



More Than Just Giving and Receiving...

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Feedback seems to be quite the hot topic these days! Between a recent Learning Curriculum (LC) workshop that focused on it, and a recent article in the [Harvard Business Review](#) (Jackman and Strober, April 2003), it's clear that giving and receiving feedback is an important concept that deserves some further attention. In the LC workshop "Giving and Receiving Feedback," facilitators Paula Basile and Marvin Pyles, from the campus office of Organizational Development and Training, Human Resources, gave attendees many valuable tips on giving and receiving feedback. The Learning Curriculum team felt that the library staff as a whole could benefit from some of the information they presented. Whether you are a supervisor who evaluates your staff or a member of team/committee/group, you likely give and receive feedback multiple times a day. Whether the feedback takes the form of reinforcement or redirection, it's important that the feedback be useful, so that the receiver can benefit from it. Below are some tips for making feedback useful.

Feedback is useful when it is...

- **Focused on acts, not attitude:** Feedback is more useful when it is used to respond to specific actions that are done in the process of performing one's job or working on behalf of a team.
- **Directed towards the future:** The purpose of feedback is not to dwell on the past—it is to plan for the future. Useful feedback uses past actions as a springboard to help the feedback recipient develop effective plans for future actions.
- **Multidirectional:** Many of us might think of feedback as hierarchical in nature: a manager or supervisor sends feedback down to an employee. While this is the most common type of feedback, feedback within cross-functional teams is also important. Each member of the team often has a unique vantage point and insights and sharing information can help others see things they may not have previously seen.

From time to time, all of us must also receive feedback. Suggestions for receiving feedback effectively include:

- **Become a careful listener:** Concentrate on what the speaker is saying, and present your own observations only when they are finished talking.
- **Keep feedback in perspective:** Use feedback as a guide—not something you need to dwell on, but something to evaluate to see if you need to repeat or change specific actions.
- **Try to learn from all feedback:** Look at feedback as a "gift"—focus on details that can help you change your behavior or performance.

To learn more about giving and receiving feedback, please watch for the Learning Curriculum's Spring 2004 schedule for the date of the next "Giving and Receiving Feedback" workshop. You may also wish to review one of the following articles on feedback which are all available in full-text from *Business Source Premier*:

- Clarke-Epstein, Chris. "Truth in Feedback." *T+D* 55:11 (Nov. 2001): 78-80.
 - Twelve misconceptions about feedback are corrected.
- Jackman, Jay M., and Myra H. Strober. "Fear of Feedback." *Harvard Business Review* 81:4 (April 2003): 101-107.
- Simonsen, Peggy. "Give Positive Feedback." *The CPA Journal* 68:5 (May 1998): 75-76.
 - Includes sidebar on "Giving Effective Positive Feedback."
- Swinburne, Penny. "How to use feedback to improve performance." *People Management* 7:11 (May 31 2001): 46-7.
 - Includes sidebars on "The do's and don'ts of giving constructive feedback" and "Tips for receiving feedback."