

Skills 360 – Giving and Receiving Feedback (Part 1)

Discussion Questions

1. How do you feel when people give you feedback on your work?
2. How often do you give other people feedback on their work?
3. What do you think makes feedback effective or useful?

Vocabulary

Performance review: a situation in which a manager or boss gives regular structured feedback to an employee; "I felt pretty good before my performance review, but my boss surprised me with a lot of criticism."

Ongoing: continuous, or not only for a short time; "Janie has been such a good temp that we're thinking of employing her on an ongoing basis."

To report to someone: the person you "report to" is your boss or supervisor; "Although I work primarily in Arizona, I report to a sales manager in New Mexico."

To work on: if we "work on" a project, we do work, but if we "work on" an aspect of our work, we try to improve it; "Overall, Tomo is a very good salesman, but I still think he needs to really work on his English skills."

To overwhelm: to be too much, too strong, or too powerful for someone, often used in the passive; "Whenever Smithers goes away I'm always overwhelmed with extra work that he couldn't finish."

Reassurance: words or actions that make someone less worried or more confident; "During my first few months on the job I was very thankful for the reassurance I got from my new coworkers."

To make sense: to be understandable or logical; "Sorry Harriet, but I don't think it makes sense to start revising the budget before the expense numbers are in."

Sandwiched: to be positioned between two things; "I found the revised proposal sandwiched between two project reports on Tim's desk."

Sense of well-being: a positive emotional and mental state that indicates general happiness and health; "As an accountant, the busyness of tax time really affects my sense of well-being, as well as that of my family."

Demotivating: if something is "demotivating," it makes us less excited, less interested, or less willing and motivated to do something; "Studies have shown that a manager's grouchiness can have a very demotivating effect on his employees."

To fly: if an idea or plan "flies," then people accept it or it works; "If this new app idea flies, we could make a lot of money in the next year."

To dwell on: to think or talk a lot about something, especially something negative; "Dan, if you keep dwelling on your little failures, you won't have the right confidence to be successful."

To inspire: to make someone feel excited, energetic, creative, motivated, or some other feeling; "As a leader, I believe we can only inspire true loyalty by taking care of all our employees' needs."

Annoying: if something or someone is "annoying," it bothers, irritates, or slightly upsets you; "Grant is a good guy, but he's got some annoying habits that only someone who shared a workspace with him would know."

After the fact: after something has happened and therefore too late to change; "The president claimed that he was only told about the controversial spending decision after the fact."

Evidence: facts or information that can show something is true; "The auditors could find no evidence that the accountant had tampered with the books."

To rectify: to make something correct or fix a situation or problem; "We need to call the tech guys right away and get them to rectify the problem with the server."

To enable: to make something possible or easier; "The new mobile interface should enable much better access to key information about the company."

To take things personally: if you "take things personally," you interpret a statement as critical of you; "Don't take this personally John, but I really think we need to rethink those designs for the new office."

Transcript

Welcome back to the Skills 360 podcast. I'm your host Tim Simmons, and today I want to talk about giving feedback.

Say "feedback" and a lot of people will immediately think of a [performance review](#). You sit down with someone you manage and explain what they're doing well and what they need to improve. It's a situation we've all been in, on both sides of the desk.

However, feedback is much more than what we do in a structured and scheduled situation. Feedback is an [ongoing](#) process, and we give feedback to everyone around us, not just those who [report to](#) us. That includes colleagues and co-workers, and our managers or superiors. Feedback happens every day, between everyone in a company. You might be giving feedback and not even realize it. Every time you let someone know what you think about what they're doing, you're giving feedback.

Okay, now let's talk about the kinds of feedback we give. First, there's negative feedback, or criticism, such as "Joe, I think you need to shorten your sales presentation and [work on](#) your delivery. I think it'll be more effective that way." Then there's positive feedback, or praise, such as "Tanis, I think your presentation was great. You didn't [overwhelm](#) people with information and the visuals really helped emphasize the key points." Those statements are easy to recognize as feedback, but feedback can also be daily [reassurance](#) in which you let people know you're okay with what's happening. Like this: "Yep. Looks good." Or this: "That [makes sense](#). Let's do it."

It's very important to balance these kinds of feedback. You don't have to deliver every critique [sandwiched](#) between praise, but be aware of your overall balance. Too much negative feedback can damage a person's confidence and [sense of well-being](#). It can be [demotivating](#), which is the opposite of what we want to do. How do you feel when someone keeps saying "Well, you could have done that differently." Or "that just doesn't work." Or "that idea is never going to [fly](#)." It's very easy to [dwell on](#) what people need to improve, but we can't ignore what people do well.

And we should tell them about it. Positive feedback can [inspire](#), motivate, and reassure. How do you feel when you hear things like "Great job." Or "I think that looks fantastic." Or "Just wanted to let you know I read your report, and it was just what I was hoping for."

Now, good feedback has a few important qualities: it is immediate, direct, and specific. Feedback is immediate when it comes not long after the work or behavior you're giving feedback on. Feedback is useless, or rather [annoying](#), when it comes months [after the fact](#). Feedback is direct when it's delivered to the person who it's intended for. That means you shouldn't get others to deliver feedback for you. It feels disrespectful, and there's a good chance that it won't be delivered in the way you want.

And feedback is specific when it includes **evidence** to support the central idea. An example of specific feedback might be: "Joan, I noticed that some of the personnel files are incomplete. We need to make sure that each file includes signed performance reviews."

By being specific, especially with negative feedback, we're giving people ways to **rectify** the situation. Remember, feedback is about **enabling** success and producing better results. And to do that, make sure you give a good balance of feedback and that you keep it immediate, direct, and specific.

Now, while giving good feedback is not always easy, *receiving* feedback can be even harder. The important thing is to keep the conversation focused on the work, not on the person. It's easy for the receiver to begin **taking things personally**, so just watch your language and be sensitive to the needs of different people. Tune in next time to learn more about how to *receive* feedback well.

That's all for today. If you'd like to test yourself on what we've just covered, have a look at the **myBEOonline.com** website. There you'll find a quiz about today's show as well as a complete transcript.

So long! And see you again soon.

Review

1. What does Tim imply about "performance reviews"?
 - A They are the only appropriate time for giving negative feedback.
 - B They are just one of many situations in which we give feedback.
 - C They should be carefully planned in advance.
 - D They should be used primarily for motivating employees.

2. According to Tim, who do we give feedback to on an ongoing basis?
[Select all that apply.]
 - A. Our managers
 - B. Our coworkers
 - C. Our subordinates
 - D. Our supervisors

3. What is NOT mentioned as a type of feedback?
 - A. Positive feedback
 - B. Daily reassurance
 - C. Negative feedback
 - D. Process feedback

4. What does Tim say about giving negative feedback?
 - A. Too much may negatively affect someone's performance.
 - B. Too little can give a false sense of well-being.
 - C. It should be done only in structured situations.
 - D. It should always come between positive statements.

5. According to Tim, good feedback has a few important qualities: it is _____, _____, and _____.
 - A Positive, specific, timely
 - B Respectful, direct, useful
 - C Immediate, direct, specific
 - D Motivating, immediate, and constructive

6. Which of the following is NOT a good example of specific feedback?
 - A. I think if you limit yourself to 20 slides and slow down, your presentation will be really great.
 - B. After careful consideration, I've come to the conclusion that this isn't really what we're looking for.
 - C. I like the way you've arranged the tables. I think that makes it easier to understand.
 - D. What if you tried some small talk before asking for a donation? That might help.

Review Answers

1. What does Tim imply about “performance reviews”?
B. They are just one of many situations in which we give feedback.
2. According to Tim, who do we give feedback to on an ongoing basis?
[Select all that apply.]
A. Our managers
B. Our coworkers
C. Our subordinates
D. Our supervisors
3. What is NOT mentioned as a type of feedback?
D. Process feedback
4. What does Tim say about giving negative feedback?
A. Too much may negatively affect someone’s performance.
5. According to Tim, good feedback has a few important qualities: it is _____, _____, and _____.
C. Immediate, direct, specific
6. Which of the following is NOT a good example of specific feedback?
B. After careful consideration, I’ve come to the conclusion that this isn’t really what we’re looking for.

Online Practice

Click the “Launch” button to open the **online practice**:

