting defensive and/or rejecting the feedback, think about which trigger you are experiencing, and re-commit to the tips above.

#### Truth Triggers

*“That’s not even accurate!”*

The substance of the feedback sets us off. We don't agree with what's being said.

### Relationship Triggers

*"I don't believe anything this person says"*

We reject the content because of what we believe about that person. Perhaps you've had a difficult history or this person has a general lack of credibility.

### Identity Triggers

*"That's not who I am"*

The feedback threatens our sense of who we are. We might feel threatened, ashamed, or unsure of how to think about ourselves.

## What if I don't agree with the feedback?

Sometimes we listen, ask clarifying questions, reflect for a while, and still think the feedback is off-base. At this point you may:

- Request a follow up discussion, and bring additional information or data to share with your supervisor.
- Accept that your supervisor has a perspective that's different than yours and seek to adjust your behavior.

Material sourced from:

Stone, Douglas, and Sheila Heen. *Thanks for the Feedback: the Science and Art of Receiving Feedback Well: (Even When It Is off Base, Unfair, Poorly Delivered, and Frankly, You're Not in the Mood)*. Portfolio Penguin, 2015.