

5-STEP FRAMEWORK FOR PROVIDING CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Constructive conversations are integral parts of managing performance and leading others. Feedback is one of the most powerful influences on performance, learning, and career development. But how should managers provide feedback in a way that's beneficial to the giver and receiver?

1. Affirm the person.

The foundation for receptivity to feedback, learning, and development is affirmation. Affirmation has been shown to generate high levels of energy, engagement, and commitment.

TIP: Examples of affirmations include specific observation and personal reactions. Individuals are more likely to believe the veracity of what they're hearing if they're faced with specific instances of when they have exhibited behavior.

2. Confront the facts.

Productive and authentic conversations can only happen when rooted in the realities of the day, no matter how harsh, and when the truth is sought out, no matter how difficult to hear. Good confrontations are given as gifts with good intentions.

TIP: Besides confronting people with helpful feedback, also seek to confront them with their own values, aspirations, and potential.

3. Explore the possibilities.

Help the other person find options. There's power in options. If they believe they have only one path forward, they often have a sense of powerlessness. Power comes from having options.

TIP: Provide others with fresh eyes to see things they wouldn't otherwise see by themselves.

4. Encourage the change.

Remind people they're the architect of their own career and life and have the capacity to learn and change.

TIP: Offer support while insisting that the other person remain accountable for their own choices and future.

5. Advance the action.

Without action or change of some sort, it has just been a nice conversation. Often, we can be most effective when we help the other person identify and commit to the most potent first step toward the objective. Clear accountability to others and oneself fuels the effort required to create sustained change.

TIP: Encourage the other person to take accountability for a change—an attitude, an approach, a behavior, or a habit.