Receiving Feedback

Feedback encourages you to consider your strengths and development opportunities in order to reach your potential.

How can you get the most out of the feedback you're receiving?

- **Listen carefully.** Paraphrase to make sure you heard the message correctly. This demonstrates to the other person that you sincerely want to hear the feedback.
- **Ask clarifying questions.** Ask for examples that illustrate the feedback so you really understand the giver's perspective.
- **Just say thank you.** Be careful that your clarifying questions don't result in you appearing to be defensive; getting defensive sends the signal that you are unreceptive and potentially "uncoachable." When receiving positive feedback, accept it graciously.
- **Acknowledge.** You don't have to agree or disagree with the feedback at this time. It's appropriate to recognize the other person's input by saying, "You've given me something to think about."
- **Decide how you will use the feedback.** Spend some time thinking about what action you can take to be more effective as a result of the feedback, whether it is continuing the actions and approaches you've been recognized for or considering a new approach to respond to constructive feedback.
- **Monitor your emotional responses.** When receiving difficult feedback, practice all the skills of an effective listener including using body language and facial expressions that encourage the other person to talk. Relax tense muscles and be aware of how you may be coming across nonverbally.

How do you go about asking for feedback?

Getting useful feedback can be the fastest route to growth and improved performance. It's not always an accurate reflection of who you are. But it *is* always an accurate reflection of how you're perceived. In addition to your manager, consider asking for feedback from others you work with who are able to observe your behavior, such as project team members and other colleagues, a mentor, etc. You can either ask for general feedback, or feedback related to a specific skill or task you are working on. Consider these questions to get the conversation started:

- What should I start doing?

- What's one thing I could do differently?

- What should I continue doing that I do well?

- I'm really excited about working on _____ together. Would it be possible to get some feedback from you over the course of the project?

- Do you have thoughts on what I could have done differently on Project XYZ to have gotten better results?

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