GIVING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK

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"Our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world as in being able to remake ourselves."

--Mohandas K. Gandhi

> *Feedback is information that helps people learn the effectiveness and impact of their behavior. Effective feedback reinforces the "right" behaviors and lets people know what change is desired.*

BENEFITS OF GIVING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK:

- People get clear about the impact of their behavior and what is expected of them.
- Effective feedback promotes curiosity and encourages others to try new behaviors.
- Giving effective feedback is a respectful way to help another person succeed. (If you can't discuss it, you can't improve it.)
- Feedback is the most powerful tool available to shape another's behavior; the best way to do this is to "catch people doing something right" and then reinforce it.

TEN REASONS FOR NOT GIVING FEEDBACK:

1. *I don't want to hurt his feelings or de-motivate him.*
2. *I don't want to make her mad. She works so hard.*
3. *There are no clear performance expectations, so it's just my opinion against his.*
4. *I was raised to not say anything if you can't say something nice.*
5. *That's just the way she is. People don't change.*
6. *It won't make any difference. He just doesn't seem to care.*
7. *It's never the right time or place.*
8. *I'm not the boss; it's not my job to do this.*
9. *I don't know what to say.*
10. *He knows I appreciate his work. Why should I have to tell him?*

WHAT'S NEEDED FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE:

For a person to change his or her behavior, four conditions must exist:

- Agreement that there is a problem and that change is needed
- Agreement that it's mine to fix (with support as appropriate)
- Belief that I am capable of changing, and
- An understanding of the consequences of not changing.

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK:

- Based on clear expectations and agreements
- Describes specific behaviors
- Focuses on behaviors that can be changed and are in the person's control
- Uses neutral language
- Is given as quickly as possible, but not in the heat of the moment
- Is delivered respectfully and in an appropriate setting
- Acknowledges the impact of the behavior on you or others in the organization
- Explores options (does not prescribe one way to act or to do something)
- Is given to express appreciation, to reinforce a behavior, or to encourage a change in behavior
- Is given with a positive intent to help another person succeed

EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK IS NOT:

- Given in a way that judges or evaluates the person
- Intended as retaliation, control, or manipulation
- Unloading frustration by being "honest" at the expense of another

HARD-WON WISDOM - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED:

- Intention is as important as technique or content. Be certain your intention is to help or appreciate.

- Delayed feedback loses impact. Remember **FAST**: **F**requent, **A**ccurate, **S**pecific, **T**imely.

- Feedback is not Truth. It is another's perception. When you receive unsettling feedback, stay curious. Ask questions. Seek to understand before defending or problem solving.

- Avoiding giving feedback to an employee who is not performing undermines a leader's credibility and sends a message that mediocrity or bad behavior will be tolerated.

- Leaders who give and solicit honest and respectful feedback model courage and humility.

- Don't expect gratitude when you give feedback. Remember…as a leader, giving feedback is your job.

HOW TO GIVE CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK:

Before you begin:
- o Be certain that your intention is to help or appreciate.
- o Plan what to say and be as specific as possible.
- o Choose an appropriate time and place.

Sample Opening Lines:
- o *I have something I'd like to discuss with you that I think will help us work together more effectively.*
- o *I'd like to talk about what just happened. Do you have a few minutes to talk?*
- o *I'd like to talk about _____. I think we may have different ideas about how to proceed.*

Other sample phases to use during the feedback conversation:
- o *When you…*(Describe the behavior.)
- o *I feel…* (Describe how the behavior affects you.)
- o *The impact on me, on other, on the team, or on the organization is…*
- o *I would like…* (Request a change in behavior.)
- o *What is your reaction?* (Listen to his or her response.)
- o *What are some things you will do differently?* (Explore options.)
- o *Thank you for…* (Express appreciation being open to feedback, for having a desire to learn, or for being willing to explore options.)

Examples:
- o *When you entered the meeting, you arrived 15 minutes late and closed the door loudly. My energy shifted to you and I lost my train of thought. In the future I'd appreciate you arriving on time.*
- o *I appreciate the thoroughness of this report. I especially liked how you listed the pros and cons of each alternative with a thorough analysis. Thanks for going the extra mile, especially with the limited time you had to produce the document.*
- o *I observed you in the Leadership Meeting this morning. I think you could make more of an impact if you spoke more concisely when presenting data and responding to questions. Would you be willing to practice with me before your next presentation to the team?*
- o *When you turned in your section of the report past the due date, I felt irritated because I had to scramble to get my section of the report done on time. Next month, I'd appreciate getting it on time or letting me know if it going to be late so I can plan accordingly. Would that be possible?*

Afterwards:
- o Follow through on agreements made.
- o Monitor progress and challenges.
- o Catch people doing things right…and reinforce improvement!