

## CRITERIA FOR GIVING FEEDBACK

Feedback is a way to help people to consider changing their behavior. It communicates how effective their work or actions appear to be and helps them keep their behavior "on target," thus better achieving their goals. Some criteria for useful feedback:

### Essential

1. Feedback is **descriptive** rather than judgmental. Describing one's own reaction to other people's work leaves them free to use or not use the feedback. Avoiding judgmental language reduces their need to respond defensively.
2. Feedback is **specific** rather than general. To make a general statement about people's behavior as a whole doesn't tell them which parts of their behavior need changing or which are strengths.
3. Feedback is **directed at behavior** the receiver can do something about. Being reminded of shortcomings people can't control will only cause frustration.

### Helpful

4. Feedback is **checked** to insure clear communication. What the giver intends to say is not necessarily equal to its impact on the receiver. It's important to ask about the meaning of anything that's unclear.
5. Feedback is both positive and negative. A **balanced** description of behavior takes both the strong and weak points into account. Both give the other person information for change.
6. Feedback takes into account the **needs of both the receiver and the giver** of the feedback. What you say to people reflects not only what they do, but also its effect on you.
7. Feedback is **solicited** rather than imposed. It's most useful when the receiver has asked for specific feedback.
8. Feedback is most useful when given **immediately after the behavior** has occurred.